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**COVENANT IN CONFLICT:
THE CONTROVERSY OVER THE CHURCH COVENANT
BETWEEN SAMUEL RUTHERFORD AND THOMAS HOOKER**

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BY
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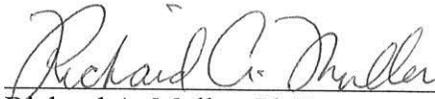
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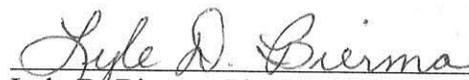
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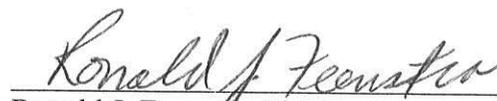
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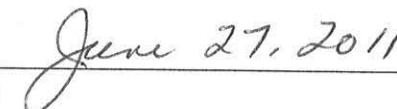

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To my Lord, the Head of the Church

Soli Deo Gloria!

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the mid-seventeenth-century controversy over the church government between Samuel Rutherford (Presbyterian) and Thomas Hooker (Congregationalist) focusing on its theological underpinnings. The church covenant played a significant role: For Hooker, it constitutes the theological and logical foundation of his systematic defense of the New England Way—particularly in the issues of the nature of the visible church, church membership, the power of the keys, sacraments, and church discipline. Rutherford considers the church covenant as a human invention because it is unknown to Scripture. In reply, Hooker argues both that the concept of church covenant is warranted by God’s word, and also that Rutherford’s Presbyterianism is neither biblical nor true to the Reformation.

Their differing views of the church covenant are closely interconnected with each man’s covenant theology. Hooker emphasized the dispensational administration of the biblical covenant, by which he justifies church covenant as the basis of the congregational polity which belongs to the final stage in God’s dispensation of the covenants. Rutherford stresses the unchanging substance of the covenant of grace, which is based on the *atemporal* covenant of redemption. He argued that given the sufficiency of the covenant of grace, there must be no more dispensation of the covenant beyond the covenant of grace.

Rutherford tends to identify Hooker’s church covenant with an inward covenant in line with the Separatists’ ecclesiology. Hooker insists that it is an outward covenant, which belongs to a visible church only. In order to remove misunderstandings about Congregationalism, Hooker attempts to use many important distinctions—such as the

church as *totum essentiale/organicum*, explicit/implicit church covenant, outward/inward covenant, church privileges/power, real/visible saints, judgment of truth/charity etc. For Hooker, these distinctions are useful in dealing with the problem of the compatibility between Congregational church and other forms of church polity. Also, they show that the former is compatible with the traditional distinction of the visible/invisible church.

Finally, I will seek to critically assess the strength/weakness of each man's arguments on the one hand, and, on the other, the success/failure in completing their ecclesiastical projects, particularly from the perspective of each man's own ecclesiastical context.

CHAPTER 1.

INTRODUCTION

I. Statement of the Thesis

This dissertation examines the mid-seventeenth century controversy over the church government between Samuel Rutherford, “the most prominent protagonist of Presbyterianism” and Thomas Hooker, a chief spokesman for the New England Way, who became “the acknowledged father of Congregationalism” in Connecticut.¹ For both Rutherford and Hooker, this controversy was very significant because they were convinced that it was their duty to establish the most biblical form of church polity in order to complete the work of the Reformation.

What I intend to do is to demonstrate, first, that the biblical concept of the covenant played a central role in their dispute over church government. Hooker was convinced that the biblical doctrine of covenant must be extended to include the concept of a church covenant, which would constitute the theological foundation of the congregational polity. On the contrary, Rutherford argued that Hooker’s church covenant lacked scriptural support, calling it a “Scriptureless imagination.”² Given the sufficiency of the Covenant of Grace or “the Gospel covenant,” Rutherford believed, a church covenant should be useless.³

¹ Kingsley G. Rendell, *Samuel Rutherford: A New Biography of the Man & His Ministry* (Fearn, Ross-shire: Christian Focus, 2003), 89; George Punchard, *History of Congregationalism from about A.D.250 to the Present Time*, vol. 4 (Boston: Congregational Publishing Society, 1880), 66.

² Samuel Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey of that Summe of Church-Discipline Penned by Mr. Thomas Hooker* (London: J.C. for Andr. Crook, 1658), 96.

³ Rutherford, *The Due Right of Presbyteries* (London: E. Griffin for Richard Whittaker & Andrew Crook,

Second, detailed study of the Rutherford-Hooker dispute will show that their different views of the church covenant are deeply rooted in each man's covenant theology. Hooker, compared with Rutherford, emphasized the dispensational administration of the biblical covenant, by which he attempted to justify his eschatological viewpoint of the church covenant. On the contrary, Rutherford put a strong emphasis on the unchanging substance of the Covenant of Grace, which is based on the *atemporal* Covenant of Redemption.

Finally, this study will demonstrate differing understanding of the church covenant led Hooker and Rutherford to different conclusions concerning the major ecclesiastical issues—such as the nature of a visible church, church membership, sacraments, church discipline, and, finally, the form of the church government. For Hooker, the theological basis of them must be God's Covenant of Grace *and* the church covenant. For Rutherford, it must be the "Gospel covenant" alone.⁴

II. Statement of the Problem

In analyzing the theological underpinning of the Rutherford-Hooker dispute, this dissertation will address each man's unique problems within their polemical context. Hooker, in his *A Survey of the Summe of Church Discipline* (hereafter *Survey*), argued that Congregationalism was divinely instituted church government, which belonged to the

1644), 83-88; Idem, *A Survey of the Survey*, 95-115, 138-156, 162-171, 162.

⁴ It must be remembered that the Covenant of Grace forms a substantial part of both men's ecclesiology. As a result, as this study will show, Hooker sees an agreement (as well as disagreement) with Rutherford in many fundamental principles—or the theological foundation—of his Congregationalism.

climax of church history.⁵ According to Hooker, his congregational church was based upon the church covenant, which gives the “formal cause” to a visible church.⁶ Hooker formulated his doctrine of church covenant from a biblical concept of covenant.

Given his argument that Congregationalism was the most developed and biblical form of church government, however, Hooker had to answer a series of questions. On the one hand, he had to address many ecclesiastical issues including church membership and discipline without referring to any hierarchical authority: Given the absence of the plenary—or the limited—power of a synod or a presbytery, how should a particular church make some practical principles for church discipline, including the issues of admission, election, and excommunication? And what would be the theological basis for those rules?

On the other hand, Hooker had to deal with another issue about how to evaluate other forms of church government. For instance, given Hooker’s claim that either Presbyterian Church or Episcopacy lacks an explicit church covenant as well as any New Testament models for their church polity, should he still call them a true church?⁷ If no, should he justify a separation from those churches? If yes, how should one differentiate the congregational form from other forms of church polity? Also, how should one defend the primacy of the Congregationalism over against the other forms of church government?

⁵ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, “The Preface” (London: A. M. for John Bellamy, 1648), 1-18.

⁶ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, part I, 45 (Hereafter, unless it is specified by part II, part III, part IV, all page numbers refer to part I). For detailed discussion of Hooker’s concept of the efficient, material, and formal cause of a visible church, see chapter 5 of this dissertation.

⁷ One of Hooker’s key arguments against Presbyterianism is that the Presbyterian form of church government lacks any biblical support: “There is no Presbyteriall Church (i.e. A Church made up of the Elders of many Congregations appointed Clasickwise, to rule all those Congregations) in the N.T.” Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 16.

As for Rutherford, this paper will focus on his counterview on the issue of church covenant, which he defined as a “Scriptureless imagination.” Rutherford, in his *A Survey of the Survey of that Summe of Church Discipline penned by Mr. Thomas Hooker* (1658), argued that there was no scriptural evidence for a church covenant. In the Old Testament, he emphasized, Abraham’s family became the member of God’s family even before they performed circumcision. In the New Testament, many churches established by the Apostle Paul showed no evidence that they made a church covenant. Rutherford concluded that “Scripture is silent” about the Congregational form of church government.⁸

However, the Bible, Rutherford believes, is not silent about the Presbyterianism. Rutherford seems to be convinced—as revealed in his ecclesiological works⁹—that a true religion must follow the biblically prescribed form of church government, which should be Presbyterian Church polity. Furthermore, Rutherford argues for the concept of a national covenant or a national church. Given the absence of a New Testament model for the national church, however, Rutherford attempts to prove the “lawfulness of a National Covenant” using the “Law of Nature” as well as the Old Testament model of the Jewish national church—as a biblical evidence for it.¹⁰ How, then, would Rutherford justify his opposition to Hooker’s similar attempt to prove the lawfulness of church covenant using the same source and method—the old Jewish church model for a national *church-*

⁸ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 112.

⁹ See Rutherford’s *A Peaceable and Temperate Plea for Paul’s Presbytery in Scotland* (London: Printed for John Bartlet, 1642); *The Due Right of Presbyteries* (1644); *The Divine Right of Church Government and Excommunication* (London: John Field for Christopher Meredith, 1646); *A Free Disputation against Pretended Liberty of Conscience* (London: R.I. for Andrew Crook, 1649); *A Survey of A Survey of that Summe of Church Discipline penned by Mr. Thomas Hooker* (1658).

¹⁰ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 474-485.

covenant and the use of human logic—without falling into inconsistency?¹¹

It should be noted that Rutherford, while severely attacking the church covenant as the theological basis of Hooker's Congregationalism, *never* denied the ecclesiastical implications of the biblical covenant. Rutherford, for example, considered the Covenant of Grace (or Gospel-Covenant) as the theological ground of church membership and church discipline.¹² The Covenant of Grace, he argued, was the sum of all privileges and duties given to all visible churches.¹³ How would, then, this shared interest in a biblical concept of the Covenant of Grace contribute to the controversy between Hooker and Rutherford? And how is it related to their differing view of the church covenant?

By answering the above questions, I will particularly consider how their differing view of the church covenant could play a central role in the Rutherford-Hooker dispute and, ultimately, contribute to the theological framework of the controversy in which both men tried to seriously probe into, assess and address his own as well as his partner's unique problems.

¹¹ One of the key criticisms of Rutherford on Hooker's church covenant is that Hooker depends too much on human logic than the Bible. However, it is interesting to note that Rutherford himself, as this study will show, seems to freely use human reason in his defense of Presbyterianism, the Covenant of Redemption, the national church, and "the lawfulness of a National Covenant." In addition, it should be remembered that Hooker never denies the existence of a "National Church" as "*truly and properly* so called and so appointed by God" in the Old Testament. Unlike Rutherford, however, Hooker does not believe that it can be used as a biblical ground for modern concept of a National Church because, Hooker emphasizes, the Jewish national church was a unique model in the history of God's dispensation of covenant. Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, part IV, 38-42.

¹² The covenant of grace, for Rutherford, is the sufficient ground of church membership: "A man being born in the Gospel-covenant, and being baptized to all churches, he is a son and a married member of all congregations." Thus, given the sufficiency of this covenant, one may not enter into another church covenant to become a church member. Also, the covenant of grace is the sufficient ground for church discipline: He argues, "Vow in baptism and the Gospel Covenant professed by me obliges me all duties." Accordingly, the covenant of grace which is extended to individuals through baptism in a visible way, must be the sufficient ground for executing church discipline. Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 140, 163.

¹³ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 140, 153, 155-56.

III. Survey of Scholarship

The Rutherford-Hooker dispute has been largely overlooked in the secondary literature. There is not yet a book length study of this subject. Daniel W. O'Brien has an interesting essay on Hooker's *Survey*. But, as its title indicates,¹⁴ it was an attempt to compare Thomas Hooker's Congregationalism, as expressed in his *Survey*, with Richard Hooker's Anglicanism, as reflected in *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, rather than with Rutherford's ecclesiological works.

Of the scholarly discussion about the Rutherford-Hooker dispute, the majority has been confined either to its historical/ecclesiastical context or its contribution to each man's specific aspects of political/religious positions. For example, while O'Brien's work focused on Hooker's use of logic, style, and structure—particularly in his connection with Ramism—as expressed in his *Survey*, Thomas A. Denholm's essay discusses the content of *Survey* mainly “in connection with the basic content of Hooker's preaching.”¹⁵ James F. Cooper paid attention to the political implications of Hooker's Congregationalism. Given his thesis that Hooker's principles of Congregationalism—such as limited authority, the accountability of leaders, and free consent—contributed to the development of American democracy, Cooper attempted to detect the above principles in Hooker's polemical works including *Survey*.

As for Rutherford, his polemical works were extensively discussed in both O. K. Webb's and John Coffey's works in which they set aside one chapter in each work to deal

¹⁴ Daniel Walker O'Brien, “Law versus Discipline: An Examination of Episcopal and Congregational Modes in Richard Hooker's *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* and Thomas Hooker's *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 1981).

¹⁵ Andrew Thomas Denholm, “Thomas Hooker: Puritan Preacher, 1586-1647,” (Ph.D. diss., The Hartford Seminary Foundation, 1961), 158.

with Rutherford's ecclesiology.¹⁶ Rutherford's controversy with Hooker, however, was briefly treated and the whole discussion was focused mostly on the political implications of Rutherford's Presbyterianism (Webb) or his political theory as expressed particularly in *Lex, Rex* (Coffey).

While many scholars seem to have recognized the importance of the Rutherford-Hooker dispute, most works attribute surprisingly little significance to the theological underpinning of the controversy. Particularly, little attention has been given to the major role of the church covenant or covenant for each man's ecclesiology and its contribution to the course of their debate. Why is there so little scholarly discussion about this topic? Three prejudices may account for this lack of interest in the theological ground of the Rutherford-Hooker controversy.

First, there has been an argument that by the time of the convening of the Westminster Assembly, church government was not a major issue. The commitment of English divines in the Westminster Assembly to Presbyterianism was largely due to the later intrusion of Scottish divines. William Shaw, E. W. Kirby, William Lamont and George Yule tend to support such a view arguing that Puritan leaders were highly unspecific on issues of church polity.¹⁷ Furthermore, it seems to be true that the Westminster Assembly chose not to seriously debate the question whether

¹⁶ Omri Kenneth Webb, "The Political Thought of Samuel Rutherford," (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1964); John Coffey, *Politics, Religion and British Revolutions: The Mind of Samuel Rutherford* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1997).

¹⁷ E. W. Kirby, "Sermons before the Commons, 1640-42," *American Historical Review* 44 (1939):529-34; idem, "The English Presbyterians in the Westminster Assembly," *Church History* 33 (1964):418-427; William M. Lamont, *Godly Rule: Politics and Religion: 1603-1660* (London: MacMillan, 1969); William Shaw, *A History of the English Church During the Civil Wars and Under the Commonwealth, 1640-1660*, 2 vols. (London: Longmans, 1900); George Yule, "Some Problems in the History of the English Presbyterians in the Seventeenth Century," *Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society of England* 13 (1967): 4-13; Carol G. Schneider, "Godly Order in a Church Half-Reformed: The Disciplinary Legacy, 1570-1641," (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1986), 5-18.

Congregationalism—as a biblical form of church government—should become a possible alternative to Presbyterianism. It was, perhaps, because the majority of the Assembly was already in favor of Presbyterianism.¹⁸

It should be remembered, however, that the most heated debate over the church government between English Presbyterianism and New England Congregationalism took place *outside* the Assembly. Particularly, the pamphlet war between the two groups reached its climax during the mid-1640s. Accordingly, criticizing a tendency to consider church government as not essential for the mid-seventeenth-century Puritan divines, Carol G. Schneider, James F. Cooper and many others have shown that there were ongoing debates about church polity in the 1640s and that their fight over the forms of church government must be seen in relation to the fundamental theological concerns. Indeed, church government was one of the key reasons why many Puritans came to New England.¹⁹

Second, there has been a tendency to overlook the polemical works of both Rutherford and Hooker while giving more attention to their pastoral works—such as sermons and letters—and *non*-polemical theological treatises. It proceeds from an assumption that the former lacks theological depth due to its preoccupation with the controversy while the latter reflects the essence of each man's theology. It is interesting to note that the only two works of Hooker, *Survey* and *The Covenant of Grace Opened*

¹⁸ Moreover all three New England Congregationalists, John Cotton, John Davenport, and Hooker who were invited to the Westminster Assembly decided not to attend the Assembly. As a result, there could not be a *direct* confrontation between the English Presbyterians and the New England Congregationalists within the Assembly. As for the latter's connection to Independent brethren in the Assembly, see chapter 2.

¹⁹ Schneider, "Godly Order in a Church Half-Reformed: The Disciplinary Legacy, 1570-1641," 5-18; James F. Cooper Jr., *Tenacious of Their Liberties: The Congregationalists in Colonial Massachusetts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 11.

(1649), which are excluded—because of their “polemical nature”—from John H. Ball’s list of Hooker’s works for the discussion of his theology,²⁰ are the major texts that will be extensively discussed in this dissertation.

However, Hooker’s *Survey* is considered by many scholars as the most systematic treatment of the whole range of Congregationalism from a theological as well as a logical viewpoint. Likewise, Rutherford’s polemical works for ecclesiology are not only voluminous but also considered by John Coffey and many others as theologically rich.²¹ Moreover, the ecclesiology of both Rutherford and Hooker, as this dissertation will show, is closely interconnected with other theological doctrines. In this sense, Bush seems to be right when he says that all parties, including Rutherford and Hooker, who were involved in the debate over church government “appear to have felt that they were engaged in no less a task than producing the final revelation of truth on this subject.”²²

Finally, there is an assumption that polemical works are less scriptural than other pastoral and *non*-polemical theological works.²³ The significant parts of the Rutherford-Hooker debate, however, revolved around the issue of biblical exegesis. For example, their debates over the major ecclesiastical issues—such as the nature of a visible church, church membership, church officers, the power of the keys, excommunication, sacraments, church discipline, and synod—are closely interconnected with the exegetical

²⁰ John H. Ball, *Chronicling The Souls Windings: Thomas Hooker and His Morphology of Conversion* (Lanham, New York, London: University Press of America, 1992), 195-96.

²¹ Bush, *The Writings of Thomas Hooker*, 106-107; O’Brien, “Law versus Discipline,” 233-239 ; Coffey, *Politics, Religion and British Revolutions*, 188-224.

²² Bush, *The Writings of Thomas Hooker*, 106.

²³ Perry Miller, for example, believes that Hooker’s defense of Congregationalism and church covenant should be characterized by the primacy of human logic over the Scripture. See Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (New York: Macmillan, 1939). 46.

problems of some key biblical verses or concepts. Particularly, both the Abrahamic Covenant and the Mosaic covenant as expressed in Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy and other places in the Old Testament became the important biblical models for Rutherford's concept of national covenant, while, for Hooker, its visible as well as spiritual dimension should establish the biblical ground of the church covenant.²⁴

IV. Sources and Outline

This dissertation will attempt to read the Rutherford-Hooker controversy in its larger polemical context in which Hooker represented “the joint judgment of all the Elders upon the river: of New-haven, Guilford, Milford, Stratford, Fairfield: *and of most of the Elders of the Churches in the Bay,*”²⁵ while Rutherford wished to speak of both Scottish and English Presbyterianism. Accordingly, Rutherford will be read along with other major polemical works of his Presbyterian brethren, Simeon Ash, William Rathband, John Ball, Richard Bernard, Charles Herle, Daniel Cawdrey, Samuel Hudson, and others.²⁶ Likewise, Hooker will be examined with William Ames and other New England

²⁴ Hooker, in his sermon on Genesis 17:23, made a distinction between the inward, spiritual covenant—which would include his elect descendent—and the external, federal covenant. He connected the latter to the concept of national covenant which would contain all Abraham's seed. Hooker, then, argued that Christ had turned the national covenant of the Jewish nation into the spiritual version of the church covenant. Hooker, *The Covenant of Grace Opened* (London: G. Dawson, 1649), 1-85. Shuffelton points out the significant role of the Abrahamic covenant for Hooker's church covenant: “Hooker was able to argue that baptism, the ‘seals of our first entrance into the covenant,’ was to be extended only to the children of church members, the New Testament version of the seed of Abraham. *The Covenant of Grace Opened* thus defended the practice of the New England churches against both the Anabaptists, who wished to limit baptism to the visible saints alone, and the Presbyterians, who wished to extend it to any child whose parents requested it.” Frank Shuffelton, *Thomas Hooker 1586-1647* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 47.

²⁵ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 17.

²⁶ Simeon Ash and William Rathband ed., *A Letter of Many Ministers in Old England* (London: Printed for Thomas Underhill, 1643); John Ball, *A Tryal of the New-Church in New England* (London: T. Paine and M. Simmons for Thomas Underhill, 1644); Charles Herle, *Independency On Scriptures Of The Independency Of Churches* (London: Tho. Brudenell for N.A., 1643); Robert Baillie, *A Dissuasive from the Errours of the*

divines such as Richard Mather, John Cotton, John Davenport, Samuel Stone, Thomas Shepard and others.²⁷

Second, I will explore the major ecclesiological works of both Rutherford and Hooker: Rutherford's *A Peaceable and Temperate Plea for Paul's Presbytery in Scotland* (1642); *The Due Right of Presbyteries* (1644); *The Divine Right of Church Government and Excommunication* (1646); *A Free Disputation against Pretended Liberty of Conscience* (1649); *A Survey of the Survey of that Summe of Church Discipline penned by Mr. Thomas Hooker* (1658); Hooker's "John Paget's XX Questions (Propositions) and

Time (London: Printed for Samuel Gellibrand, 1645); Daniel Cawdrey, *Vindicae Clavium, or a Vindication of the Keyes of the Kingdome of Heaven, into the hands of the right owners* (London: T.H. for Peter Whaley, 1645); idem, *The Inconsistency of the Independent Way with the Scriptures and Itself* (London: A. Miller for Christopher Meredith, 1651); idem, *Independency Further Proved to be a Schism: or a Survey of Dr. Owens Review of his Tract of Schism* (London: Printed for John Wright, 1658); Samuel Hudson, *A Vindication of the Essence and Unity of the Church Catholike Visible* (London: A.M. for Christopher Meredith, 1650); idem, *An Addition or Postscript to the Vindication of the Essence and Unity of the Church-Catholick visible, and the Priority thereof in regard of particular Churches* (London: J.B. for Andrew Kembe, 1658); As for the works of Parker and Noyes in New England, see James Parker, *The true copy of a letter: written by Mr. Thomas Parker, a learned and godly minister, in New-England, unto a member of the assembly of divines now at Westminster* (London: Richard Cotes for Ralph Smith, 1644); James Noyes, *The temple measured: or, A brief survey of the temple mystical, which is the instituted church of Christ* (London: Printed for Edmund Paxton, 1646/7); As for the works of Rutherford's Scottish brethren, see Alexander Henderson, *Government and Order of the Church of Scotland*. (Edinburgh: Printed for James Bryson, 1641); George Gillespie, *An Assertion of the Government of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Printed for James Bryson, 1641).

²⁷ William Ames, *Medulla Theologiae* (Londini, : Apud Robertum Allottum, 1629); Richard Mather, *Church Government and Church Covenant Discussed* (London: R.O. and G.D. [and T.P. and M.S.] for Benjamin Allen, 1643); idem, *An Apologie of the Churches in New England for Church Covenant* (London: R.O. and G.D. [and T.P. and M.S.] for Benjamin Allen, 1643); idem, *A Modest & Brotherly Answer To Mr. Charles Herle* (London: Printed for Henry Overton, 1644); idem, *A Reply to Mr. Rutherford* (London: Printed for J. Rothwell, and H. Allen, 1647); John Davenport, *The power of Congregational churches asserted and vindicated* (London: Printed for Rich. Chiswell, 1672) ; John Cotton, *The Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven* (London: M. Simmons for Henry Overton, 1644); idem, *The Way of the Churches of Christ in New England* (London: Matthew Simmons, 1645); idem, *The Way of Congregational Churches Cleared* (London: Matthew Simmons for John Bellamie, 1648); idem, *A Treatise of the Covenant of Grace* (London: James Cottrell, 1659); Samuel Stone, *A Congregational Church is a Catholic Visible Church* (London: Peter Cole, 1652); Thomas Shepard, *A Treatise of Liturgies, Power of the Keyes, and of matter of the Visible Church: In Answer to the Rev. Servant of Christ, Mr. John Ball* (London: E. Cotes for Andrew Crooke, 1653, reprint 1658); John Allen's edition of late Cotton, *Certain Queries Tending to Accommodation and Communion of Presbyterian & Congregational Churches* (London: M.S. for John Allen and Francis Eglesfield, 1654); John Owen, *A defence of Mr. John Cotton from the imputation of selfe contradiction, charged on him by Mr. Dan. Cawdrey* (Oxford: H. Hall for T. Robinson, 1658).

Thomas Hooker's Answer"(1633); *A Survey of the Summe of Church Discipline* (1648); *The Covenant of Grace Opened* (1649). Also, their pastoral and *non-polemical* works will be examined, focusing on the theme of covenant.

As for both Hooker's and Rutherford's covenant theology, there have been a handful of scholars who have recognized its significance for each man's theology. Ball, Denholm, O'Brien, Roland H. Bainton, Sargent Bush Jr., Diane M. Darrow, Frank Shuffelton, and even E. H. Emerson discuss Hooker's covenant theology, while Coffey, Webb, San-Deog Kim, and Guy M. Richard address Rutherford's view of covenant. For Hooker's case, some of them discussed the ecclesiastical implication of the biblical doctrine of the covenant. O'Brien, for example, argued, "At the core of the Congregational ideal was a covenantal theology."²⁸

I will attempt to incorporate the insight of previous studies on each man's covenant theology into our discussion about the Rutherford-Hooker dispute over church covenant. While exploring each man's view of the biblical covenant and how they understand its adaptability or flexibility to meet the diverse needs of the church in a vastly different ecclesiastical context, this study will enrich our understanding of the practical and ecclesiastical implications of Puritan covenant theology in the seventeenth century.

In chapter 2, I will examine the historical context of the Rutherford-Hooker

²⁸ Ball, *Chronicling The Souls Windings*; Denholm, "Thomas Hooker: Puritan Preacher, 1586-1647"; O'Brien, "Law versus Discipline"; Ronald H. Bainton, *Thomas Hooker and the Puritan Contribution to Democracy*, booklet reprinted from the *Bulletin of the Congregational Library*, vol. 10, No. 1(October 1958); Sargent Bush Jr., *The Writings of Thomas Hooker: Spiritual Adventure in Two Worlds* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1980); Diane M. Darrow, "Thomas Hooker and the Puritan Art of Preaching," (Ph.D. diss., University of California, San Diego, 1968); Shuffelton, *Thomas Hooker 1586-164*; Everett H. Emerson, "Thomas Hooker and Reformed Theology: The Relationship of Hooker's Conversion Preaching to Its Background," (Ph.D. diss., Louisiana State University, 1955); Coffey, *Politics, Religion and British Revolutions*; Webb, "The Political Thought of Samuel Rutherford"; San-Deog Kim, "Time and Eternity: A Study in Samuel Rutherford's theology, with Reference to His Use of Scholastic Method," (Ph.D. diss., University of Aberdeen, 2002); Guy M. Richard, *The Supremacy of God in the Theology of Samuel Rutherford* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2008); Quote is from O'Brien, "Law versus Discipline," 122.

dispute over church covenant: First, the term, church covenant will be defined as a document, a ceremony and a concept or doctrine. Then I will turn to a biographical sketch of each man's life, focusing on the major events, figures and works which might influence on their ecclesiology. Finally, I will examine the polemical context of the Rutherford-Hooker dispute, particularly focusing on the period of before and after the Westminster Assembly.

Both chapter 3 and chapter 4 will explore the covenant theology of each man, focusing on its practical and ecclesiological implications. The covenant theology of Rutherford will be characterized by his emphasis on the unchanging substance of the Covenant of Grace, the eternal Covenant of Redemption, and the sufficiency of the Covenant of Grace for the theological foundation of the church government (chapter 3). Unlike Rutherford, the characteristic emphasis of Hooker's approach to the biblical doctrine of covenant is to show that God's administration of the covenants as revealed in the Bible shows the ever-changing, dynamic and evolving nature of God's covenantal dispensation (chapter 4). One of the major purposes of chapter 3 and 4 is to show that there exists a strong correlation between their different views of the church covenant and different emphasis in each man's covenant theology.

Chapter 5 and chapter 6 will discuss in detail the Rutherford-Hooker dispute focusing on their debates over the nature of a visible church and the church covenant (chapter 5) and the power of the keys, sacraments and church discipline (chapter 6). In chapter 5, I will closely examine Rutherford's claim that Hooker's Congregational church is a *new* church based on a newly invented practice or concept of church covenant. In chapter 6, I will critically examine Hooker's thesis that the jurisdiction of a Presbyterian

church is a *new power*, which has nothing to do with the power as instituted by Christ and, accordingly, nothing but a humane invention. Also, I will discuss their differing views of the church covenant as a theological ground for the sacraments and church discipline, focusing on some key disputed points about the relationship between the church covenant and the power of the keys.

Finally, chapter 7 will incorporate the findings of all previous chapters into the final discussion about the legacy of the Rutherford-Hooker dispute. I will attempt to critically assess both success and failure in completing their ecclesiastical projects, particularly from the perspective of each man's own ecclesiastical context.

CHAPTER 2.

**THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE RUTHERFORD-HOOKER
DISPUTE ABOUT THE CHURCH COVENANT**

I. The Church Covenant in New England

This chapter examines the historical context of the Rutherford-Hooker dispute over church covenant, focusing on the polemical background of the controversy. Also, I will provide a brief biographical sketch of Samuel Rutherford and Thomas Hooker with especial reference to the major events, figures and works which might influence on their ecclesiology—particularly their differing views of the church covenant. Before I proceed to these details I will describe what the church covenant meant in the context of seventeenth-century New England.

1. Definitions

What is the Church Covenant? There are at least three ways to define it: It may be defined as a document, a ceremony and a concept or doctrine.

1) Church Covenant as a Document—First, as David A. Weir describes it, the term church covenant may refer to a *written document* or a written statement that is “relatively brief and spells out the initial vision for a New England community or religious body.” It is often found at the beginning of a church record book.¹ The Salem Covenant of 1629 is

¹ David A. Weir, *Early New England: A Covenanted Society* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 2, 191-192. Or, he defines it as the “brief and pithy documents that emerged from an elaborate theological schema that encompassed all of biblical history.” *Ibid.*, 170.

known as the first church covenant ever drawn in New England.² It is also one of the shortest documents:

We Covenant with the Lord and one with another; and doe bind ourselves in the presence of God, to walke together in all his waies, according, as he is pleased to reveale himself unto us in his Blessed word of truth.³

The above simple form of church covenant was enlarged by Rev. Hugh Peter in 1636 when he became pastor of the Salem Church. This Renewed Salem Covenant of 1636 incorporates both the prologue and the *nine articles of vows* into the original document:

Gather my Saints together unto me that have made a Covenant with me by sacrifice. Ps.50:5. Wee whose names are here under written, members of the present Church of Christ in Salem, having found by sad experience how dangerous it is to sitt loose to the Covenant wee make with our God: and how apt wee are to wander into by pathes, even to the looseing of our first aimes in entering into Church fellowship: Doe therefore solemnly in the presence of the Eternall God, both for our own comforts, and those which shall or maye be joined unto us, renewe that Church Covenant... [The original statement of 1629]

And doe more explicitey in the name and feare of God, profess and protest to walke as followeth through the power and grace of our Lord Jesus.

1. first wee avowe the Lord to be our God, and our selves his people in the truth and simplicitie of our spirits.

2. We give our selves to the Lord Jesus Christ, and the word of his grace, fore the teaching, ruleing and sanctifyeing of us in matters of worship, and Conversation, resolveing to cleave to him alone for life and glorie; and oppose all contrarie wayes, canons and constitutions of men in his worship.

3. Wee promise to walke with our brethren and sisters in this Congregation with all watchfullnes and tenderness, avoiding all jelousies, suspitions, backbyteings,

² As for the Pilgrim Fathers at Plymouth, particularly the reason why they did not attempt to draw a church covenant in 1620s, see Champlin Burrage, *The Church Covenant Idea* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1904), 86-87. They, according to Burrage, seem to have considered themselves as the members of the Leyden Church or at least a branch of it. This may be the reason why they needed not any new church covenant until 1676. In 1676, during the times of trouble, a new covenant document was read before the congregation. Still, however, Burrage argues that it should be considered as a renewal of the old covenant—rather than making a new one. *Ibid.*, 87.

³ Williston Walker, *A History of the Congregational Churches in the United States* (New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1894), 104; idem, *The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism* (New York: Scribner, 1893), 116.

censurings, provoakings, secrete risings of spirite against them; but in all offences to follow the rule of the Lord Jesus, and to beare and forbear, give and forgive as he hath taught us.

4. In publick or in private, we will willingly doe nothing to the ofence of the Church but will be willing to take advise for our selves and ours as occasion shalbe presented.

5. Wee will not in the Congregation be forward eyther to shew oure owne gifts or parts in speaking or scrupling, or there discover the fayling of oure brethren or sisters butt attend an orderly cale thereunto; knowning how much the Lord may be dishonoured, and his Gospell in the profession of it, sleighted, by our distempers, and weaknesses in publick.

6. Wee bynd our selves to study the advancement of the Gospell in all truth and peace, both in regard of those that are within, or without, noe way sleighting our sister Churches, but using their Counsell as need shalbe: nor laying a stumbling block before any, noe not the Indians, whose good we desire to promote, and soe to converse, as we may avoid the verrye appearance of evill.

7. We hearbye promise to carrye our selves in all lawfull obedience, to those that are over us, in Church or Commonweale, knowing how well pleasing it will be to the Lord, that they should have encouragement in their places, by our not greiveing theyre spirites through our Irregularities.

8. Wee resolve to approve our selves to the Lord in our particular callings, shunning ydleness as the bane of any state, nor will wee deale hardly, or oppressingly with any, wherein we are the Lord's stewards:

9. alsoe promyseing to our best abilitie to teach our children and servants, the knowledge of God and his will, that they may serve him also; and all this, not by any strength of our owne, but by the Lord Christ, whose bloud we sprinkle this our Covenant made in his name.

This enlarged version of the renewed church covenant of 1636 is quoted in Cotton Mather's *Magnalia Christi Americana* (1702) and Williston Walker's *The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism* (1893).⁴ It outlines the duties of church members towards God and their fellow believers in more detail. It is a fraternal and mutual agreement which, as the prologue indicates, is to be freely endorsed and signed by each church member.

Weir has recently collected numerous other samples of church covenant—mostly

⁴ Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, vol.1 (London: Printed for Thomas Parkburts, 1702), 18-19. Walker, *The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism*, 116-118. The Enlarged Covenant of 1636 that Mather quotes in his book is rather imperfect. Besides, he did not mention the original short version of 1629.

the unpublished copies of the surviving documents of seventeenth-century New England. Below is an example of, what he calls, a “classic example” of church covenant which was drawn up on August 23 in 1636—the same year that the Salem Covenant was renewed—by the First Church of Dorchester-2, Massachusetts Bay Colony. At the bottom of the document seven male members, led by Richard Mather, signed this covenant:

Dorchester. the 23th day of the 6th moneth. Anno. 1636.

Wee whose names are subscribed being called of God to joyne o^{[u]r} selves together in Church Comunion, from o^r hearts acknowledging or owne unworthines of such a priviledge or of the least of Gods mercyes, & likewise acknowledging or disability to keepe coven^t wth God or to p[']fourme any spirituall duty w^{ch} hee calleth us unto, unlesse the Lord Jesus do enable us thereunto by his spirit dwelling in us, Doe in the name of Cht Jesus o^r Lord and in trust and confidence of his free grace assisting us freely Coven^t & bind ourselves solemnly in the

1. presence of God himselfe, his holy Angells and all his servants here present that wee will by his grace assisting us endeavour constantly to walke together as a right ordered Congregac[ti]on of Cht. according to all the holy rules of a church-body rightly established, so farre as wee do already know it to bee o^r duty or shall further und^rstand it out of Gods holy
2. word: Promising first & above all to cleave unto him as o^r chiefe and onley good, and to o^r Lord Jesus Cht as o^r onely spirituall husband and Lord, & o^r onely high priest & Prophet and
3. King. And for the furthering of us to keepe this blessed Comunion wth God and wth his sonne Jesus Cht and to grow up more fully therein, wee do likewise promise by his grace assisting us, to endeavour the establishing amongst o^r selves of all his holy ordinances w^{ch} hee hath appointed for his churches here on earth, and to observe all and every of them in such sort as shall bee most agreeable to his will; opposing to the utmost of o^r power, whatsoever is contrary thereunto, & bewayling fro o^{[u]r} hearts o^{[u]r} owne neglect thereof in former tyme, and our polluting o^r selves therein wth any sinfull inventions of men.
4. And lastly wee do hereby Coven^t & p[']mise to further to o^r utmost power, the best . . . spirituall good of each other, and of all and every one that may become members of this Congregacon, by mutuall Instruction reprehension, exhortacon, consolacon, and spirituall watchfulnes over one another for good; and to bee subject in and for the Lord to all the Administracons and Censures of the Congregacon, so farre as the same shall bee guided according to the rules of Gods most holy word.

Of the integrity of o^r heartes herein wee call God the searcher of all hearts to witnesse; beseeching him so to blesse us in this and all o^r Enterprises, as wee shall sincerely endeavour by the assistance of his grace to observe this holy Coven^t

and all the braunches of it inviolably for ever; and where wee shall fayle there to wayte upon the Lord Jesus for pardon and for acceptance and healing for his names sake.

[Seven male signers]

... The names of such as since the constituting or gathering of the church at Dorchester have been added to the church and joyned thereunto as members of the same body, by profession of faith and Repentance and taking hould of the Covent before the Congregacon; viz. . . .⁵

The above sample, according to Weir, is a typical covenant formulary that the majority of churches in early colonial New England followed. Its outline is summarized by him as follows:

1. Preamble: a. Purpose b. Witnesses
2. Acceptance of and submission to God as God
3. Submission and cleaving to Jesus Christ, particularly in his three offices of prophet, priest, and king
4. Agreement to walk with the brethren in the church and to keep a holy watch over one another
5. Submission to the government of the church; at times the church covenanted to watch over the member
6. Conclusion⁶

This formulary did not vary significantly in the seventeenth century. However, Weir's research has revealed that some confessional statements—mostly taken from the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and the *Cambridge Platform* of 1648—tended to be incorporated into the prologues or epilogues of the church covenant as the religious environment began to change and become diverse in the middle of the seventeenth

⁵ The original Source: Dorchester, MA, First Church, *Records of the First Church at Dorchester in New England, 1636-1734*, 1-2. Quoted in Weir, *Early New England: A Covenanted Society*, 153-54.

⁶ *Ibid.* For the detailed discussion of the church covenant as a document, see Weir's *Early New England: A Covenanted Society*, 139-220. For the list of seventeenth-century towns and churches that he researched, read "Appendix" I & II, 243-303. His bibliographical essay (304-354) is also very helpful.

century.⁷

2) *Church Covenant as a Ceremony* — Second, the church covenant may be defined as a *practice* or *ceremony* for establishing a new church or for getting the membership of a particular congregation, which was implemented throughout New England in the seventeenth century—particularly among both Separatists and non-Separating Puritans. By attending the ceremony of this special engagement, all participants are supposed to be informed of their rights and privileges. Also, they pledge themselves to a faithful performance of their duties as church members.⁸

Samuel Rutherford tends to emphasize this ceremonial aspect of the church covenant when he defines it as “an explicit, and vocall or professed Covenant,” which New England churches “require of all persons come to age, before they be received members of the Church.”⁹ A more detailed description of this ceremony—for establishing a new congregational church—is summarized by Rutherford as follows:

A. Preparation

A number of Christians, with a gifted or experienced Elder meet often together.. about the things of God, and performe some duties of prayer, and spirituall conference together, till a sufficient company of them be well satisfied, in the spirituall good estate one of another.. as living stones, fit to be laid on the Lords spirituall Temple.

B. The Church-Covenanting Day

[1] They, having acquainted the Christian Magistrate, and nearest adjoyning Churches, of their purpose of entering into Church-fellowship, convene in a day

⁷ Weir, *Early New England: A Covenanted Society*, 191-220.

⁸ Thomas Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline* (London: A. M. for John Bellamy, 1648), 48-49.

⁹ Samuel Rutherford, *The Due Right of Presbyteries* (London: E. Griffin for Richard Whittaker & Andrew Crook, 1644), 84.

kept with fasting and praying, and preaching, [then] one being chosen with common consent of the whole, in name of the rest, standeth up, and propundeth the covenant, in the.. four Articles [as follows]

1. A publique vocall declaration of the manner and soundnesse of their conversion, and that either in continued speech.. or in answer to questions propounded by the Elders.

2. They require a publick profession of their faith, concerning the articles of their religion, the foresaid way also.

3. An expresse vocall covenanting by oath, to walke in that faith; and to submit... themselves to God, and one to another, in his feare; and to walke in a professed subjection to all his holy Ordinances, cleaving one to another, as fellow members of the same body in brotherly love and holy watchfulnesse unto mutuall edification in Christ Jesus.

4. And a covenanting, not to depart from the said Church, without the consent thereof.

[2] All the rest declare their joint consent in this covenant, either by silence, or word of mouth, or writing.

[3] The brethren of other Churches, some specials, in name of the rest, reach out to them the right hand of fellowship, exhorting them to stand stedfast in the Lord.

[4] Prayers made to God for pardon and acceptance of the people.

[5] A Psalm is sung.¹⁰

C. After

*In the following weeks, months, and years the church covenant document was signed by other men and women who joined the gathered church.*¹¹

Where did Rutherford get such detailed information about church-covenanting practice? The major two sources that Rutherford used here are Richard Mather's *An Apologie of the Churches in New England for Church Covenant* (1643) and John Cotton's *The Way of the Churches of Christ in New England* (1645).¹² Given his conviction that the above ceremony is *newly* practiced by their Congregational churches, Rutherford

¹⁰ I rearranged the order without altering the text except abbreviation, headings and numbers in brackets. Rutherford, first, deals with the above "Four Articles" before he describes the general order. Rutherford, *The Due Right of Presbyteries*, 84-85.

¹¹ Weir, *Early New England: A Covenanted Society*, 137.

¹² Rutherford, *The Due Right of Presbyteries*, 78-139. Particularly see his footnotes in page 84. Mather's *Apology* is sometimes quoted under another title, *A Discourse Touching the Covenant between God and Men, and especially concerning Church-Covenant*.

considers it simply as a human invention, which is unknown to the Scripture: “we hold that such a *Church-covenant* is a conceit destitute of all authority of Gods Word, *Old* or *New Testament*, and therefore to be rejected as a way of mens devising.”¹³

However, both Mather and Cotton would not agree that their church-covenanting practice lacks any biblical support. Also, they do not believe that the church covenant should be regarded simply as a newly invented human document or a mere ceremony. Instead, they emphasize the theological foundation of the church covenant, which is firmly rooted in the biblical doctrine of the covenant. In doing so, they show another way to define the church covenant.

3) *Church Covenant as a Doctrine* — The church covenant, as both Mather and Cotton would agree, may also be defined as a *concept* or a *doctrine*, which is closely interconnected with the concept of the Covenant of Grace. Mather, for example, identifies the church covenant with the Covenant of Grace, insofar as the latter is made in a “generall and publick” way between God and “a company jointly together”—as in the cases of Exodus 19:5-6, Deuteronomy 29:9-10, and Jeremiah 50:5¹⁴:

The Covenant taken thus is either the Covenant of works, or the Covenant of grace: And again the Covenant may be considered, first as it is personall, private and particular, between God and one particular soule... Secondly, it is generall and publick of a company jointly together, of which this Text [Jeremiah] 50.5. seems most properly to speake...¹⁵

¹³ Rutherford, *The Due Right of Presbyteries*, 88.

¹⁴ Richard Mather, *An Apologie of the Churches in New England for Church Covenant* (London: R.O. and G.D. [and T.P. and M.S.] for Benjamin Allen, 1643), 2-3.

¹⁵ Mather, *An Apologie of the Churches in New England*, 2-3.

To be sure, Mather argues, there should be no difference between the two covenants in the matter of “substance of the things promised.”¹⁶ Nevertheless, Mather proceeds to discuss four major differences between the Covenant of Grace and the church covenant as follows:

First, the one is of one Christian in particular [the Covenant of Grace], the other [the church covenant] of a company jointly together.
 Secondly, if right Order be observed, a man ought not to enter into Church-Covenant, till he be in Covenant with God before, in respect of his personal estate.
 Thirdly, The one is usually done in private, as in a mans Closet between the Lord and his soule, and the other in some publick assembly.
 Fourthly, The one in these days is of such duties as the Gospel requires of every Christian as a Christian, the other of such duties as the Gospel requires of every Church and the members thereof.¹⁷

Like Mather. Cotton also explains the church covenant in terms of the Covenant of Grace between God and his people. Thus, he argues,

When the Lord entereth into covenant with his people, that is with his Church, his Church either expressly, or by silent consent covenanteth with him, and also one with another, to yeeld professed subjection to him.¹⁸

Cotton, quoting Jeremiah 50:51, even calls the church covenant “the everlasting covenant.”¹⁹ Both Mather’s and Cotton’s views of the church covenant as an ecclesiastical doctrine seem to be in line with Thomas Hooker’s doctrine of the church covenant. Like Mather and Cotton, Hooker also understands the church covenant as the

¹⁶ Mather, *An Apologie of the Churches in New England*, 3.

¹⁷ Mather, *An Apologie of the Churches in New England*, 3.

¹⁸ John Cotton, *The Way of the Churches of Christ in New England* (London: Matthew Simmons, 1645), 61. Particularly see page 59-64.

¹⁹ Cotton, *The Way of the Churches of Christ in New England*, 104.

Covenant of Grace “in the broader sense.” Furthermore, Hooker emphasizes that the church covenant must be considered as the *formal cause* of a visible church, without which no visible church can be established. This will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters.²⁰

2. Secondary Scholarship on the Church Covenant

The above three ways to approach the church covenant—as a document, practice and doctrine—indicate that the issue of the church covenant may deserve scholarly attention from various perspectives. Nevertheless, as Weir rightly observes, it has been dealt with, rather, in a cursory manner and its scope is sometimes either too limited or too broad to account for the theological depth and complexity of the subject.²¹

The first major scholarly work in the twentieth century is Campline Burrage’s *The Church Covenant: Its Origins and Its Development* (1904). Burrage surveys the idea of the church covenant among diverse groups, including the Anabaptists, the Scottish reformers, the Brownists, the Independents, the Congregationalists and American Baptists. L. J. Trinterud criticizes Burrage for attempting to trace the origins of the church covenant idea in English Puritanism to an Anabaptist source, which “fails to take account of the indisputable, widespread interest, in both the Rhineland and England...in the covenant theology, prior to any possible influence from Anabaptist sources.”²²

Trinterud’s criticism, however, is not well-founded because Burrage did not attempt to connect the covenant idea of the Puritans directly to that of the Anabaptists as

²⁰ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 12-14, 55-56, 58, 69-70, part III, 24-25.

²¹ Weir, *Early New England: A Covenanted Society*, 146.

²² L. J. Trinterud, “The Origins of Puritanism,” *Church History* XX (1951), 56, footnote 28.

its source. Burrage's point is simply that the latter was one of the earliest groups during the early period of the Reformation who were "evidently acquainted with the idea."²³ In his later work, *The Early English Dissenters* (1912), Burrage clearly denies such a link between the two groups: "It is now evident that the English and Scotch did not borrow the Church Covenant idea from the Anabaptists"—nor from Robert Browne's—because, as Burrage rightly points out, "the idea had been employed in England from the time of Queen Mary, and in Scotland still earlier."²⁴

The ultimate source of the church covenant idea, for Burrage, is both the Scripture—especially "the Old Testament covenant idea"—and the early church's practice of taking a church oath—particularly in Asia Minor.²⁵ Again, the Christian practice of church oaths seems to have been influenced by the Jewish ceremony of having the gentile proselytes take an oath to avoid "blasphemy, idolatry, murder, uncleanness, theft, disobedience toward the authorities, and the eating of flesh with its blood." This requirement, which was imposed upon the gentile proselytes in Jewish tradition, Burrage argues, seems to have continuity with the well-known decision of the first Jerusalem council of Acts 15:19-20, 29. It imposed similar requirements on the early gentile Christians in Antioch.²⁶ Still, however, Burrage has to admit that the very idea of the

²³ Burrage, *The Church Covenant Idea*, 13, 26-27.

²⁴ Burrage, *The English Dissenters: In the Light of Recent Research (1550-1641)*, vol.1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912), 97-98. Dr. Henry Martyn Dexter—whose chief concern is the literature of the English Anabaptists and Baptists before 1745—seems to be one of those who believe that Robert Browne is the source of the covenant idea for the Puritans. See *The English Dissenters*, vii, 97.

²⁵ For example, Burrage points out the well-known letter of Pliny to the Emperor Trajan, written about the year A.D.112, where Pliny mentions on early Christians' practice of taking an oath, which, Burrage argues, "resembles the earliest church covenants of later times, though, of course, the term covenant was not used." Burrage, *The Church Covenant Idea*, ix-xi, 13. Quote is from page x.

²⁶ The early gentile Christians are required to abstain from the pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from what is strangled, and from blood. Burrage, *The Church Covenant Idea*, ix-xi.

church covenant itself “does not seem definitely to appear in the New Testament.”²⁷

While the major contribution of Burrage’s study is that he surveys the earliest samples of the church covenant idea among the diverse groups, nevertheless, it also seems to become the weakness of his study. Weir criticizes Burrage for not providing interpretive framework for those good documents nor exploring the detailed analysis of them.²⁸ Moreover, the scope of his discussion seems to be further limited by his chief interest in the Baptist church tradition.

Another major scholarly work on the church covenant is to be found in Perry Miller’s groundbreaking work *The New England Mind* (1939), in which he devotes a chapter to the church covenant.²⁹ Miller is one of the earliest scholars who understand the church covenant as a *theory* or an ecclesiastical *doctrine*.³⁰ Also, he seems to be well aware of the close relationship between the Covenant of Grace and the church covenant: “the abstract theology of” the former, Miller argues, becomes “the concrete covenants of churches.”³¹ Moreover, Miller seems to be convinced that the key difference between New England Puritanism and other Puritanism must be found in the former’s ecclesiastical doctrine:

²⁷ Burrage, *The Church Covenant Idea*, ix.

²⁸ Weir, *Early New England: A Covenanted Society*, 147.

²⁹ Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (New York: Macmillan, 1939). Particularly, see chapter XV, 432-462.

³⁰ Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century*, 443.

³¹ Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century*, 458. Or, Miller even asserts that New England Puritans identified the covenant of grace with the church covenant: “Therefore in their church polity they identified the Covenant of Grace, which was of the soul, with the covenant of the church, which was of the community.” *Ibid.*, 461.

This ecclesiastical doctrine was the unique and distinguishing feature of New England Puritanism, setting it off not alone from Anglicanism but from other Puritanism and from continental Calvinism. The fact that all except five or six of the New England ministers were seeking this particular “due forme” of church government indicates that the migration was not alone propelled by political or economic adversity... but was undertaken as a positive crusade for an idea.³²

The very heart of this ecclesiastical doctrine, Miller argues, is the church covenant.³³

While he seems to have successfully drawn attention to the significance of the church covenant, some would argue that Miller tends to overemphasize the uniqueness of it, considering it as a *peculiar* establishment. For Miller, the church covenant was a unique product of New England Puritans who “used *logic* to derive its principles from the Bible, *physics* to explain its place in the natural world, *psychology* to prove its suitability to man.”³⁴ Though the doctrine of the church covenant was claimed to be based on the Bible, nevertheless, the more important foundation, Miller argues, was logic or the law of reason and nature:

The colonial leaders believed that they had Scripture on their side, yet careful analysis of their arguments shows again and again that the polity was established upon the Bible only at several removes, only after the Bible had been pressed by logic to yield up deductions which are not always obvious in the texts, or else that it was established openly upon the laws of reason and nature, upon the political ideals of contract and government by consent.³⁵

Accordingly, Miller believes that the theorists of the church covenant were logicians who “absolutely assured that... their logic was invincible” and “erected a commonwealth and

³² Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century*, 433.

³³ Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century*, 435.

³⁴ Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century*, 434.

³⁵ Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century*, 461.

a state church upon deductions.”³⁶

However, as this dissertation will demonstrate, Congregationalist leaders in New England would not have agreed with Miller’s assessment. The authors of major ecclesiological works published in the seventeenth-century New England³⁷ did not actually attempt to replace the primacy of Scripture with that of human logic, nor the biblical concept of covenant with the political idea of contract. Even in their major polemical works about ecclesiology, where they do use human reason and logic, the major part of their discussion always revolves around the question of how to find the original meanings of the biblical texts, characters, events and idea.³⁸ The Rutherford-Hooker dispute is a good example, in which, as it will be discussed later, both men try to show the biblical foundation of the church covenant (Hooker) and of a Presbytery (Rutherford). In doing so, they do not over-emphasize the role of human logic. Nor do they believe that their own interpretation of the biblical texts should be logically invincible. Instead, each of them wishes to demonstrate that either the Congregational church (Hooker) or the Presbyterian church (Rutherford) is a biblically *warranted* form of church government, which will be discussed in chapter 5 and 6.³⁹

The most recent scholarly work on the church covenant of early New England is

³⁶ Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century*, 439.

³⁷ Particularly, see both authors and works cited in the section, “IV. The Polemical Context of the Rutherford-Hooker Dispute” in this chapter.

³⁸ As for the detailed discussion of the role of Scripture in the seventeen century debates on ecclesiology, see Sungho Lee, “All Subjects of the Kingdom of Christ: John Owen’s Conceptions of Christian Unity and Schism,” (Ph.D. diss., Calvin Theological Seminary, 2007), 66-79. Also see chapter 4 for Owen’s view of Scripture as “the final judge” in the matter of ecclesiology.

³⁹ For example, the full title of Hooker’s *Survey* seems to indicate this point: *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline: Wherein The Way of The Churches Of New England Is Warranted Out Of The Word* (London: A. M. for John Bellamy, 1648).

David A. Weir's *Early New England: A Covenanted Society* (2005). Criticizing the limited scope of the previous studies of Burrage, Miller and others,⁴⁰ Weir argues that no systematic and methodical study of the extant church covenants has been attempted so far.⁴¹ Accordingly, he attempts to “systematically examined the formation of every civil and religious institution” founded in New England before 1708,⁴² focusing on both the fifty-four surviving documents of the church covenant and one hundred twenty two samples of civil covenant, which he has collected from the archives of local churches and towns in the thirteen colonies. His careful analysis of the numerous samples of the church covenant reveals that New England Congregationalism developed a “covenant formulary,” which, Weir argues, was very consistent throughout the seventeenth century. The major pattern of such a covenant formulary is summarized by him as follows:

The covenant formulary began with a preamble, outlining the purpose of the covenant and naming the earthly and heavenly witnesses to the covenant. It then usually moved to an acceptance of God as God, and then to an acceptance of the work of Christ, particularly in his office as prophet, priest, and king. The next step in the church covenant formulary was the submission of the members one to another in the “holy watch,” and then finally a promise to submit to the governance of the church. The church covenant usually concluded with a final commitment to the terms of the covenant and a reminder to the reader of the

⁴⁰ Particularly, Weir deals with two other works: William Eleazar Barton, *Congregational Creeds and Covenants* (Chicago: Advance Publishing Company, 1917) and Charles W. Deweese, “The Origin, Development, and Use of Church Covenants in Baptist History,” (Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1973). Barton’s study is greatly indebted to both Williston Walker and Burrage. Accordingly, Barton also collected the major documents of Congregational creeds and covenants. The scope of his study—which covers the entire history of the Congregationalism—seems to be too broad to account for the early New Englanders’ doctrine of the church covenant. Like Barton, the primary interest of Deweese is also in the Baptist tradition. Thus, he only devotes a few pages to the subject of the church covenant in the Baptist churches of early New England. See Weir’s review of both works. Weir, *Early New England: A Covenanted Society*, 3-4, 146-149. Deweese’s other work *Baptist Church Covenants* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1990) is also limited to Baptist churches in the world history—only briefly dealing with the church covenant in the seventeenth century New England.

⁴¹ Weir, *Early New England: A Covenanted Society*, 149 [Emphasis added].

⁴² Weir, *Early New England: A Covenanted Society*, 3.

documents that this was being done in the presence of God, his holy angels, and the congregation.⁴³

To be sure, not only unity—as shown in the above “covenant formulary”—but also some diverse forms appeared as dissenters, such as the Quakers, the Anglicans, and the Baptists began to establish their own congregations in New England. Responding to religious diversity, the Congregational churches tended to incorporate some written confessions of faith into the original documents when they decided to renew them. Accordingly, the major pattern of the church covenant moved in the direction of diversification while that of the civil covenant became much more uniform or standardized as the century passed—particularly after 1660. In short, the covenant in the New World, Weir concludes, was “an instrument of formation: the foundational covenants of the civil realm and the church laid the basis for the community.”⁴⁴

Most scholars would not disagree with E. Brooks Holifield’s evaluation that Weir’s book provides “the most detailed study of the civil and church covenants of colonial New England that we have ever had.”⁴⁵ However, the strength of his research may also become a shortcoming, because, as Timothy L. Wood rightly points out, he tries to cover too much material in too little space. As a result, his generalizations sometimes may sound incomplete and superficial.⁴⁶

Furthermore, perhaps, because of his preoccupation with the *documents* of “the church covenants themselves,” he tends to fail to connect those written statements of the

⁴³ Weir, *Early New England: A Covenanted Society*, 230.

⁴⁴ Weir, *Early New England: A Covenanted Society*, 221-242. Quote is from 221.

⁴⁵ See the back cover of Weir’s book.

⁴⁶ Timothy L. Wood’s book review on Weir, *Early New England: A Covenanted Society*, in *The New England Quarterly*, 79:3 (Sept. 2006): 485-487.

church covenant to the more detailed discussion of the theological foundation of them. For example, he ignores the Puritan covenant theology and its significant role in shaping the ecclesiastical doctrine of church covenant. Also, Weir does not discuss the scriptural foundation of the church covenant, which constituted a major point of contention between the New England Congregationalists and the Presbyterian divines in England. Nor does he examine how the concept of church covenant functions as the theological basis of other ecclesiastical issues—including the church membership, sacraments, church discipline, and the power of the keys. These issues are very significant in order to better understand the theological as well as the practical aspects of the church covenant.

In this sense, the Rutherford-Hooker dispute may be worth considering because the major part of the dispute has revolved around all of the above ecclesiastical issues. Before we proceed to discuss the Rutherford-Hooker dispute in more detail, I will first examine who they are and how the dispute between them evolved in the broader polemical context—focusing on the major ecclesiastical works published by them and others in the early seventeenth century.

II. Thomas Hooker and New England Congregationalism

1. A Short Biography

Thomas Hooker⁴⁷ was born in 1586 at Marfield in County of Leicestershire,

⁴⁷ For biographical information about Thomas Hooker, see the following works: Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana or the Ecclesiastical History of New England*, vol.1, Book III (London: Printed for Thomas Parkburts, 1702), 57-68; Edward W. Hooker, *The Life of Thomas Hooker* (Boston: Massachusetts Sabbath School Society, 1870); George L. Walker, *History of the First Church in Hartford, 1633-1883* (Hartford: Brown & Gross, 1884); idem, *Thomas Hooker Preacher. Founder. Democrat* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1891); Warren Seymour Archibald, *Thomas Hooker* (New Haven: Published for the Tercentenary Commission by the Yale University Press, 1933); George H. Williams et al., *Thomas Hooker:*

England. In 1604, he began his theological study at Emmanuel College, Cambridge and, after graduation, became a lecturer at Chelmsford. In 1621, he married Susannah Garbrand and had five children, two of whom died in infancy. Their first child, Johanna, would later marry Thomas Shepard. In 1629, when he was persecuted by Archbishop William Laud because of his non-conforming views and teachings, he had already become a well-known Puritan preacher and leader. He escaped to Holland and stayed more than three years working as a minister in the cities of Amsterdam, Delft, and Rotterdam. In 1633, he sailed for America along with his friends Samuel Stone and John Cotton. They arrived at Massachusetts Bay Colony. He became one of the founding fathers of New England. In 1636 he founded Hartford, Connecticut and helped to draft the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut in 1639. In 1642, Hooker, John Davenport and John Cotton were invited to Westminster Assembly but they declined to attend.⁴⁸ Instead, wishing to influence the Assembly, Hooker published two works on the Lord's Prayer and a catechism.⁴⁹ He continued as a minister of the Hartford church until his death on July 7, 1647. So far, about thirty-eight works of Hooker's sermons, treatises, and letters

Writings In England and Holland 1586-1633 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975); Frank C. Shuffelton, *Thomas Hooker 1586-1647* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977); Sargent Bush, *The Writings of Thomas Hooker: Spiritual Adventure in Two Worlds* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980); John H. Ball III, *Chronicling the Soul's Windings: Thomas Hooker and His Morphology of Conversion*. (Lanham and London: University Press of America, 1992).

⁴⁸ According to John Winthrop, "Mr. Hooker liked not the business, nor thought it any sufficient call for them to go 3,000 miles to agree with three men, (meaning those three ministers who were for independency, and did solicit in the parliament, etc)." While Davenport declined the invitation because his "church had no other officer but himself," Cotton "apprehended strongly a call of God in it." Soon, however, other letters came from Mr. Peter and Mr. Welde in England in which they informed them of "the breach between the king and parliament" and, accordingly, "advise[d] them to stay till they heard further." John Winthrop, *Winthrop's Journal: History of New England, 1630-1649*, edited by James Kendall Hosmer, vol.2 (New York: Scribner, 1908), 71-72.

⁴⁹ Hooker's three works were published in 1645 in London: *A Brief Exposition of the Lord's Prayer and Heaven's Treasury Opened in a Fruitfull Exposition of the Lord's Prayer; An Exposition of the Principles of Religion*. There is no evidence, however, that these works of Hooker had a direct influence on the Westminster Assembly.

have been published. Hooker was called “*vir solertis et acerrimi judicci*” (a man of profound and acute judgment) by his old friend John Cotton and praised as the *Luther* of New England or “the light of the Western Churches” by Cotton Mather.⁵⁰

As this brief summary of Hooker’s biography indicates, his life may be divided into three periods according to the place he lived: England, Holland, and New England. Hooker’s ecclesiology has evolved over decades especially through his interaction with several important figures, theological works, and his own field experience in all three places. The most significant events or persons of each period—that might have influenced Hooker’s view of the church—are summarized as follows:

2. Thomas Hooker’s Life and His Congregationalism

1) The England Period, 1586-1630 — The major part of Hooker’s adulthood in England was influenced by the absolute monarch of the Stuart dynast which was supported by the episcopacy. The theological orientation of Emmanuel College, however, was quite favorable for his study of Reformed theology. Particularly his preaching style might be influenced by William Perkins, a late Puritan hero at Cambridge. The early formation of his ecclesiastical views could be impacted by William Ames, who, as an international scholar, received Christ’s College Fellowship from 1601 to 1610 and became a chief spokesman for non-separating Independents. After graduation, perhaps in the year between 1618 and 1620, Hooker began his Puritan ministry as a lecturer—in connection with the church of St. Mary—at Chelmsford, in Essex, which was very successful. On May 20, 1629, Samuel Collins, Vicar of Braintree, wrote a letter to Dr. Duck, William

⁵⁰ Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana or the Ecclesiastical History of New England*, vol.1, Book III (London: Printed for Thomas Parkburts, 1702), 57-68. Mather calls Hooker and Cotton the Luther and Melanchthon of the New England.

Laud's Chancellor, which indicates the popularity of Hooker:

I have lived in Essex to see many changes, and have seene the people idolizing many new ministers and lecturers, but this man [Hooker] surpasses them all for learning and some other considerable partes and . . . gains more and far greater followers than all before him. . . . If my Lord tender his owne future peace . . . let him connive at Mr. Hooker's departure.⁵¹

Soon, Hooker was compelled to lay down his lectureship at Chelmsford and to retire to a small hamlet, Little Baddow. On July 10, 1630, he was ordered by Laud to appear before the High Commission Court. Fortunately, right before he was arrested, Hooker could flee to Holland.

2) *The Holland Period, 1630-1633: Paget, Forbes, and Ames* — Hooker's stay at Holland, though short, was very meaningful for Hooker. During this period, he met three important figures who had a great influence on the development of Hooker's Congregationalism.

The first person was Rev. John Paget who initially welcomed and invited Hooker as a co-pastor when he arrived at Amsterdam. Soon, however, Paget severely criticized Hooker's position in willingness to accord fellowship to the former Brownists. To prevent the congregation's plan to make Hooker the new assistant pastor from succeeding, Paget proposed *Twenty Questions*, written from his Presbyterian perspective, which Hooker was supposed to answer satisfactorily. Hooker's response was published under the title of "Answers to the XX Questions by John Paget" (1631). It is one of the earliest works in which his Congregationalist viewpoint is revealed. For example, on the one hand, he argues that a particular congregation should have power from Christ to call a minister

⁵¹ This letter is quoted in George L. Walker, *Thomas Hooker Preacher. Founder. Democrat*, 45-46.

“without any derived power from a Classis.”⁵² On the other hand, however, Hooker states in a very explicit way that his view is different from the Brownists:

To separate from the faithful assemblies and churches in England as no true churches is an error in judgment, and a sin in practice, held and maintained by the Brownists, and therefore to communicate with them, either in their opinion or practice, is sinful and utterly unlawful.⁵³

Hooker’s above statement, unfortunately, did not remove all suspicion of Paget and the municipal classis. As a result, Hooker was not permitted to preach as a co-pastor of Paget.

By November, Hooker moved to Delft where he became the assistant to John Forbes (1568-1634), a pastor of the Prinsenhof church, between November, 1631 and March, 1633. Hooker’s fruitful ministry with Forbes seems to be very significant particularly because Forbes was a Scottish Presbyterian pastor. Unlike Paget, Forbes could become such a faithful co-worker with Hooker that Cotton Mather even compares their close fellowship with the relationship between “*Basil and Nazianzen, They were but one Soul in two Bodies.*”⁵⁴

Two years later, by the end of 1633, Hooker was called to Rotterdam to assist William Ames who also fled to Holland from the persecution of Bishop Bancroft. Hooker assisted Ames in the preparation of his book *A Fresh Suit Against Humane Ceremonies in God’s Worship* (1633) and wrote “The Preface” —which is ninety-nine

⁵² Hooker recommends that a particular congregation should “crave the approbation of the Classis,” if she freely combined herself with the classis: “*Ergo*: [I hold] that, if by mutual consent the congregation hath freely combined itself with the Classis, they shall do piously and expediently: freely to crave the approbation of the Classis.” Hooker, “John Paget’s XX Questions (Propositions) and Thomas Hooker’s Answer,” in *Writings in England and Holland, 1626-1633*, edited by George H. Williams (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), 277-91. Quote is from page 284 and 285.

⁵³ Hooker, “John Paget’s XX Questions (Propositions) and Thomas Hooker’s Answer,” 278.

⁵⁴ Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, vol.1, Book III, 61.

pages—of it. According to Mather, Ames esteemed Hooker very highly: “though he [Ames] had been acquainted with many Scholars of diverse nations, yet he never met with Mr. Hooker's equal, either for Preaching or for Disputing.”⁵⁵ Hooker also respected Ames. Particularly, Hooker studied his major work, *Medulla Theologia*, (Franeker, 1623; Amsterdam, 1627; London, 1629) and, as Cotton Mather testifies, understood it thoroughly.⁵⁶ It seems to be obvious that Hooker's doctrine of the church covenant was influenced by Ames' view of it—as expressed in his *Medulla Theologia*, lib.1. cap.14. Ames defines a particular congregation as a “society of believers” which is joined together by a “special bond”: “*Congregatio vel Ecclesia huiusmodi particularis, est societas speciali vinculo inter se conjunctorum.*”⁵⁷ Thus, without such a special bond, Ames continues, believers cannot make a particular church:

Believers doe not make a particular church, though perhaps there be many of them that meete together, and live in the same place, unless they be joined together by some special bond among themselves.⁵⁸

The above statements indicate that Ames considers this “special bond” as a foundation of a visible particular church. Later, Hooker would further develop Ames' concept into a

⁵⁵ Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, vol.1, Book III, 61.

⁵⁶ The early English translation of *Medulla Theologiae* was published in London under the title, *The Marrow of Sacred Divinity, Drawne Out of the Holy Scriptures, and the Interpreters Thereof* (London: Edward Griffin for Henry Overton, 1642). Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, vol.1, Book III, 61. Matthew Nethenus et als., *William Ames*, trans. By Douglas Horton (Cambridge: Harvard Divinity School Library, 1965), 62-63, 148.

⁵⁷ “Such a congregation or particular Church is a society of believers joyned together by a speciall band among themselves.” William Ames, *The Marrow of Sacred Divinity*, 1.32.6. See also 1.32.14; 1.39.20.

⁵⁸ [Translated by Richard Mather] The original Latin statement is “*Fides non constituunt Ecclesiam particularem, quamvis simul forsam plures in eodem loco convenient aut vivant, nisi speciali vinculo inter sese conjungantur.*” Ames, *Medulla Theologiae*, 1.32.14. Richard Mather quotes the same passage in his *Church Government and Church Covenant Discussed* (London: R.O. and G.D. [and T.P. and M.S.] for Benjamin Allen, 1643), 41-42.

more detailed ecclesiological doctrine of church covenant, which will be discussed in chapters 5 and 6.

3) *The New England Period, 1633-1647* — During the final stage of his life in New World, he made special effort to promote the New England Way, or Congregationalism. In England, many non-conforming Puritans took the direction toward the Presbyterian form of church government, while their brethren in New England had established their churches according to the Congregationalist model since their arrival in the early 1630s. With his brethren such as John Cotton, Samuel Stone, Richard Mather and many others, Hooker contributed to the development—both ideological and practical—of Congregationalism in New England. In 1643, he served as a moderator of the assembly which consisted in the ministers at Cambridge in order to reaffirm Congregational principles over against Presbyterianism. To be sure, the Presbyterian tendency of the Westminster Assembly in England seemed to have influenced some ministers in Newbury—including Rev. Thomas Parker and James Noyes. As the tendency of English Puritanism became more strengthened in the course of Parliament's war against the King, Hooker and other Congregationalist seemed to feel the need to further consolidate their ecclesiological position. In this context, the Cambridge Synod of 1646-48 was convened and produced *A Platform of Church-Discipline*, which would be known as the New England Way. It clearly affirmed the basic principles of Congregationalism. Unfortunately, during the period of adjournment of the synod—due to an “epidemic sickness”—Hooker became one of the victims of the disease and died on July 7, 1637.

In sum, the brief survey of all three periods in Hooker's life seems to indicate

three significant points, which are relevant to our discussion about his dispute with Rutherford. First, Hooker's view of the church has evolved over time. Thus, any readers of Hooker's *Survey* (1648) should not be disappointed to find that Hooker's *Answers to the XX Questions by John Paget* (1631) does not contain much clear, sophisticated and detailed information about his ecclesiological doctrine.

Second, Hooker's view of the relationship between Congregationalism and Presbyterianism might be influenced by his own first-hand experience. On the one hand, his conflict with Paget and classis could intensify his negative view of the Presbyterian form of church government. On the other hand, the successful years of co-ministry with Forbes at Delft may account for Hooker's good intention to find similarities between his church and Rutherford's Presbyterian church, enumerating more than ten significant points between them—as shown in the Preface of his *Survey*.⁵⁹

Finally, his dispute with Rutherford must be viewed from the broader historical—both religio-political and theological—context of England and New England. Especially, in order to better understand the theological underpinning of the Rutherford-Hooker dispute, one must approach it from the broader polemical context in which their controversy developed and, finally, came to clear expression.

III. Samuel Rutherford and Scottish Presbyterianism

1. A Short Biography

Samuel Rutherford (1600-61),⁶⁰ a Scottish “champion of Presbyterianism,” was

⁵⁹ See “The Preface” in Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 11-12.

⁶⁰ For biographical information about Rutherford, see Thomas Murray, *The Life of Rev. Samuel Rutherford*

born in 1600 in Nisbet, Roxburghshire, Scotland.⁶¹ He studied at University of Edinburgh and became a Professor of Humanity (Latin) at Edinburgh in 1623. His theological study began in 1625. In two years, he was called to be a pastor of Anwoth church in Kirkcudbrightshire where he ministered faithfully for a decade. During his years in Anwoth, unfortunately, he lost his first wife Euphame and all children but one daughter due to diseases. Also, Rutherford suffered from religio-political persecution. Because of his opposition of Episcopacy, he was summoned to appear before the Court of High Commission at Edinburgh in 1630. In July 1636, again, Rutherford was called before the High Court and, after trial, was deprived of ministerial office, forbidden to preach in Scotland, and confined to Aberdeen. In 1638, Charles I's attempt to impose Laudian Anglo-Catholicism upon the Church of Scotland led to the signing of the National Covenant. In the course of struggle, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland restored Presbyterianism and made Rutherford Professor of Divinity at St. Andrews in 1638. In 1640, he married Jean M'Math, a pious woman, and had six children, all of whom died before their father. During the period between November 1643 and October 1647, Rutherford attended the Westminster Assembly with other five Scottish commissioners. His influence was significant, particularly in making the Shorter Catechism and supporting the Presbyterian form of church government among the English divines. In 1644, Rutherford's major ecclesiastical work, *The Due Right of*

(Edinburgh: William Oliphant & Sons, 1828); Andrew Thomson, *Samuel Rutherford* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1884); Robert Gilmour, *Samuel Rutherford: A Study Biographical and Somewhat critical, in the History of the Scottish Covenants* (Edinburgh: Oliphant Anderson & Ferrier, 1904); J.M. Brentnall, *Samuel Rutherford in Aberdeen* (Inverness: John Eccies, c.1981); Faith Cook, *Samuel Rutherford and His Friends* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1992); John Coffey, *Politics, Religion and the British Revolutions: The Mind of Samuel Rutherford* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1997); Kingsley G. Rendell, *Samuel Rutherford: A New Biography of the Man & his Ministry* (Fearn, Ross-shire: Christian Focus, 2003).

⁶¹ Rendell, *Samuel Rutherford: A New Biography*, 75. Rendell also calls him "the most prominent protagonist of Presbyterianism." *Ibid*, 89.

Presbyteries or A Peaceable Plea for the Government of the Church of Scotland as well as his great political treatise, *Lex, Rex* was published in London. In 1651, he was appointed Rector of St. Mary's College. He spent the last fourteen years of teaching and preaching there until the Restoration in 1660. By the end of the year, he was deprived of all his offices and was summoned before Parliament on a charged of treason. Due to a serious illness, he could not show himself up before King Charles II's Parliament. He died on March 30, 1661 at St. Mary's College. During his entire life time, Rutherford produced nearly 10,000 pages of theological treatises, sermons, catechism, letters, and political writings. Guy M. Richard has recently compared the literary output of Rutherford with that of John Owen.⁶²

As this brief biography of Rutherford indicates, his life may be roughly divided into five periods: The early life until his schooling at Edinburgh University (1600-1626); pastoring at Anwoth with his two-years of exile period in Aberdeen (1627-1638); the National Covenanting period (1638-1643); four years of a commissioner at the Westminster Assembly (1643-1647); teaching at St. Andrews (1647-1661).⁶³ Throughout these five periods of his entire life, his ecclesiastical view of the church and covenant was influenced and shaped by many events, figures and theological works which may be summarized as follows.

⁶² Nevertheless, Guy M. Richard complains, "Rutherford's thinking has received comparatively little attention in the scholarship of the period, especially in relation to that of Owen." Guy M. Richard, *The Supremacy of God in the Theology of Samuel Rutherford* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2008), 2-3.

⁶³ As for periodization, see, Coffey, *Politics, Religion and the British Revolutions*, 30-61; "Contents" in Rendell, *Samuel Rutherford: A New Biography*, 5. Coffey divides Rutherford's life into seven period—Early Years(1600-1617); Edinburgh University(1617-1626); The Parish of Anwoth (1627-1636); Exile in Aberdeen (1636-1638); The Covenanter Revolution (1638-1643); The Westminster Assembly(1643-1647); Final Years at St. Andrews(1647-1661)—according to the places he lived or worked, while Rendell divides it into six combining the first two periods of Coffey's division into one under the title "Student and Professor." Here I further reduced it to five periods combining Anwoth period and exile period at Aberdeen. The title of each period is based on both Coffey's and Rendell's periodization.

2. Samuel Rutherford's Life and His Presbyterianism

1) *The Early Period, 1600-1626: "Student and Professor"* — One of the first people who influenced Rutherford's early life was Rev. David Calderwood, who became a parish minister of Rutherford between 1604 and 1617. He studied at Edinburgh in the early 1590s where he became an advocate of Presbyterianism. Calderwood supported Andrew Melville, who fought for the liberty of the Scottish Church against the English government. Calderwood followed Melville's footsteps, asking King James VI to preserve the religious liberty of the church in Scotland. In 1617, he was summoned before the High Commission at St. Andrews and deprived of his ministerial office. In the same year, Rutherford entered the University of Edinburgh. Probably, it is not too exaggerated when John Coffey called Rutherford a "Melvillian in the mould of Calderwood."⁶⁴

During his days at Edinburgh, Rutherford studied both Latin and theology under many Professors, including Andrew Stevenson, Andrew Ramsay, and John Adamson, who supported the Presbyterian cause. Particularly, Robert Boyd, who became principal of the University in 1622 and an advocate of private conventicles, seemed to have a great influence on Rutherford. Rutherford went outside the campus and associated himself with John Mein and William Rigg, the radical Presbyterian leaders of conventicles.

The Articles of Perth became a major issue for the Church of Scotland during this period.⁶⁵ It consisted in five articles—kneeling during communion, private baptism,

⁶⁴ Coffey, *Politics, Religion and the British Revolutions*, 31.

⁶⁵ As for the detailed study of the Perth Articles, see Ian B. Cowan, "Reformation and Revolution," *Essays Presented to Hugh Watt, on the 60th anniversary of his ordination* (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1967): 160-177; John D. Ford, "The Lawful Bonds of Scottish Society: The Five Articles of Perth, the Negative Confession and the national Covenant," *Historical Journal*, 37:1(1994):45-64; idem, "Conformity in Conscience: The Structure of the Perth Articles Debate in Scotland, 1618-38," *Journal of Ecclesiastical*

private communion for the infirm, confirmation of the laity by a bishop, and the observance of the Holy Days—which were imposed on the Church of Scotland by King James VI. In 1618, these five articles were reluctantly accepted by the General Assembly of the Church at Perth and ratified by the Scottish Parliament in 1621.⁶⁶ Boyd and many other Presbyterian ministers were deprived of their positions because they had refused to conform to the Five Articles of Perth. Soon, Rutherford also would join them as a militant opponent of the Articles of Perth and Episcopacy.

2) *The Anwoth and Exile Period, 1627-1638: “The Pastor and Prisoner”* — During his ministry at Anwoth, Rutherford attempted to make his parish a stronghold against invading episcopacy. He preached against the Five Articles of Perth and defended conventicles by both preaching sermons and circulating his own treatises. As a result, Rutherford was summoned in 1630 before the High Commission and, again, in 1636 before the Court of High Commission. The latter deprived him of his charge and confined him in Aberdeen. During the period of his exile in Aberdeen (1636-38), the world outside his confinement passed a very critical period. The religio-political conflict sparked a riot which stimulated a large scale resistant movement—so-called the National Covenanting movement—against the King. The riot began in July 23, 1637 when the new Prayer Book

History, 46:2(1995): 256-277; Laura A. M. Stewart, “The Political Repercussions of the Five Articles of Perth: A Reassessment of James VI and I’s Religious Policies in Scotland,” *Sixteen Century Journal*, 38:4(2007): 1013-1036.

⁶⁶ According to Alan R. MacDonald and Laura Stewart, a combination of the government’s ruthless use of intimidation, fears for the future survival of the assembly of the Church of Scotland, and their genuine hope that the Articles would never be enforced anyway won the day at Perth on 27 August 1618. Alan R. MacDonald, *The Jacobean Kirk: Sovereignty, Polity and Liturgy* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 162-164; Stewart, “The Political Repercussions of the Five Articles of Perth,” 1023. Later, the approving Act of 1621 was repealed by the Confession of Faith Ratification Act 1690.

was read in St. Giles Cathedral. Andrew Thomson describes the event as follows:

The eventful day came, July 23, 1637, when Laud's liturgy was to be introduced into the High Church, St. Giles, Edinburgh. . . . Scarcely had the dean, arrayed in his new robes, begun to read the new prayer book when a simple woman, a green-grocer, accustomed to sell her wares in the street outside, enraged at the innovation, seized the stool on which she had been sitting, and with angry words, not remarkable for reverence, flung it at the dean's head, only narrowly missing her mark. This act became the signal for a tumult, The unpremeditated act of that poor woman struck a sensitive chord in the heart of Scotland The woman's shrill cry in her rough Doric, "Rascal, wilt thou- say mass at my lug?" was mighty, because it reflected what multitudes were thinking and feeling over all the land.⁶⁷

Soon, similar "resolute and humiliating resistance" began to spread in many parts of Scotland. In this context, Rutherford had already sent a letter to his parishioners in Anwoth encouraging them to fight against "the new fatherless Service Book":

The abominable bowing to altars of tree (wood) is coming upon you. Hate, and keep yourselves from idols. Forbear in any case to hear the reading of the new fatherless Service Book, full of gross heresies, popish and superstitious errors, without any warrant of Christ, tending to the overthrow of preaching. You owe no obedience to the bastard canons; they are unlawful, blasphemous, and superstitious. . . . maintain your cause against your enemies.⁶⁸

The Covenanting movement grew up to a revolution when more and more people supported this cause and as it was organized by national leaders such as Alexander Henderson, George Gillespie, David Dickson, and Rutherford. They set up their own "unofficial Parliament," the Tables. By February in 1638, they devised and signed the "National Covenant."

⁶⁷ Thomson, *The Life of Samuel Rutherford*, 65-66.

⁶⁸ Rutherford's letter to his parishioners in Anwoth on July 13, 1637. Rutherford, *Letters of Samuel Rutherford*, ed. by A.A. Bonar (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant Anderson & Ferrier, 1891), 440.

3) *The National Covenanting Period, 1638-1643: "The Reformer"* — Rutherford's exile in Aberdeen came to an end in 1638. The General Assembly of 1638 abolished episcopacy and cleared Rutherford of the charge against him. The Assembly also appointed Rutherford to the Chair of Theology at St. Mary's College hoping that the Kirk of Scotland and the cause of Presbyterianism would be better served by such a learned reformer. Regarding the issue of Rutherford's ecclesiology of this period, three major events are worth to be mentioned.

First, in the Assembly of 1640 at Aberdeen, Rutherford was involved in a dispute about "private meetings," which then abounded in both Ireland and Scotland in order to promote the benefits of true worship through prayer, exhortation, reading and mutual instruction and consolation. Rutherford defended them along with Robert Blair and David Dickson, against the criticism of the majority, including Alexander Henderson, Henry Guthrie and Calderwood who tended to view them as connected to the Brownism or Independency. While Rutherford initially defended the legitimacy of them, nevertheless, for the sake of unity of the Kirk, he finally agreed to withdraw his opposition and agreed to the following conclusion of the Act of the Assembly which forbade the practice.⁶⁹

That whatsoever had been the effects of private Meetings of Persons from divers Families for Religious Exercise in time of Trouble or Corruption (in which case many things may be commendable, which otherwise are not tolerable); yet now, when God hath Blessed us with Peace, and with the Purity of the Gospel, they could not but disallow them, as tending to the hindrance of the Exercises of each Family by itself, to the prejudice of the public Ministry, and to the rending of Particular congregations, and by progress of time of the whole Kirk, besides many Offences that may come thereby, to the hardening of the Hearts of Natural

⁶⁹ This issue, however, was raised again at the Assembly of 1641, 1643 and 1647. The problem of the Aberdeen Act of 1640 is that it seemed to be open to diverse interpretations. Murray, *The Life of Rev. Samuel Rutherford*, 177-186; George Grub, *An Ecclesiastical History of Scotland*, vol.3 (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1861), 69-85; Rendell, *Samuel Rutherford: A New Biography*, 57-59.

Men, and the grief of the Godly.⁷⁰

Second, in 1642, Rutherford published his first major ecclesiological treatise *A Peaceable and Temperate Plea for Paul's Presbyterie in Scotland*.⁷¹ The purpose of this work is to defend the Presbyterian government of the Church of Scotland. In doing so, he dealt with both “foes and friends”: The former refers to the “Papists,” “Antichristian Prelacy” or “half-dyed Papistry,” and “haters of the truth.”⁷² As for the latter, Rutherford seems to think mostly of the Independents in England. By correcting the “honest and almost innocent error” of them, Rutherford wishes to promote the unity of the churches in both England and Scotland.⁷³ In the twenty Quests or chapters, Rutherford deals with many ecclesiastical issues, including the power of the keys, church officers, the membership of the visible churches, church discipline, sacraments, synod, and the problem of separations. Murray says that Rutherford’s *Peaceable and Temperate Plea* served to pave the way for the introduction of the Presbyterian system into England.⁷⁴ Two years later, in 1644, Rutherford developed and expanded this work into a larger treatise, *The Due Right of Presbyteries* (1644).⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Henry Guthrie, *Memoirs of Henry Guthry, late Bishop of Dunkel* (London: Printed for W. B., 1702), 68

⁷¹ Its full title is a brief summary of its contents: *A Peaceful and Temperate Plea for Paul's Presbyterie in Scotland, A Modest and Brotherly Dispute of the Government of the Church of Scotland wherein Our Discipline is Demonstrated to be the True Apostolick Way of Divine Truth and the Arguments on the contrary are friendly dissolved, the grounds of Separation and Independencie of particular Congregations, in defence of Ecclesiasticall Presbyteries, Synods and Assemblies, are examined and tried* (London: Printed for John Bartlet, 1642).

⁷² See the Preface of Rutherford, *A Peaceful and Temperate Plea*, A2-A5, a1-a3.

⁷³ Rutherford, *A Peaceful and Temperate Plea*, a2, a3.

⁷⁴ Murray, *The Life of Rev. Samuel Rutherford*, 187.

⁷⁵ I will discuss this work in more detail in the following section of this chapter, “The Polemical Context of the Rutherford-Hooker Dispute.”

Third, with the outbreak of the English Civil War in 1642, the leaders of the English Parliament drew up a Solemn League and Covenant with the Scottish Covenanters. The English parliament needed the military support of the Scots when they faced with the threat of the Royalists joined by Irish Catholic troops. The Scottish Covenanters promised their aid on condition that the English Parliament would preserve the Reformed religion in Scotland and reform the religion in England and Ireland “according to the word of God and the example of the best reformed churches.”⁷⁶

Accordingly, they agreed,

[we] shall indeavour to bring the Churches of God in the three Kingdomes, to the nearest conjunction and Uniformity in Religion, Confession of Faith, Form of Church-government, Directory for Worship and Catechizing; That we and our Posterity after us, may as Brethren, live in Faith and Love, and the Lord may delight to dwell in the midst of us.⁷⁷

Though both the Scottish Covenanters and the majority of the English Parliament support Presbyterianism, the above documents do not explicitly mention the Presbyterian form of church government. Accordingly, the Independents and others in the Parliament could expect the Congregational form of church government as a possible alternative to Presbyterianism. In this context, the Scottish commissioners—when they came to London to attend the Westminster Assembly—might feel the need to make a special effort to advocate Presbyterian form of church government claiming it as the most faithful to the Bible. Also, it may account for the reason why Rutherford was chosen: As Coffey argues, it was probably because his *Peaceable Plea for Pauls Presbyterie* was published in 1642,

⁷⁶ *A Solemn League and Covenant for Reformation, and Defence of Religion, The Honour and Happinesse of the KING, And the Peace & Safety of the three Kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (London: Printed for E. Husbonds, 1643), 6. After the Restoration, this covenant was declared unlawful and void by the Sedition Act of 1661.

⁷⁷ *A Solemn League and Covenant for Reformation*, 6.

in which Rutherford proved himself to be a competent debater—who would be able to correct the errors of the Congregationalism—as well as an advocate of Presbyterianism.

4) *The Westminster Assembly Period, 1643-1647: “The Apologist”* — Indeed, Rutherford was actively involved in the Westminster Assembly of Divines and defended the cause of both Presbyterianism and the Kirk of Scotland with other Scottish commissioners Alexander Henderson, Robert Baillie, George Gillespie and Robert Douglas. According to the record of John Lightfoot, during the session period until December 1644, Rutherford enthusiastically participated in about thirty debates which covered more than fifteen important issues—such as the Presbyterian form of church government, ruling elders, ordination, election, excommunication, the early Jerusalem church, the nature of visible church, and the sacraments—sharing his exegetical, theological, and practical opinions on such topics.⁷⁸

It is interesting to note that, as Coffey points out, whereas in Scotland Rutherford was always considered as a radical, in London he appeared as “the arch conservative,” who advocated a strict Presbyterianism over against both the Independents and the Erastians, who were the advocates of the liberty of congregation (Independents) and of

⁷⁸ See John Lightfoot, *Journal of the Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines from January 1st 1643 to December 31st 1644*, in Lightfoot, *The Whole Works of John Lightfoot, D.D.*, vol.13, ed., John R. Pitman (London: J.F. Dove, 1824). The specific topics that Rutherford discussed—as recorded by Lightfoot—may be summarized as follows (page number belongs to Lightfoot’s *Journal*): Ruling elders (63, 261); the lay-elders in the ecclesiastical matters (78); ordination (99, 108, 225, 266); the legitimacy of ‘extraordinary measures’ in extraordinary cases (117); excommunication (138, 140, 144, 146, 275); the ground of obedience to the elders (158); the relationship between the church (Presbytery) and civil government (169); the Jerusalem church before the dispersion as a Presbyterian church (177, 183, 185, 188, 190, 198, 200); distinction between the unique works of the Apostles and the ordinary works of the Apostles as elders (198, 200); the synod (208, 255); the visible church as the ‘universal catholic church’ (215-216); the ceremony of the Communion (286-288, 290, 291, 293, 294) and of Baptism (297, 298); an expectant’s reading and preaching of the Word (283-284); marriage (336, 338); the holy place for public worship (342).

the civil magistrate (Erastians).⁷⁹ It is well-known that Rutherford, responding to both groups published *The Due Right of Presbyteries* (1644) and *The Divine Right of Church Government and Excommunication* (1646).⁸⁰ Also, there is no doubt in Rutherford's mind that the English Presbyterians would be the readers of his treatises. Comparing English Presbyterianism with Scottish Presbyterianism, Rendell argues that the former was “by no means as rigid as that of the Scots.” The root of English Presbyterianism may be traced to Calvin’s Geneva through Thomas Cartwright (d.1603). Calvin believes that the church may submit in non-essentials to the state. On the contrary, Rutherford and other Scottish Presbyterians strongly opposed any attempt to compromise the independence of the Kirk by the state. Accordingly, to Rutherford’s viewpoints, English Presbyterianism might be seen to some extent Erastian.⁸¹ Rutherford also seems to believe that the moderate English Presbyterianism tended to be influenced by both the Independents at the Assembly and the Congregationalists in New England. In this context, Rutherford might feel the need to make a special effort to expose the dangers of Independency or Congregationalism.

Furthermore, the religious context of England during this period might stimulate Rutherford and his Scottish brethren to support a more strict form of Presbyterian church government. When they arrived in London in 1643, Rutherford was shocked to find that England teemed with many sects and heretical movements such as Antinomians, Seekers, Fifth Monarchy men, the Familists, the anti-Sabbatarians, Soul Sleepers, Arians,

⁷⁹ Coffey, *Politics, Religion and the British Revolutions*, 53; Murray, *The Life of Rev. Samuel Rutherford*, 211-212.

⁸⁰ Murray, *The Life of Rev. Samuel Rutherford*, 218; Coffey, *Politics, Religion and the British Revolutions*, 53.

⁸¹ Rendell, *Samuel Rutherford: A New Biography*, 70-72, 86.

Socinians and Anti-Trinitarians. His *Survey of the Spiritual Anti-Christ* (1648) must be read in this context. Likewise, Rutherford's defense of Synod is closely related to its function of checking the problem of heresy. On March 12, 1644, in the process of the church government debate, Rutherford indicated that when a synod failed to check the problem of heresy, they would incur "the reproof that the churches of Laodicea, & c. do, in Rev.ii.3, for not stopping the mouth of false teachers."⁸² Later, in his controversy with Hooker, Rutherford would emphasize that the key benefit of the presbytery or synod lies in its ability to effectively deal with the great scandals of the heresy.⁸³

5) *The Later Years at St. Andrews, 1648-1661: "The Protester"* — Rutherford's continued and intensified effort to advocate Presbyterianism and to refute the ecclesiological doctrines of the Independents in his later years must be understood in the complicated religio-political context of both Scotland and England. It has been generally believed that Rutherford was the leading figure among the Scottish commissioners at Westminster Assembly. He might be satisfied when episcopacy was finally abolished in October 1646. After Rutherford left London in November 1647, however, the political climate in England became unstable particularly after the Parliament signed the Engagement with King Charles I.⁸⁴ In August 1648, the King's army was defeated at

⁸² Lightfoot, *Journal of the Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines*, 208.

⁸³ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey of that Summe of Church-Discipline Penned by Mr. Thomas Hooker* (London: J.C. for Andr. Crook, 1658), 216, 238, 310, 456-473.

⁸⁴ By entering into this "specious arrangement" between Charles and the Scots, the latter hoped that the King would preserve Presbyterianism and establish it in England if they could restore him to power. When Charles actually gained the power, however, he argued that he was not obliged to perform the pledges. Rendell, *Samuel Rutherford: A New Biography*, 106-107; George Grub, *An Ecclesiastical History of Scotland*, vol.3 (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1861), 138-167.

Preston by Oliver Cromwell. Initially, this changed the political climate of Scotland in favor of Rutherford's Presbyterianism. Coffey even says that Rutherford's "dream of a godly, Presbyterian Scotland was never more fully realized than in 1649 and 1650."⁸⁵

Rutherford, however, could not be happy with Cromwell's victory, because it meant that the power of the Independents in the Parliaments would increase as Cromwell, the head of the Independents, gained the control of the Parliament. Even before the battle at Preston, the relationship between the two Parliaments became seriously strained when the Scottish Parliament demanded that the English Parliament should insist on a compulsory imposition of the Covenant, intolerance for heresies, the disbanding of the Army, and even the freedom for Charles to negotiate.⁸⁶ Now, after the execution of King Charles in 1649, Cromwell proceeded to defeat the Covenanter army at Dunbar on September 3, 1650. Rutherford wrote a letter to William Guthrie in which he cried, "Alas, alas! poor I am utterly lost, my share of heaven is gone, and my hope is poor; I am perished, and I am cut off from the Lord, if hitherto out of the way!"⁸⁷ In December 1650, the General Assembly accepted the moderate "Resolution" of the Commission. Those who supported this Resolution were called Resolutioners, who, later, would crown Charles II at Scone in January 1651.⁸⁸ Resolutioners were opposed by the Protesters who

⁸⁵ Coffey, *Politics, Religion and the British Revolutions*, 55.

⁸⁶ The Scots' protest was published by Patrick Gillespie, James Guthrie, and Rutherford under the title *The Humble Representation of the Commission of the General Assembly to the Honourable Estates of Parliament upon their Declaration lately communicated to us* (London: Edward Griffin for I. R., 1648). Rendell, *Samuel Rutherford: A New Biography*, 109.

⁸⁷ Rutherford, *Letters of Samuel Rutherford*, "Letter CCCXXX" (1650), 650. Rutherford considered the defeat at Dunbar as a divine judgement upon the compromising nation.

⁸⁸ On December 14, after the battle of Hamilton, the Commission was asked to submit a Resolution about who should be admitted to the army. The Commission took a moderate policy to include all sensible persons with a few exceptions. This was taken to mean that by 1651 the issue of national defense began to be separated from the cause of the Covenant. Rendell, *Samuel Rutherford: A New Biography*, 114.

refused to accept the authority of the General Assembly. Rutherford played a significant role as the head of the Protesters throughout the 1650s, taking a firm non-compromising stance against the Resolutioners, sectarianism and Episcopacy until his death in 1661.

During his later years, Rutherford's views of the church and covenant were published in *A Survey of the Spirituall AntiChrist* (1648); *The Covenant of Life Opened* (1655); *A Survey of the Survey of that Summe of Church-Discipline Penned by Mr. Thomas Hooker* (1658). Rutherford's insistence on the unity of the church and the principle of intolerance against sectarianism is well expressed in his *Survey of the Spirituall AntiChrist*. In *The Covenant of Life Opened*, Rutherford emphasizes God's sovereign grace. Rendell believes that, in the midst of the conflict between Resolutioners and Protesters, Rutherford seemed to seek "refuge from its rancor by turning his attention to a consideration of the grace of God."⁸⁹ Finally, *A Survey of the Survey* must be read from the broader view of his polemical context in which Rutherford fought for the cause of Presbyterianism over against all other forms of the church government. Indeed, it reflects the author's uncompromising criticism of the Separatists, the Independents, and New England Congregationalists. Particularly, Rutherford tends to see Hooker's Congregationalism as in line with the Separatists' ecclesiological doctrine, which will be discussed in the following section.

So far, I have examined all five periods of Rutherford's life focusing on the major events, figures, and ecclesiological works, which might have influenced the development of Rutherford's view of the church and covenant. Like Hooker's case, there seems to exist at least three important points, which are helpful to understand the general context of the

⁸⁹ Rendell, *Samuel Rutherford: A New Biography*, 78, 119. Rutherford's doctrine of covenant as revealed in *The Covenant of Life Opened* will be discussed in detail in the following chapter 3.

Rutherford-Hooker dispute.

First, Rutherford's ecclesiology was influenced by a religio-political context in both Scotland and England. His conservative view of Presbyterianism seems to have developed in a long struggle against the Episcopacy, the Independents, and diverse forms of sectarianism. Particularly, the Solemn League and Covenant might intensify his demand that Presbyterianism should be established as the *national* church of both England and Scotland.

Second, accordingly, Rutherford's critical view of the Congregational church has evolved over time. Many parts of *The Due Right of Presbyteries* (1644), for example, were a product of a series of debates and discussion that Rutherford had with the Independents in the Assembly. According to Robert Baillie, another Commissioner to the Assembly, Rutherford seemed to add new facts, observations and reflections to his book on a daily basis, which resulted in "dailie enlarging" of the book.⁹⁰ Compared with his previous work *A Peaceable and Temperate Plea for Paul's Presbyterie in Scotland* (1642), *The Due Right of Presbyteries* covers more topics including the church covenant and explore both the biblical and the theological foundation of Congregationalism at a deeper level. Fourteen years later, his most mature and thoroughly researched work on New England Congregationalism was published under the title *A Survey of the Survey of that Summe of Church-Discipline Penned by Mr. Thomas Hooker* (1658).⁹¹

⁹⁰ See Baillie's letter "For Mr. Blair" written on March 26th, 1644. Robert Baillie, *Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie*, vol.2 (Edinburgh: Printed for Robert Ogle, 1841), 159. "Mr. Samuell for the great parts God hes given him, and speciall acquaintance with the question in hand, is very necessare to be here; especiallie because of his booke, which he is dailie enlarging, and it will not come off the presse yet for some short time."

⁹¹ As for the difference among the above three ecclesiastical works, read the following section.

Finally, Rutherford's view of the biblical covenant also developed in response to political, social and ecclesiastical factors. Some modern scholars tend to believe that in Scotland the biblical/theological concept of covenant began to have a socio-political implication as the Covenanters had become increasingly entangled with political considerations in their protest against the English government.⁹² James B. Torrance, for example, even argues that the concept of covenant became a kind of "theology of politics."⁹³

However, Rutherford's covenant theology—though it *de facto* has and should have a socio-political and ecclesiastical implication—seems not to fit into Torrance's one-sided view of covenant as "theology of politics," nor his identification of the concept of covenant with socio-political *contract*. Particularly, Rutherford's concept of the Covenant of Grace was largely shaped by his reading of the Bible, church fathers, and the reformers. In the following chapter, I will examine the biblical and theological underpinning of his view of covenant, focusing on its ecclesiastical implications.

IV. The Polemical Context of the Rutherford-Hooker Dispute

Seemingly, the Rutherford-Hooker dispute of the mid-1640s began when Samuel

⁹² James B. Torrance, "Covenant or Contract? A Study in the Theological Background of Worship in Seventeenth-Century Scotland." *Scottish Journal of Theology* 23(1970): 51-76; idem, "The Covenant Concept in Scottish Theology and Politics," in *The Covenant Connection: From Federal Theology to Modern Federalism*, ed. Daniel J. Elazar (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2000): 140-162; A.T.B. McGowan, *The Federal Theology of Thomas Boston* (Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 1997), 6-8.

⁹³ J. B. Torrance argues, "In the socio-political context of a nation struggling for freedom, this [theme of covenant] was a language which people understood, as possibly people today would understand the language of trade unions, civil rights, settlement of wage disputes, etc. It was a kind of "theology of politics" which provided a conceptual framework for communication of the Gospel to the man in the pew, and by means of such terminology the Gospel grasped the imagination of a covenanted nation." Torrance, "Covenant or Contract?" 64.

Rutherford's work, *The Due Right of Presbyteries* was published in 1644. Soon, Hooker attempted to refute Rutherford's criticisms of Congregationalism with his lengthy treatise. The original manuscript, unfortunately, was lost at sea while it was carried to England in 1646. Hooker rewrote the book, which was published shortly after his death under the title *A Survey of the Sum of church Discipline* (1648). In response, Rutherford published a point by point refutation against Hooker's *Survey* with another lengthy book, entitled *A Survey of the Survey of that Summe of Church-Discipline Penned by Mr. Thomas Hooker* (1658).

The root of the controversy between them, however, stretched back to the mid-1630s. Rutherford's *The Due Right of Presbyteries* itself was his response to the works of New Englanders such as John Cotton and Richard Mather published in the early 1640s. Again, both John Cotton's and Richard Mather's treatises were published as the answers to the scathing criticism of Congregationalism made by their Presbyterian brethren in England in the late-1630s. The polemical history of the ecclesiological dispute between the two groups may be divided into two periods as follows:

1. The Early Controversy, 1630-1643

It is obvious that the Puritans, who obtained the charter of the Massachusetts Bay Company from Charles I and came to New England in 1630, were *not* Separatists. They, though being non-conformists, considered themselves as loyal members of the Church of England. Secession or separation from the national church, for them, was a sin of schism.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, in less than seven years, Puritans in the mother country began

⁹⁴ The earliest view of the New Englanders is well expressed in their parting message from the *Abella* (April, 1630) John Winthrop, *The Humble Request of his majesty's Loyal Subjects* (London: Printed by Miles Flesher for John Bellamie, 1630).

to hear that their brethren in New England actually followed the ways of the Separatists. Accordingly, in 1637, a formal and written communication was made, in which Puritans in England put forward “Nine Propositions,” to which their “Reverend and beloved Brethren” in the New World replied in 1639. This early debate was compiled by Simeon Ash and William Rathband and, four years later, published with John Ball’s “Reply,” under the title *A Letter of Many Ministers in Old England*.⁹⁵

The “Nine Propositions” ask some practical questions about the lawfulness of a “stinted form of prayer and set liturgy” (Proposition I & II), the problem of dispensing the sacraments to church members only (Proposition III & IV), the subject of the power of excommunication (Proposition V), the membership of the church (Proposition VI), and the problem of particularism in ministry and fellowship among sister churches (Proposition VII, VIII, IX).⁹⁶ The main purpose of these propositions was to find whether or not the New England brethren actually adopted the methods of the Separatists which they once denounced before they left England. The fear of the old friends is well

⁹⁵ Simeon Ash and William Rathband ed., *A Letter of Many Ministers in Old England, requesting the Judgment of their Reverend Brethren in New England, concerning Nine Propositions, Written A.D. 1637. Together with their Answer thereto, returned anno 1639; and the Reply made unto the said Answer and sent over unto them anno 1640* (London: Printed for Thomas Underhill, 1643). This letter is written by John Dod and twelve other ministers in England in June 1637. John Cotton, *The Correspondence of John Cotton*, edited by Sargent Bush, Jr (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 262.

⁹⁶ The full title of each propositions are: I. That a stinted form of prayer and set liturgy is unlawful; II. That it is not lawful to join in prayer, or to receive the sacrament where a stinted liturgy is used; III. That the children of godly and approved Christians are not to be baptized until their parents be set members of some particular congregation; IV. That the parents themselves, though of approved piety, are not to be received to the Lord’s Supper until they be admitted as set members; V. That the power of ex-communication is so in the body of the church that what the major part shall allow [that] must be done, though the pastors and governors and the rest of the assembly be of another mind, and that, peradventure, upon more substantial reason; VI. That none are to be admitted as members, but they must promise not to depart or remove unless the congregation will give leave; VII. That a minister is so a minister of a particular congregation, that if they dislike him unjustly, or leave him, he ceaseth to be their minister; VIII. That one minister cannot perform any ministerial act in another congregation; IX. That members of one congregation may no communicate in another.

expressed in the Preface of *A Letter of Many Ministers in Old England*:

While we lived together in the same kingdom, we professed the same faith... But since your departure into New England, we hear, and partly believe, that divers have embraced certain opinions such as you disliked formerly... You know how oft it hath been objected that Non-conformists in practice are Separatists in heart... They of the Separation boast that they stand upon the Non-conformist grounds: a vain-glorious flourish and alight pretense! But both these are much countenanced by your sudden change, if you be changed as reported.⁹⁷

Many ministers in Old England, as this passage indicates, were surprised at the rumor about their brethren's sudden turn to Separatism. Particularly, they were frightened when they received a report that the above nine propositions were practiced by New Englander "as the *only* Church way, wherein the Lord is to be worshipped."⁹⁸

Of course, this report seemed to be exaggerated. Thus, John Cotton, representing "the Elders of the Churches in New England,"⁹⁹ provided an answer to this letter in which he assured them that New England Congregational churches had nothing to do with "the wayes of rigid separation." Also, Cotton reminded them of the fundamental difference between the Separatists and non-separating Congregationalists:

As if we here justified the wayes of rigid separation, which sometimes amongst you we have formerly borne witness against and so build againe the thing we have destroyed; you know they separate from your Congregations, as no Churches; from the Ordinances dispensed by you as meere Antichristian, and from your selves as no visible Christians. But wee professe, unfeignedly, we separate from the corruptions which we conceive to be left in your churches, and from such ordinances administrated therein as we fear are not of God but of men.

⁹⁷ Ash and Rathband ed., *A Letter of Many Ministers*, A3-A4. For detailed discussion of the "Nine Propositions," see Leonard Bacon, "Reaction of New England on English Puritanism, in the Seventeenth Century: Article I" *The New Englander*, vol.37 (New Haven: W. L. Kingsley, Proprietor and Publisher, 1878): 441-461.

⁹⁸ Ash and Rathband ed., *A Letter of Many Ministers*, A6-A7. [Emphasis added]

⁹⁹ Cotton, *The Correspondence of John Cotton*, 262-268.

And for your selves, we are so farre from separating as from no visible Christians, as that you are under God in our hearts.. to live and die together.¹⁰⁰

Cotton's above answer was sent to England in 1639 and Ball's comments and reply were finished by 1640.¹⁰¹ For some reason, however, their works were not published until 1643.

Meanwhile, New England churches received another similar inquiry from Richard Bernard of Batcombe, who proposed "Thirty-two Questions." In reply, Richard Mather provided an answer under the title *Church Government and Church Covenant Discussed* (1643). Compared with the "Nine Propositions," Bernard's "Thirty-two Questions" are more sophisticated, which are designed to find both the theological and the biblical foundation of the Congregational practices. For example, consider Bernard's first three questions:

1. Whether the greatest part of the English there (by estimation) be not as yet unadmitted to any Congregation among you, and the Reasons thereof?
2. What things doe you hold to be Essential and absolutely necessary to the being of a true Visible Church of Christ?
3. Whether doe you not hold all Visible Believers to bee within the Visible Church as Members thereof, and not without in the Apostles sense, 1 Cor. 5. and therefore ought so to be acknowledged, and accepted in all Congregations wheresoever they shall come, and are so knowne: and ought ... to be permitted to partake in all Gods ordinances and Church priviledges there, so farre as they personally concerne themselves, although they be not Ass yet fixed Members in particular Covenant...? ¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Ash and Rathband ed., *A Letter of Many Ministers*, A7.

¹⁰¹ See Ball's reply in *A Tryall of the New-Church Way in New-England and in Old* (London: T. Paine and M. Simmons for Thomas Underhill, 1644).

¹⁰² Richard Mather, *Church Government and Church Covenant Discussed* (London: R.O. and G.D. [and T.P. and M.S.] for Benjamin Allen, 1643), 1.

In inquiring these questions, Bernard seemed to be already aware of the fact that the nature of Congregational form of church government is closely related to the idea of church covenant. Indeed, Mather's view of a visible church—as the titles of his two books indicate—seems to be based on his key concept of church covenant: “Now that a company becomes a Church, by joyning in Covenant”; “And the forme [of a visible church], a gathering together of these visible Christians a combining and uniting of them into one body, by the bond of an holy Covenant.”¹⁰³

Mather's concept of church covenant, however, would lead to a fundamental problem as posed by Bernard's first and second questions: Given the essential necessity of church covenant as the foundation of a true visible church, he asks, “But what shall be said of the Congregations in England, if Churches must be combined by Covenant? Doth not this doctrine blot out all those Congregations out of the Catalogue of Churches?”¹⁰⁴ In reply, Mather argues that many churches in England and other places can be called true churches because the substance or “the essence of visible Churches” may be preserved by an *implicit* church covenant, which is indirectly evidenced by profession of faith, worship, baptismal vows, and other voluntary agreements and consents among church members.¹⁰⁵

In sum, the early controversy between Old and New England seemed to be significant in two aspects. On the one hand, both “Nine Propositions” and “Thirty-two Questions” contributed to setting the agenda for the further development of the discussion

¹⁰³ Mather, *An Aplogie of the Churches in New England for Church Covenant*, 5; idem, *Church Government and Church Covenant Discussed*, 9.

¹⁰⁴ Bernard, here, thinks of the Church of England because he says, “For whatever Covenant may be found in the reformed Churches in other parts, yet it is plaine that the English have none.” Mather, *An Aplogie of the Churches in New England for Church Covenant*, 36.

¹⁰⁵ Mather, *An Aplogie of the Churches in New England for Church Covenant*, 36-42.

about the church government until the Rutherford-Hooker debate. Particularly, the early tendency to identify New England Congregationalists with the Separatists—as shown in *A Letter of Many Ministers in Old England*—have continued to have an influence on the way Rutherford and other critics understood Hooker and the New England Way. On the other hand, some participants in this early debate began to focus on the church covenant as a key ecclesiological doctrine for New England Congregationalism. Accordingly, the major part of later dispute between Rutherford and Hooker would revolve around the doctrine of church covenant: the latter would defend it as theological/biblical foundation of the Congregational church while the former simply denies it.

2. During and After the Westminster Assembly, 1643-1658

It is interesting to note that during the six years period of the Westminster Assembly (1643-49), the pamphlet war over church government between the Presbyterians and New England Congregationalists continued mostly outside the Assembly.¹⁰⁶ Since all three New England divines, Cotton, Hooker and John Davenport who were invited to the Assembly declined to attend, there could not be any direct confrontation between the two groups within the Assembly. Nevertheless, their Independent brethren, called “the five dissenting brethren”—five co-authors of the *Apologeticall Narration* (1644): Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye, Jeremiah Burroughs, William Bridge, and Sydrach Simpson—actively participated in the debates on church

¹⁰⁶ Inside the Assembly, those five co-authors of the *Apologeticall Narration* of 1644 pleaded for toleration of non-separating Calvinist congregations outside a proposed Presbyterian national church. Besides these five Independents, there were several other members who supported their cause: William Greenhill, William Carter the younger, John Bond, John Green, John Philips, and Joseph Caryle. In January of 1646, William Strong joined in the Assembly. In addition, Peter Sterry and Anthony Burgess often voted with those “dissenting brethren.” Francis J. Bremer, *Congregational Communion: Clerical Friendship in the Anglo-American Puritan Community, 1610-1692* (Richmond: Northeastern University Press, 1994), 153.

government.¹⁰⁷ Through many debates with these men, even though they were in minority, Rutherford and other Presbyterians in the Assembly seemed to learn, especially, about what are the key Bible verses and how these verses should be interpreted from a Presbyterian viewpoint. The early Jerusalem Church of Acts, for example, was interpreted by Presbyterian debaters as an early biblical model of Presbyterian church—“consisting of many congregations under one Presbytery.”¹⁰⁸ The exegetical problem of Jerusalem church and many other ecclesiastical issues—such as elders (1 Tim. 5:17), deacons (Acts 6), the nature of a visible church (1 Cor. 12), ordination (Acts 13), and excommunication (1 Cor. 5 and Matt. 18)—which were disputed in the Assembly continued to be discussed in Rutherford’s *The Due Right* and *A Survey of the Survey*.

It seems to be obvious that the pamphlet war between the Presbyterians in England and New England Congregationalists reached the new levels of intensity in the mid-1640s, particularly, during the period of the Assembly. In 1643, the collections of the early debates between the Old English Presbyterians and the New England were published in London. In the same year, Charles Herle, a Presbyterian who became a prolocutor of the Assembly in 1646, sparked a new round of controversy. Rutherford, in the following year, joined in Herle’s crusade against Congregationalism with his famous

¹⁰⁷ They tended to confirm their preference of the New England Way in the course of their debates with the Presbyterian members of the Assembly. Bremer briefly summarizes their agenda as follows: “They desired recognition of congregational ordination, liberty for anyone to join a gathered church, and freedom of their congregations from Presbyterian discipline.” Bremer, *Congregational Communion*, 155. In the matter of tolerance, however, there seemed to be difference between the Independents and the New England Congregationalists. For further discussion of their activities within the Assembly see Samuel C. Pearson, Jr. “Reluctant Radicals: The Independents at the Westminster Assembly,” *A Journal of Church and State*, XI:3 (1969):471-486; Tai Liu, “In Defence of Dissent: The Independent Divines on Church Government 1641-46,” *Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society*, 21:3(1972):59-68; Rosemary D. Bradley, “The Failure of Accommodation: Religious Conflicts between Presbyterians and Independents in the Westminster Assembly 1643-1646,” *Journal of Religious History*, 12:1 (1982):23-46.

¹⁰⁸ Lightfoot, *Journal of the Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines*, 116, 119, 133, 170, 173-210. Quote is from 116.

work, *The Due Right of Prebyteries* (1644).¹⁰⁹ In reply to Herle, Mather and William Tompson published *A Modest & Brotherly Answer To Mr. Charles Herle* (1644). Also, refuting both Herle and Rutherford, Mather wrote another work, *A Reply to Mr. Rutherford* (1647).

It should be remembered that Rutherford's *The Due Right of Prebyteries* (1644) itself was his critical review of both Mather's *Church Government and Church Covenant Discussed* (1643) and Cotton's *The Way Of The Churches Of Christ In New-England*, whose manuscript was widely circulated in England even a few years before its publication in 1645. By 1644, Rutherford was already involved in another round of debate, which was set off by John Cotton. Particularly, Cotton's *The Keys Of The Kingdom Of Heaven* (1644) was so influential in England that John Owen, a Presbyterian, became convinced that Cotton was right and, finally, supported the Congregational form of church government.¹¹⁰ Meanwhile, refuting Cotton's works, both Robert Baillie and Daniel Cawdrey wrote *A Dissuasive from the Errours of the Time* (1645) and *Vindicae Clavium, or a Vindication of the Keyes of the Kingdome of Heaven, into the hands of the right owners* (1645) respectively. Three years later, Cotton's reply to Baillie and Cawdrey was published under the title, *The Way of Congregational Churches Cleared* (1648). In short, it is no doubt that by the mid-1640s, the literary war over the church government reached its climax. The Assembly seemed to contribute to creating a general polemical atmosphere, in which the Rutherford-Hooker dispute could develop.

¹⁰⁹ Charles Herle, *The Independency On Scriptures Of The Independency Of Churches* (London: Tho. Brudenell for N.A., 1643).

¹¹⁰ See John Owen's Preface in *A defence of Mr. John Cotton from the imputation of selfe contradiction, charged on him by Mr. Dan. Cawdrey* (Oxford: H. Hall for T. Robinson, 1658). As for Owen's view of the Congregational ecclesiology, see Sungho Lee, "All Subjects of the Kingdom of Christ: John Owen's Conceptions of Christian Unity and Schism," (Ph.D. diss., Calvin Theological Seminary, 2007), 54-107.

Another significant way that the Assembly might influence on the polemical context of the Rutherford-Hooker dispute was that the Assembly's final adoption of *the Form of Presbyterian Church Government* in 1646 stimulated the Congregationalists in New England to convene the Cambridge Synod in the same year. The "Elders and Messengers of the Churches" at the synod gave their "heartly assent" to the "whole confession of faith" of the Westminster Confession of Faith—except certain "Points of Controversie in Church-Discipline." Accordingly, in order to clarify these differing points and reaffirm their Congregational Way, they made *A Platform of Church-Discipline*, which was drafted by Richard Mather in 1648 and published in the following year. In the Preface, Cotton writes,

This [Cambridge] Synod having perused, and considered. . . the confession of Faith published of late by the Reverend Assembly in England [Westminster Assembly], do judg[e] it to be very holy, orthodox, and judicious in all matters of Faith; and do therefore freely and fully consent thereunto, for the substance thereof. Only in those things which have respect to Church-Government and Discipline, we refer our selves to the Platform of Church-Discipline agreed upon by this present Assembly.¹¹¹

While both Mather and Cotton made a formal document of the Cambridge Platform,¹¹² Thomas Hooker was asked to write a more detailed, thoroughly researched and comprehensive treatise in defense of the Congregational Way. In July 1, 1645, a year before the Cambridge Synod was convened, there was a meeting of "the elders of the

¹¹¹ See the Preface of *A Platform of Church-Discipline* (Printed in New-England; and reprinted in London for Peter Cole). Quote is from B3.

¹¹² It consists in seventeen chapters, whose subjects are systematically ordered as follows: The form of church government and the Bible as its foundation (I); the nature & matter of a visible church (II, III); the church covenant as the form of a visible church (IV); the subject of church power (V); officers and their election, ordination, and power (VI~XI); church members and their admission and excommunication (XII~XIV); communion among sister churches (XV); synod (XVI); civil magistrates and the church (XVII).

churches through all the United Colonies” in Cambridge, where they agreed to send Hooker’s original manuscript of *Survey* along with other books including John Davenport’s answer to Paget, *The Power of Congregational Churches*. When their works were lost in the sea, both Hooker and Davenport rewrote them, which were sent over to London and published in 1648 and 1651 respectively.¹¹³ Samuel Stone considers Hooker’s *Survey* as the most complete defense of the Congregational Way which is free from errors: “I can affirm I know no man more free From Errors in his judgement, then was he [Hooker].” Accordingly, Stone audaciously declares, “If any to this Platform [Hooker’s *Survey*] can reply with better reason, let this volume die: But better argument if none can give, Then Thomas Hookers Policy shall live.”¹¹⁴

Such a bold statement, however, would elicit a severe criticism from Cawdrey and Rutherford. In 1651, Cawdrey published a treatise *The Inconsistency of the Independent Way with the Scriptures and Itself*, where he attacked Cotton’s *The Way of Congregational Churches Cleared* (1648) and the part I and chapter II of the third part of Hooker’s *Survey*.¹¹⁵ Unlike Cawdrey, who deals with only some parts of Hooker’s *Survey*, Rutherford, in his *Survey of the Survey* (1658) attempted a point by point

¹¹³ Hooker, *A Survey of the Summe of Church-Discipline* (London: A. M. for John Bellamy, 1648); John Davenport, *The Power of Congregational Churches* (London: Printed for Rich. Chiswell, 1651, reprint 1672). Walker, *History of the First Church in Hartford, 1633-1883*, 111-113, 120-121.

¹¹⁴ Samuel Stone, “In obitum viri Doctissimi Thomae Hookeri,” in Hooker’s *Survey*, c3. “this Platform” refers to Hooker’s *Survey* as revealed in Stone’s letter to Thomas Shepard on July 19, 1647: “We shall do what we can to prepare Mr. Hooker’s answer to Rutherford... You may think whether it may not be comely for you and myself and some other elders, to make a few verses for Mr. Hooker, and transcribe them in the beginning of his book.” William B. Sprague ed., *Annals of the American Pulpit* (New York: R. Carter and brothers, 1857), 35.

¹¹⁵ In the second and third part of his *Inconsistency of the Independent Way*, Cawdrey deals with the major issues of the nature of a visible church, the church covenant, church membership, the first subject of church power, and the problem of the infant baptism of the children of non-members. See Cawdrey, *The Inconsistency of the Independent Way with the Scriptures and Itself* (London: A. Miller for Christopher Meredith, 1651), 49-219.

refutation of Hooker's doctrine of the church as revealed in the all four parts of his *Survey*, which will be discussed in the following chapter 5 and 6.

It seems to be true that by the time Rutherford's *A Survey of the Survey* was published in 1658, the climax of the Congregational-Presbyterian debate of the 1640s was over. Only some echoes of the debates of the previous decade lingered into the 1650s through the works of Cawdrey, Rutherford, and Samuel Hudson on the one hand, and Stone, Owen, John Allen and Thomas Shepard on the other.¹¹⁶

3. Conclusion

Throughout the long debate between the Presbyterians in England and the Congregationalists in New England, there were some recurring themes and patterns which were raised in the early debates and continued to appear until the Rutherford-Hooker dispute.¹¹⁷ One of the most important things that remained unchanged throughout the two decades of controversy is that the debates were made and developed on a *group-to-group* basis rather than a person-to-person basis. The Rutherford-Hooker dispute was not an exception. It also grew out of a long conflict between the two groups, Presbyterians and

¹¹⁶ After Hooker's death, Samuel Stone answered Cawdrey's criticism in his *A Congregational Church is a Catholic Visible Church* (London: Peter Cole, 1652) while Owen defended Cotton over against Cawdrey's charge of self-contradiction in his *A Defence of Mr John Cotton from the Imputation of Selfe Contradiction Charged him by Mr Dan. Cawdrey* (Oxford: H. Hall for T. Robinson, 1658). For further debates between the two groups see, Thomas Shepard, *A Treatise of Liturgies, Power of the Keyes, and of matter of the Visible Church: In Answer to the Rev. Servant of Christ, Mr. John Ball* (London: E. Cotes for Andrew Crooke, 1653, reprint 1658); John Allen's edition of late Cotton, *Certain Queries Tending to Accomodation and Communion of Presbyterian & Congregationall Churches* (London: M.S. for John Allen and Francis Eglesfield, 1654); Samuel Hudson, *An Addition or Postscript to the Vindication of the Essence and Unity of the Church-Catholick visible, and the Priority thereof in regard of particular Churches. In answer to the Objections made against it both by Mr. Stone and some others* (London: J.B. for Andrew Kembe, 1658); Cawdrey, *Independency Further Proved to be a Schism: or a Survey of Dr. Owens Review of his Tract of Schism* (London: Printed for John Wright, 1658).

¹¹⁷ For example, the issues of the nature of a visible church, church covenant, church membership, the subject of the keys, church officers (election & ordination), excommunication, synod, the problem of particularism and some exegetical issues continued to be discussed in the later debates.

Congregationalists. Accordingly, each man tended to offer views that were *representing* each group's shared positions: Thus, Hooker states in the Preface of his *Survey*, "In all these I have leave to professe the joint judgement of all the Elders upon the river... That at a common meeting, I was desired by them all, to publish what now I do."¹¹⁸

Another important issue is the problem of a relationship between New England Congregationalism and the Separatists. It should be remembered that the origin of dispute—as shown in *A Letter of Many Ministers*—was related to the criticism that New Englanders adopted the practice of the Separatists. In the later debate between Rutherford and Hooker, the former continued to accuse the latter of standing in line with the Separatists such as John Robinson.¹¹⁹

Finally, it should be noted that there also exist some important *changes*, which are relevant to the Rutherford-Hooker dispute. Foremost among the apparent changes was the style of debate itself, which began to move away a simple pattern of Questions and Answers toward a more organized and systematic approach. Hooker's *Survey* is a good example: Unlike the ad-hoc style of the early debates, the numerous topics of Hooker's lengthy book is now systematically divided into four parts according to his ecclesiological view of the church: Church *as totum essentiale*, "its first rise and essence"; Church *as corpus organicum*, "as completed with all her Officers,"; Church *as constituted*, "the power that exercised in admissions, dispensations of sacraments, and censures"; finally, the consociation of Churches in classis, synods and councils.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ See "The Preface" of Hooker's *Survey*, 17.

¹¹⁹ Rutherford, in his *Due Right and Survey*, often quotes John Robinson's two works: *Justification of Separation from the Church of England* (Amsterdam : G. Thorp:1610), and *The People's Plea for the Exercise of Prophesie* (Leiden : W. Brewster, 1618).

¹²⁰ Hooker, *A Survey of the Summe of Church-Discipline*, 17-18.

Along with this change in style, the focus of the debate also began to move from the early practice-oriented (liturgy, sacraments) discussion toward a more theological and exegetical oriented controversy. Accordingly, the major parts of the Rutherford-Hooker dispute began to revolve around the doctrine of church covenant. For Hooker, it constituted the theological/biblical basis of his Congregational church government. For Rutherford, it was a *newly* invented human practice, which is unknown to Scripture. Their differing view of church covenant is rooted in their differing emphasis in their covenant theology. Thus, in the following two chapters, I will discuss the covenant theology of Rutherford and Hooker respectively, focusing on its ecclesiastical implications.

CHAPTER 3.

THE COVENANT THEOLOGY OF SAMUEL RUTHERFORD

I. Introduction

In order to better understand the theological underpinning of the Rutherford-Hooker controversy, this chapter examines the covenant theology of Rutherford. One of the major purposes of the following two chapters is to verify and examine the thesis, posited in the “Introduction,” that there exists a strong correlation between their different views of the church covenant and different emphasis in covenant theology. Hooker, for example, emphasized the dispensational administration of the biblical covenant, by which he attempted to justify his eschatological viewpoint of the church covenant. Compared with Hooker, as this chapter will show, Rutherford put more emphasis on the unchanging substance of the Covenant of Grace, which is based on the *atemporal* Covenant of Redemption, than on the ever-changing reality of God’s covenantal dispensation.¹ Before

¹ As for the covenant theology of Rutherford, see the works of John Coffey, O.K. Webb, Sang D. Kim, and Guy M. Richard: John Coffey, *Politics, Religion and British Revolutions: The Mind of Samuel Rutherford* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1997); Omri Kenneth Webb, “The Political Thought of Samuel Rutherford,” (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1964); San-Deog Kim, “Time and Eternity: A Study in Samuel Rutherford’s theology, with Reference to His Use of Scholastic Method,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Aberdeen, 2002); Guy M. Richard, *The Supremacy of God in the Theology of Samuel Rutherford* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2008); On Hooker’s covenant theology, John Ball, A. T. Denholm, D.W. O’Brien, Roland H. Bainton, Sargent Bush Jr., Diane M. Darrow, Frank Shuffelton, and E. H. Emerson have made some significant comments in their works: John H. Ball, *Chronicling The Souls Windings: Thomas Hooker and His Morphology of Conversion* (Lanham, New York, London: University Press of America, 1992); Andrew Thomas Denholm, “Thomas Hooker: Puritan Preacher, 1586-1647,” (Ph.D. diss., The Hartford Seminary Foundation, 1961); Daniel Walker O’Brien, “Law versus Discipline: An Examination of Episcopal and Congregational Modes in Richard Hooker’s *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* and Thomas Hooker’s *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 1981); Ronald H. Bainton, *Thomas Hooker and the Puritan Contribution to Democracy*, booklet reprinted from the *Bulletin of the Congregational Library*, vol. 10, No. 1(October 1958); Sargent Bush Jr., *The Writings of Thomas Hooker: Spiritual Adventure in Two Worlds* (The University of Wisconsin Press, 1980); Diane M. Darrow, “Thomas Hooker and the Puritan Art of Preaching,” (Ph.D. diss., University of California, 1968); Shuffelton, *Thomas Hooker 1586-164*; Everett H. Emerson, “Thomas Hooker and Reformed Theology: The Relationship of Hooker’s Conversion Preaching to Its Background,” (Ph.D. diss., Louisiana State University,

I proceed to examine Rutherford's covenant theology, I will briefly discuss a recent debate concerning the role of covenant in Rutherford's theology.

II. Is Samuel Rutherford a Covenant Theologian?

1. The Kim-Richard Debate

Rutherford's covenant theology has recently triggered a scholarly debate between San-Deog Kim and Guy M. Richard. The major issue is about whether or not Rutherford should be called a covenant theologian. Arguing that the covenant theology is not an organizing principle for his whole theological scheme, San-Deog Kim understands Rutherford as a covenant theologian only in a limited sense.² In response, Guy M. Richard has recently argued that the covenant idea, for Rutherford, "does in fact function as an architectonic principle." Kim's evaluation, according to Richard, overlooks the fact that covenant theology is not only a systematizing principle but also a theological structure for the biblical story of redemption, in which Rutherford establishes "the parameters for the temporal work of the triune God in salvation."³

Rutherford, in his *The Covenant of Life Opened or A Treatise of Covenant of Grace* (1655), a major text for his covenant theology, does attempt to write God's whole redemptive history—creation, fall, redemption, and consummation—in the covenantal framework of Scripture. Also, he divides the contents of his treatise according to a three-covenant system—The Covenant of Works or a Law-dispensation, the Covenant of Grace,

1955). This chapter will attempt to incorporate the insights of those previous studies on each man's covenant theology into our discussion about the Rutherford-Hooker ecclesiological controversy.

² San-Deog Kim, "Time and Eternity," 288, 295.

³ Richard, *The Supremacy of God*, 140, 160.

and the Covenant of Redemption or the Covenant of Suretyship—and discusses the inter-relationship among three covenants as well as the unique properties of each covenant in a very extensive way including the practical implications of covenant. Given the importance of the covenantal theme for Rutherford, one may wonder why Kim hesitates to call him a covenant theologian.

2. A Critical Reading of Kim's Argument

On the one hand, Kim seems to believe that one may be called a covenant theologian *only* when covenant must be an organizing principle for one's entire theology or "doctrinal summary of Christianity." It should be noted that Kim would not disagree with Richard that the covenant played a central role in Rutherford's soteriology. Still, however, Kim would hesitate to call Rutherford a covenant theologian because the covenantal theme, Kim argues, is largely limited to soteriology—rather than his "whole theological scheme."⁴ Kim's criteria for covenant theologians, however, seem to be too high and strict. On the basis of the same reason, Kim also refuses to call Johannes Cocceius, Herman Witsius, Patrick Gillespie—well-known theologians because of their covenantal scheme in explaining God's relationship with his creatures in salvation—covenant theologians. Although they use covenant in a systematic way, Kim argues, still it was not the organizing principle for their entire theology.

However, it is worthy of note that even though they used the concept of covenant in a systematic way, it was not the organizing principle by which they completely decided their own doctrinal summary of Christianity. Rather, in their writings Cocceius, Witsius and Gillespie are interested in the redemptive history of God according to the historical and biblical covenant relationships between God and

⁴ San-Deog Kim, "Time and Eternity," 294, 296.

His people. Therefore it is difficult to say that the concept of covenant was used as the synthetic method of a basic organizing principle.⁵

This passage shows Kim's too strict criteria by which Rutherford as well as Cocceius, Witsius, Gillespie may not be classified as covenant theologians because his notion of the covenant is reflected only in the soteriological perspective rather than in a whole theological scheme.⁶

On the contrary, Richard seems to use more moderate criteria for covenant theology or covenant theologians. It is true that he discusses Rutherford's covenant theology under the chapter heading, "Soteriology." However, given that covenant is an organizing principle for Rutherford's soteriology, Richard would argue, we should not have difficulty in calling him a covenant theologian.⁷

On the other hand, Kim's view of the covenant theology seems to proceed from a certain assumption that using the covenant theology as an organizing principle itself may render one's theology less "practical," less "historical" and less "relational."⁸ Accordingly, it may account for his hesitation to call Rutherford a covenant theologian in a strict sense because Rutherford's covenant theology, Kim finds, is very practical, historical, and relational. Thus, Kim concludes,

It is reasonable therefore to say that for Rutherford, covenant theology is not an organizing principle, but a *historically* focused approach, whereby the various

⁵ San-Deog Kim, "Time and Eternity," 294.

⁶ San-Deog Kim, "Time and Eternity," 295.

⁷ See chapter 4 of Richard, *The Supremacy of God*, 139-218. Quotes are from page 140 and 160.

⁸ San-Deog Kim, "Time and Eternity," 287. Accordingly, Kim argues that, for Rutherford, covenant theology is not an organizing principle of theology, but an expression of the divine relationship with humanity in terms of the redemptive history of God." *Ibid.*, 295.

periods of biblical history are unfolded and examined. Rutherford did not construct his systematic theology by using the method of a covenantal framework. Rather, he was interested in *practical* theology in terms of the *divine-human relationship* within the covenant theology.⁹

At this point, Kim is criticizing Charles M. Bell's one-sided view of Rutherford's covenant theology. Because of Rutherford's use of "mercantile language," Bell argues, there is no real distinction between God's covenant and man's covenant in Rutherford's covenant theology:

However, it must be pointed out that although Rutherford distinguishes between the covenant of man, and God's covenant, his use of mercantile language to describe God's covenant and God's actions in the covenant, renders the distinctions ineffective.¹⁰

From Bell's viewpoint, Rutherford as "the prince of federal theologians" cannot address the "fundamental axiom of an *amicable* relationship between God and humanity," while, according to Kim, it should be considered as a major characteristic of Rutherford's covenant theology.¹¹

Bell's reading of Rutherford is in line with James B. Torrance, Thomas F. Torrance, Donald Bruggink and R. T. Kendall who believed that the root of legalism was inherent in the covenant theology itself and that, accordingly, the federal theology in the seventeenth century was a radical departure from Calvin's theology of grace.¹² J. B.

⁹ San-Deog Kim, "Time and Eternity," 288. [Emphasis added]

¹⁰ Charles M. Bell, *Calvin and Scottish Theology: The Doctrine of Assurance* (Edinburgh: Handsel Press, 1985), 73.

¹¹ Bell, *Calvin and Scottish Theology*, 70. San-Deog Kim, "Time and Eternity," 268, 287. [emphasis added]

¹² R. T. Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997); idem, "The Puritan Modification of Calvin's Theology," in *John Calvin*, ed. W. Stanford Reid (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982); James B. Torrance, "The Contribution of McLeod Campbell to Scottish Theology,"

Torrance, for example, argues that during the seventeenth-century federal theology as a “subtle kind of legalism” began to creep in and alter the tenor of Scottish preaching.¹³

Accordingly, he concludes,

The seventeenth century marks the rise of so-called Federal Theology, which was to become the criterion of orthodoxy for the next two hundred years. In a number of significant ways it constituted a movement away from the older Scottish tradition of Knox, the Scots Confession, the pre-Westminster confessions as well as from the theology of Calvin himself.¹⁴

From this perspective, Rutherford should not be called both a covenant theologian and a true follower of Calvin.

It is true that many scholarly works on Reformed theology in the past tended to pose the Reformation against Protestant orthodoxy under the title “Calvin against the Calvinists.” This radical dichotomy, however, has been challenged and significantly modified on several fronts by scholars such as Paul Helm, Roger Nicole, John Woodbridge, Willem J. Van Asselt, Eef Dekker, Lyle Bierma, Carl R. Trueman, and Richard A. Muller whose close reading of the primary sources has offered a more

Scottish Journal of Theology 26/3 (1973): 295-311; idem, “The Covenant Concept in Scottish Theology and Politics,” in *The Covenant Connection: From Federal Theology to Modern Federalism*, ed. Daniel J. Elazar (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2000), 158; idem, “The Concept of Federal Theology—Was John Calvin a ‘Federal’ Theologian?” in *Calvinus Sacrae Scripturae Professor*, ed. Wilhelm H. Neuser (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 15-40; Thomas F. Torrance, *The School of Faith: The Catechisms of the Reformed Church*, (London: James Clark, 1959), xviii; idem, *Scottish Theology: From John Knox to John McLeod Campbell* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996); Donald J. Bruggink, “The Theology of Thomas Boston 1676-1732,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Edinburgh, 1956). James Torrance understands the fundamental nature of federal theology as conditionality or contract. “Where did this doctrine of conditional grace come from in such a Calvinistic land as Scotland? Different answers have been given. The most fundamental reason seems to be the confusion between a covenant and a contract which lay at the heart of federal theology.” James Torrance “The Covenant Concept in Scottish Theology and Politics,” 160.

¹³ James B. Torrance, “Covenant or Contract? —A Study of the Theological Background of Worship in Seventeenth-Century Scotland,” *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 23 (1970), 58-61; idem, “The Covenant Concept in Scottish Theology and Politics,” 149, 159.

¹⁴ J. B. Torrance, “Covenant or Contract?” 52.

nuanced account of the later Protestant development. As a result, contemporary readers of the Reformation and Post-Reformation may see a continuum between the reformers and their seventeenth century followers in the long term processes of systematic development and change.¹⁵

Kim also is very critical of the so-called “Calvin against the Calvinists” thesis and has demonstrated that Rutherford’s covenant theology does not fit into this model. However, while he has successfully showed that Rutherford’s theology is practical, historical, and relational, Kim has failed to find a link between those characteristics of Rutherford’s theology and his covenant theology. This occupies the heart of Richard’s criticism of Kim. For Richard, Rutherford’s theology is relational *precisely because of* his covenant theology:

Recently, San-Deog Kim has argued against seeing the covenant as an organizing principle in Rutherford’s theology and has suggested, instead, that covenant should be interpreted in a ‘practical’ or ‘relational way’, as expressing ‘God’s relationship with man in history.’ But Kim’s evaluation overlooks the fact that covenant theology is a systematizing principle in Rutherford *precisely because it is an expression of God’s relationship with his creatures.*¹⁶

Indeed, Puritan covenant theology, as Charles McCoy argues, actually helped Reformed theology to develop a “*meaningful interaction* between God and man.”¹⁷ And

¹⁵ There are some significant books which deal with this issue: Carl R. Trueman and R. Scott Clark, eds., *Protestant Scholasticism: Essays in Reappraisal* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1999); Willem J. Van Asselt and Eef Dekker, *Reformation and Scholasticism and Scholasticism: An Ecumenical Enterprise* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001); Richard A. Muller, *After Calvin: Studies in the Development of a Theological Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

¹⁶ Richard, *The Supremacy of God in the Theology of Samuel Rutherford*, 140. [emphasis added]

¹⁷ Charles McCoy, “The Covenant Theology of Johannes Cocceius,” (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1956), 137. Emphasis is mine. Apart from his problematic view of the so-called “two-traditions” thesis, one may agree with his understanding of the covenantal relationship as a “meaningful interaction” between God and man. As for Rutherford’s relation to the “two-traditions” thesis, see the section of “The Covenant of Redemption” (footnote) in this chapter.

Rutherford's covenant theology, from Richard's viewpoint, may become a good example demonstrating this "meaningful interaction."

In sum, a closer examination of the differing views of Kim and Richard has revealed that both of them, despite their apparent differences, agree on some basic points. First, Rutherford's covenant theology would best be understood in the soteriological context of God's redemptive work in history.¹⁸

Second, Rutherford's understanding of covenant is very relational, emphasizing mutual aspects of covenant, as expressed in his definition of the covenant as "mutual engagements betwixt parties," which involves both "given and taking" and "work and reward."¹⁹ Third, this mutual aspect of covenant does not negate the unilateral aspect of covenant nor support legalism.²⁰ On the contrary, for Rutherford, our covenantal relationship with God is always based on God's "goodness, grace, mercy to and for us."²¹

Finally, from this loving and graceful nature of covenantal relationship between God and man, both Kim and Richard see another fundamental characteristic of Rutherford's covenant theology, which is the "unity" of the covenant.²²

¹⁸ San-Deog Kim, "Time and Eternity," 296; Richard, *The Supremacy of God*, 140, 160.

¹⁹ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened or A Treatise of Covenant of Grace* (Edinburgh: Andro Anderson for Robert Brown, 1655), 15-16.

²⁰ Accordingly, both Kim and Richard strongly agree that Torrance's view of the covenant theology as the fountainhead of "perfidious legalism" must not be applicable to Rutherford's covenant theology. San-Deog Kim, "Time and Eternity," 269-270; Richard, *The Supremacy of God*, 141.

²¹ "Q. What way is God ours? A. By Covenant, *Ezek.34.24. Genes.17.7. Jere.32.38. Zech.13.9. ...Nor is God simply as God ours, but God as it were coming down in Christ to us Covenant-ways as God-incarnate, to make out his goodnesses, grace, mercy to and for us.*" Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 55. It indicates that Rutherford's view of the covenant is quite compatible with the so-called the unilateral covenant or the theology of grace.

²² San-Deog Kim, "Time and Eternity," 296. Richard, *The Supremacy of God*, 156.

III. Samuel Rutherford and the Biblical Doctrine of Covenant

The Covenant of Grace, for Rutherford, must be the “one covenant that unifies the Old and New Testaments and binds together the people of God into one people who are saved by their faith in either a coming or an already come Christ.”²³ Adam as a “private person,” Rutherford argues, was saved by the same faith as we have in Christ. Adam’s fall from the Law-dispensation (the Covenant of Works), Rutherford also emphasizes, does not mean that he fell “from the state of Gospel election to glory,” because Adam, in God’s intention, was never predestinated to a law glory.

Adam in his first state was not predestinate to a law glory, and to influences of God to carry him on to persevere: Nor could he bless God, that *he was chosen before the foundation of the world to be Law-holy, as Eph. 1.3.* What? Was not then *Adam* predestinated to life eternall, through Jesus Christ? He was: But not as a publick person representing all is sons, but as another single person, as *Abraham, or Jacob.*²⁴

Even in the Law-dispensation, Rutherford emphasizes, God had “a love designe, to set up a Theatre and stage of free grace,” which was to give him eternal life, through Jesus Christ.²⁵ From the perspective of God’s intention, Adam’s first state should be only a “time-dispensation, like a summer-house to be demolished again.”²⁶ In a very similar fashion, Rutherford attempts to explain other Old Testament covenantal dispensation such as Abrahamic, Mosaic and Davidic covenant from the perspective of the covenantal unity in God’s free grace in Christ—which, ultimately, would best be revealed in the New

²³ Richard, *The Supremacy of God*, 156.

²⁴ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 2.

²⁵ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 2.

²⁶ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 2-3.

Covenant. Why, then, should Rutherford put so much emphasis on the unity of covenant? His polemical context, first of all, may account for it.

1. Rutherford in the Polemical Context

Rutherford's biblical covenant concept was largely shaped by his concern to defend the Reformed orthodox position against the influence of the Arminians, the Socinians, the Antinomians, the Anabaptists as well as "the Papists" or the Jesuits. In more than eighteen chapters out of forty chapters in his *The Covenant of Life Opened*, Rutherford explicitly deals with the teachings of either one or more than one of those groups.²⁷ As for the unity of the biblical covenant, the first four groups tended to emphasize the fundamental difference between the Old and New Covenant:

First, the followers of Arminus,²⁸ according to Rutherford, put forward so called "the three-fold Covenant"—The Covenant of Nature (or the Covenant of Works), the Subservient Covenant (Mosaic Covenant), and the Covenant of Grace. They particularly emphasized the difference between the subservient covenant and the Covenant of Grace. In the former, God only approves righteousness and condemnes sins "with a promise of Temporall good things," while in the latter God gives "a promise of pardon and life to all

²⁷ Here are the major chapters in which Rutherford refutes them: The Antinomians- Chap. IV, XIX, XXV, XXVII, [part II] chap.IX, X; The Arminians - chap.VII, X, XI, XV, XVI, XIX, [part II] chap.III, IV, V, VII, IX, X ; The Socinians - chap.IV, XV, XIX, XXV, [part II] chap.III, IV, V, IX, X ; The Anabaptists - Chap.XIII, [part II] chap.IX; The "Papists" or the Jesuits- chap. XV, XIX, XXIV, XXV, [part II] chap. X.

²⁸ The Arminian covenantal principle was worked out more fully in his disciples, Phillip Limborch and Simon Episcopius. Limborch especially took radical Arminianism to the fringes of Pelagianism, denying the federal headship of Adam (allowing for a Law of Nature alone) and insisting upon a radical disjunction between Old and New Covenants. Limborch's rejection of the Old Mosaic Covenant went to the extent of denying the validity of the Ten Commandments for the Christian, claiming that the New Testament contains its own divine precepts and rule of conscience. Peter J. Wallace, "The Doctrine of the Covenant in the Elenctic Theology of Francis Turretin," *Mid America Journal of Theology* 13(2002): 152.

that believe and repent, to all mankind.”²⁹ Given this substantial distinction between the Old and New Testament, especially the Law of Moses was utterly opposed to grace and should have no place in the new covenant. It was to be abolished in Christ. This exclusion of the Mosaic Law from the postlapsarian covenant of salvation, as R. A. Muller argues, not only departs from the usual Reformed pattern, but also finds some reflections in the Amyraldian concept of the threefold covenant, explaining in part the debates over Amyraldian theology.³⁰ This three-fold covenant pattern continued to be followed by various Puritans and remained a subject of debate. Rutherford, for one, continued to view the three covenant model as problematic despite its use among the Reformed.

Second, like the Arminians, the Socinians also taught the threefold covenant, *foedus naturae*, *foedus legale*, *foedus gratiae*,³¹ emphasizing the progression of God’s revelation in which the final full and perfect experience of God’s redemption must be seen in the promises of the Covenant of Grace. In the law of Christ, they argued, two promises are contained, eternal life and the Holy Spirit, while in the law of Moses, according to their *Racovian Catechism*, neither eternal life nor the gift of the Spirit is

²⁹ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 57-65.

³⁰ Richard A. Muller, “The Federal Motif in Seventeenth Century Arminian Theology,” *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis* 62:1(1982): 104. [102-122]; idem, “Divine Covenants, Absolute and Conditional: John Cameron and the Early Orthodox Development of Reformed Covenant Theology,” *Mid-America Journal of Theology*, 17(2006):11-56; Sebastian Rehnman, “Is the Narrative of Redemption History Trichotomous or Dichotomous? - A Problem for Federal Theology,” *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis*, 80/3 (2000): 296-308.

| | <i>foedus. naturae</i> | <i>foedus legale</i> | <i>foedus gratiae</i> |
|------------|--------------------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| Extent | Adam(one man) | Israel | Mankind |
| Condition | Perfect obedience to the natural law | Perfect obedience to the law clarified by the Mosaic Law | Faith alone |
| Promise | Eden | Canaan | Eternal Life |
| Mediator | None | Moses | Christ |
| Efficacy | None, apart from perfect obedience | Restraining evil, pointing to humanity’s need | Inclination to God |
| Foundation | Creation | Exodus | Christ |

This chart is taken from Wallace’s discussion: “The Doctrine of the Covenant in the Elenctic Theology of Francis Turretin,” 157.

promised to those who obey the law.³² In keeping an emphasis on such a radical progress, they insisted that the Covenant of Grace could not be made only with the elect, because it would deny the superlative character of this covenant in distinction with the other covenants before. There is always a progression from the lesser to the greater—to limit the extent of the Covenant of Grace, therefore, would be to reject the progress of God’s redemptive purpose.³³ Given a radical disjunction between the Law covenant and the Grace covenant, accordingly, they argued that the Covenant of Grace is made with all and every one of mankind.³⁴

Third, the Antinomians or the Libertines put so much emphasis on the free grace of the new covenant that under the new Covenant of Grace, they argue, the root and branch of sin is taken away in Justification, “so that there is no sin nor punishment for sin in the justified man.”³⁵ From a radical disjunction of the new covenant from the old one, according to Rutherford, they could not see the place of “evangelical works” in the New Covenant, which had been affirmed by Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Baxter, and the “Authors of the book of Concord.”³⁶

Finally, many Anabaptists tended to maintain a radical discontinuity between the old and the new covenant: In the former, only temporal goods and earthly promises were

³² *Racovian Catechism* 5 (Amsterdam: Printed for Brooer Janz, 1652): 113. “nowhere will you discover in the law of Moses, either eternal life or the gift of the Spirit promised to those obeying the precepts of the law, as it is evident they are promised in the law given by Christ.”

³³ Wallace “The Doctrine of the Covenant in the Elenctic Theology of Francis Turretin,” 157-58; Brian G. Armstrong, *Calvinism and the Amyraut Heresy: Protestant Scholasticism and Humanism in Seventeenth Century France* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 144, 146-47.

³⁴ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 57, 118-129.

³⁵ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 10.

³⁶ “Evangelical works are necessaire,” Rutherford argues, “not to merite, but by the will and commandment of God.” Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 10, 82, 154.

granted to the Israelite, while in the latter, only the “real believers,” or the elect must be the members of the spiritual kingdom of Christ and, accordingly, be baptized.³⁷

In dealing with the Anabaptists, Rutherford attempted to make a distinction between two types of covenant, the “external covenant” and the “internal covenant.” While the former is related to the preaching of the Gospel, the conditional covenant, the national covenant, and the visible church, the latter has the characteristics of personal, absolute, everlasting covenant and is related to the invisible church.³⁸ The Anabaptists and some other sects tended to ignore the “existence of external Covenant” and would see “only internal Covenanting of the elect under the New Testament.”³⁹ But the biblical truth, Rutherford argues, is not only that Judas, Demas, Simon Magus were the members of the New Testament church—“by their profession in Covenant externally,” but also that the “Kingdomes of the World” such as all Egypt, Assyria and all the Gentiles must be covenanted with God *in an external way*—“Externall Covenant & the blessing of the Gospel Preached to the Nation”—according to the prophecy of Isaiah 2:1-2; 19:25; 60 and Revelation 11:15.⁴⁰

Given the basic distinction between external and internal covenant, Rutherford proceeds to discuss in detail each dispensation of God’s grace as revealed in diverse

³⁷ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 72-95. Quotes are from page 85. Also, see Rutherford’s *A Survey of the Spirituall AntiChrist* (London, 1648), 10. The tenets of the Anabaptists as summarized by Rutherford tend to emphasize both a radical disjunction between the Old Testament and the New Testament and the pure church under the New Covenant: “9. The visible Church consisteth of those that are perfect, and onely of those... 14. the second rancke of Anabaptists called *concionatores*, preachers, denied all the Old Testaments as abrogate.”

³⁸ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 118-119.

³⁹ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 79, 89; idem, *A Survey of the Spirituall AntiChrist*. Rutherford, here, seems to refer to some radical groups in England including the Brownists.

⁴⁰ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 88-89.

biblical covenants, defending their unity over against the views of the Arminians, the Socinians, the Antinomians as well as the Anabaptists.

2. Rutherford and the Covenant of Works

In explaining the Law-dispensation, as both Kim and Richard rightly point out, the main purpose of Rutherford is to emphasize the graciousness of the Covenant of Works.⁴¹ “Even in a Law-Covenant,” Rutherford emphasizes, “there is some out-breakings of Grace.”⁴² The characteristic of God’s grace was particularly revealed in his making covenant with humanity, giving them the promise of life, and even in death-threatening attached to it.⁴³

1) Making Covenant with Adam – The first covenant made with humanity, according to Rutherford, was a Covenant of Works, wherein life was promised to Adam and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience. Given the absence of any explicit biblical reference to such a covenant in the early chapters of Genesis, Rutherford nevertheless understands Genesis 2:17 as a strong indication that God made a covenant of life with Adam.⁴⁴

⁴¹ San-Deog Kim, “Time and Eternity,” 298; Richard, *The Supremacy of God*, 148.

⁴² Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 35.

⁴³ Ernest F. Kevan makes a very similar point at length in his book, *The Grace of Law: A Study in Puritan Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1976). He particularly points out that “the essence of man’s delight”—or “Adam’s highest joy and good”—was to be found in the “blessedness of man under God’s gracious Law.” See page 60-62, 110-113.

⁴⁴ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 19, 20-23, 228. It should be noted that Rutherford, here, does not reject the covenant of works on the same ground as he rejects church covenant—that Scripture does not mention it. Rutherford tends to understand the latter as a *newly* introduced *practice* by the New Englanders while the former as a biblically warranted *concept*.

However, even before he entered into the Covenant of Works, Rutherford argues, Adam as a creature initially came under the “Covenant naturall,” which God made with all creatures in his creation: “God hath made a sort of naturall Covenant with night and day, *Jer.*31.35. For all are his servants, *Psal.*119.91, that they should be faithfull to their own naturall ends to act for him, *Jer.*5.22. *Jer.*31.37. *Psal.*124.1,2,3,4.”⁴⁵ Unlike other creatures, Adam as a “reasonable creature” owes himself to God particularly “to obey so far as the Law written in the heart carries him, to love God, trust in him, fear him.”⁴⁶ It may not yet be called the Law-Covenant, however, because there was no promise of life as a reward of the work of obedience here.

Now, in making a “Law-Covenant” with Adam as a reasonable creature “endued with the Image of God,” God has shown his great mercy to his creature⁴⁷: It was God’s mercy to give him the glorious image of God, which consists in true righteousness, knowledge of God, and holiness (*Gen.*1:26; *Eph.* 4:24; *Col.* 3:10) while he might have given to Adam something inferior to the image of God. Second, man’s dominion over the creatures is also of underserved God’s goodness. Finally, the Covenant of Works itself which Sovereign God out made with man, Rutherford argues, “is underserved condescending”:

God bargains for hire, do this and live, whereas he may bide a Sovereign Law-

⁴⁵ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 18, 19. In this covenant, Rutherford says, animals are more faithfull to their ends than men, quoting from *Isa.*1:3 and *Jer.*8:7. “The ox and the asse being more knowing to their owner, and the swallow and the crane being more discerning their times, than men are.”

⁴⁶ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 19.

⁴⁷ At this point, Rutherford seems to believe that there exists a strong connection between the image of God and his making a special covenantal relationship with humanity: “But man being considered as indued with the Image of God, so the Holy God made with him a Covenant of life, with Commandments, through positive and Morall.” Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 19.

giver and charge and command us, is overcoming goodness. Law is honeyed with love, and hire; it is mercy that for our penny of obedience, so rich a wage as communion with God is given⁴⁸

Furthermore, God's goodness and love are even more clearly revealed in his promise of life attached to the Covenant of Works.

2) *The Promise of Life* – “What is meant by life promised in the Covenant of Works?”

Though it would not be our life in Christ or the New Covenant—given to us as the fruit of the merit of Christ's blood—nevertheless, Rutherford answers, it must be “life everlasting” or “a Law-life happily a communion with GOD in Glory.”⁴⁹ This everlasting life, according to Rutherford, should be understood even as “free reward” or “free gift of GOD,” because there is no intrinsic connection, *ex natura rei*, or “innate proportion” between our natural obedience and the supernatural/spiritual reward of God.⁵⁰ In response to Rutherford's emphasis on the love and gracious nature of the Covenant of Works, however, one may point out the legal aspect of the same covenant—as revealed in its death threatening. How, then, should one read both aspects of the covenant?

3) *Death Threatening* – “The death threatened, Gen.2.17” must be read, Rutherford

⁴⁸ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 35.

⁴⁹ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 22, 49-50; Rutherford, *Rutherford's Catechism: Containing the Sum of Christian Religion*, new edition (Edinburgh: Blue Banner Productions, 1998), 28.

⁵⁰ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 22-23. Rutherford's emphasis on the spiritual nature of this reward, however, does not lead him to ignore the possibility of “earthly blessings” attached to this promise: “But the life he lived, and the creatures for his service seems not to belong to this life, for the creatures were given to Adam, he not working for them. *Yet I should not oppose, if any say that earthly blessings were given to Adam, as a reward of an actual obedience*” Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 49-50. [Emphasis added]

answers, “according to the *intent* of the Threatner, partly legall, partly Evangelick.”⁵¹

Rutherford makes a distinction between “pure and only threatnings” as revealed to us in the Law and God’s absolute decree or intention, which is not revealed to us in the Law itself:

for there are two sort of threatnings, some pure and only threatnings, which reveal to us, what God may, in Law, do, but not what he hath decreed and intended, *actu secundo & quoad eventum*, to do, and bring to passe.... The words of the Law do reveal, what the Law, but do not reveal the intention and absolute decree of the Law-giver, and what punishment actually, & *quod eventum* shall be inflicted upon the guilty, and what shall come to pass as a thing decreed of the Lord.⁵²

Accordingly, when God gave Adam the threatning of the law and death in Genesis 2:17, God already had an “Evangelical remedy”—which was the Christ— for him: “For when the Lord said, in the day that thou eats thou shalt die... His meaning was, except I provide an Evangelick remedy and a Savior.”⁵³ It is interesting to note that Rutherford attempts to apply a very similar distinction—between threatning itself (material) and God’s intention/decree (formal)—to God’s threatnings to believers under the Covenant of Grace:

The threatnings to beleevers, especially such as are legall (*if you beleevers fall away, ye shall eternally perish*) are to beleevers, though *materially* legall, peremptorie, and admit no exception, yet they are *formally* and in the Lords *intention* directed to them upon an Evangelick intention, nor do they say that the Lord intends and decrees that they shall eternally perish, for he hath predestinate them to the contrary, to wit, to grace and glory, *Ephes. 1.4.*⁵⁴

⁵¹ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 3. [Emphasis added]

⁵² Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 4.

⁵³ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 5.

⁵⁴ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 8. Emphasis is added to the words “formally” and “intention.”

Therefore, God's threatening must be interpreted in an evangelical way: God's *evangelical intention* is to press believers to work out their salvation in fear and trembling and to cleave to Christ.⁵⁵ The above passage indicates that there exists a continuity between Rutherford's reading of the law-dispensation (the Covenant of Works) and his reading of the following dispensation of the Covenant of Grace.

3. Rutherford and the Covenant of Grace

In defending the unity of the Covenant of Grace, Rutherford emphasizes God's absolute "Preveening" or free grace on the one hand and man's evangelical obedience or "mortification" on the other. His effort to maintain these two aspects of the Covenant of Grace may be best exemplified in his understanding of the Mosaic Covenant. Particularly, he denies the concept of the "subservient" covenant and strongly affirms the *one* Covenant of Grace: "Beside there are not here three Covenants, but one, there is no word of the subservient Covenant with Israel in Sinai."⁵⁶ Accordingly, he does not hesitate to assert that "The Law" in the Mosaic covenant "was the very Covenant of Grace."⁵⁷ To prove this point, Rutherford attempts to demonstrate that the covenant made at Horeb was the same covenant which God made with Abraham.⁵⁸

1) *The Abrahamic Covenant* – The Abrahamic covenant, for Rutherford, becomes a decisive evidence for the covenantal unity in Scripture. In responding to his opponents'

⁵⁵ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 8, 193.

⁵⁶ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 61.

⁵⁷ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 60.

⁵⁸ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 60-65.

view of a radical disjunction between the Old and the New Covenant, Rutherford argues that the Covenant of Grace which God contracted with us in the New Covenant is the same with the covenant previously made with Abraham: “There is no ground to say that the Covenant made with Abraham, and with us under the N. Test. are different Covenants.”⁵⁹ The Apostle Paul maintains that the same Covenant made with Abraham is made with the Corinthians (2 Cor.6:16).⁶⁰ Accordingly, Rutherford provides the spiritual interpretation of both the promise and “the seed” in the Abrahamic Covenant.

The promise was not only of temporal and earthly blessings such as the multiplication of his seed, rendering his name illustrious, and the possession of the land of Canaan but also principally of spiritual and heavenly blessings, included in the benediction pronounced upon Abraham—“In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed” (Gen.12:3). Most of all, Rutherford emphasizes that the “promised seed” in Abrahamic Covenant would not mean many people but “one person who is Christ” (Gal.3:16).⁶¹ In short, there exists a substantial continuity between the Abrahamic Covenant and the New Covenant in Christ. Now, given this unity between the two covenants, Rutherford attempts to incorporate the Mosaic Covenant into this covenantal unity.

2) *The Mosaic Covenant* – Rutherford firmly believes that the Mosaic Covenant can never be separated from the one and eternal Covenant of Grace. He disagrees with the opinions that the Sinaitic covenant is either the Covenant of Works or a third species of covenant—

⁵⁹ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 81.

⁶⁰ “I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 75.

⁶¹ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 312-14.

distinct from the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace.⁶² Instead, Rutherford takes a strong view of the gracious nature of the Mosaic Covenant⁶³ over against the Arminian emphasis on its work principle (“do and live”), the spirit of bondage, legalism, this-worldly-blessings.⁶⁴

First, refuting the Arminian views that in the subservient covenant “God only approves righteousness and condemns sin; in that of Grace he pardons and revues,” Rutherford argues that true righteousness and forgiveness were revealed to David, Josiah, Jehoshaphat, Samuel, Baruch, Gideon, Daniel, and the Prophets “under that subservient Covenant!”

Second, the work principle of “do and live” in the Law had an evangelical purpose that “they might flee to Christ in whom they believed; else the fathers must be saved and justified by works contrair to Rom.2. Rom.4. Heb.11.”

Third, the distinction between the “spirit of bondage” and the “spirit of adoption” for the saints of the Old Testament are only “accidentall.” They also were true “heirs and Sons” (Gal.4:1-2) or “adopted Sons” as expressed in the Book of the Proverbs.

⁶² Against the former view, Rutherford argues, “But the truth is, the Law as pressed upon Israel was not a Covenant of Works.” As for the latter view, as we discussed before, he denied the existence of the “subservient” covenant.

⁶³ Rutherford’s view here is rather strong when compared with other Reformed theologians such as Edward Fisher, Thomas Boston, and Francis Turretin who take a *moderate* view on the nature of the Mosaic Covenant maintaining that the elements of both covenants—the covenant of works and the covenant of grace—should be present as a “mixed” form or dispensation. See Boston’s annotation on Edward Fisher, *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*, in *The Complete Works of Thomas Boston*. 12 vols, with a new introduction by Joel R. Beeke and Randall J. Pederson (Stoke-on-Trent, UK: Tentmaker Publications, 2002, 1853), vol. 7, 197-204 . Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, translated by George Musgrave Giger and edited by James T. Dennison (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Publishing, 1992), 12.12.3-22; Muller, “The Federal Motif in Seventeenth Century Arminian Theology,” 102-122; idem, “Divine Covenants, Absolute and Conditional,” 11-56; Rehnman, “Is the Narrative of Redemption History Trichotomous or Dichotomous?” 296-308.

⁶⁴ As for the below five reasons for the gracious nature of the Mosaic Covenant, see Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 58-61.

Fourth, there was true humiliation for sins under the Old Covenant. Accordingly, David, Jonah, Hezekiah and “all beleevers then, as now, were pardoned and justified.”

Finally, Canaan as the promised blessings was not only an earthly blessing but also a “type for Heaven.”

As for the Decalogue in the Mosaic Covenant, Rutherford argues that it must be read from the viewpoint of its “Preface.” At this point, he emphasizes the twofold structure of both the Abrahamic Covenant and the Decalogue, pointing out their similarities: According to the chart below, “walk before me [the Lord]” (Gen.17:1) is required in Abraham’s Covenant,⁶⁵ while God the Redeemer—as expressed in “I am the Lord your God who led you out of... Egypt” (Exod.20:2)—is included in the preface of the Decalogue.

Continuity between the Abrahamic Covenant and the Decalogue

| The Abrahamic Covenant | | The Decalogue |
|--|---|---|
| God’s Promise: “I am the all-sufficient Lord” | ➔ | “I am the Lord your God who led you out of ... Egypt” |
| Man’s Duties: “You will walk before Me” | ➔ | “You shall not have other gods before Me.” “You shall not make images for yourself.” : : “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house...” |

Comparing the two, Rutherford makes some significant points regarding the issue of continuity between the two covenantal dispensations: First, given the first part, the promise (preevening grace) of God as the “All-Sufficient Lord” and the Redeemer, the second part, the law or man’s duty should not be taken as a Covenant of Works. Second,

⁶⁵ “Walk before me” is interpreted by Rutherford as follows: “to walk in all the ways of the Lord, to fear and love him.”

it indicates that the Decalogue as the moral law should always function even in the Covenant of Grace. Third, both covenants are ultimately pointing at Christ as the substance of the covenantal unity. Rutherford has already explained the gracious nature of the Abrahamic covenant in terms of “the promised SEED.” Now, in the course of God’s redemptive history, God’s all-sufficiency is fully demonstrated in Christ, the promised seed. Likewise, the redeeming act of God as expressed in the Preface of the Decalogue would be fully revealed in the “true City of Refuge Christ Jesus, who redeemed them out of the spirituall bondage of sin.”⁶⁶

In short, the Law in the Abrahamic Covenant as well as in the Mosaic Covenant, from Rutherford’s viewpoint, must not be considered as something incompatible with his teaching of God’s absolute free grace in the Covenant of Grace. The elect in both the Old and New Covenant were supposed to find the true source of their obedience or “perfect walk” in the very substance of the covenant, which is the promised seed or Christ.⁶⁷

3) *Evangelical Obedience under the New Covenant* – Rutherford made a long list of aspects of Christian mortification,⁶⁸ in which he discusses in detail the Christian duty to

⁶⁶ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 60.

⁶⁷ Rutherford, while denying any attempts to separate the Mosaic covenant from the one and eternal covenant of grace, willingly agreed that “the full abundance of grace and of a new heart, was reserved until now [The New Covenant].” Because “the Law could not make perfect nor give pardon, in the blood of beasts; as touching that legall dispensation.” Soon, however, Rutherford reaffirms the fundamental continuity between the Old and New Covenant, whose ground is Christ: “but both grace, the Spirit, pardon, righteousnesse and life were received and believed; by looking on Christ to come.” Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 59-60.

⁶⁸ It includes mortification to “self,” “the will,” “our life,” “wisdom,” “all the gifts of the mind,” “learning, to books, and book-vanity,” “Mammon,” “honour,” “injuries,” “an office or a place of authority,” “pleasure,” “all the world,” “creature-comforts: Friends, family, country,” “valour in wars, honourable birth, blood and noble Families,” “youth, pastime, play, laughter, hunger, fullness,” “Ordinance: Externall Temple worship, Jerusalem,” “our own prayer,” “our own faith & hope (created by us),” “comforts & feeling,” “grace in us created by ourselves,” “the created sweetnesse of heaven,” “the letter of promise (rather than

obey God's commandments. He particularly emphasizes our duty not to rely on ourselves (mortification to self or to our own feeling, prayer, faith, hope, and grace etc that are created by us) but to trust in God alone. Also, he focuses on our duty to forgive (mortification to injuries)⁶⁹ and love others. It shows that the absolute gracious nature of the Covenant of Grace does not negate the conditional aspects of the covenant, which emphasizes our obedience to the law of Christ in our covenantal life:

The way that cryeth down duties and sanctification, is not the way of grace; grace is an innocent thing, and will not take men off from duties, grace destroyeth not obedience; Christ has made faith a friend to the Law.⁷⁰

However, Rutherford understands the covenantal duty in terms of “evangelical works” or “Gospel-obedience,” or “evangelical obedience.” Why, then, should it be called “evangelical?”

First, the law in the Covenant of Grace is not the same law as the law before the Fall. Rutherford would call it the evangelical law or the law of Christ. While the law under the Covenant of Works is based on the works principle “Do this and thou shalt live,” the evangelical law under the Covenant of Grace is based upon “Gospel intention to chase them to Christ, Gal.3.23.” Even the condition of belief in the Gospel is a “gift of grace.”⁷¹

Christ himself), “our-shining of God,” “providences of fair weather, Court, the blessings of a godly King, miraculous deliverance (dividing the Red Sea), defeat of enemies,” and, finally, “Mortification to dead worship, sables ceremonies and formal worship.” See chapter 4 of *The Covenant of Life Opened*, part II, 257-281.

⁶⁹ Mortification to injury is well expressed by Jesus (“Father forgive them..”) & Steven (Acts 7) in their act of forgiving enemies.

⁷⁰ Rutherford, *The Tryal and Triumph of Faith* (London, 1645), Sermon XV, 121.

⁷¹ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 10, 193, 198-99, 213. Particularly see Chap. XIX (152-181) for the place of the “evangelical works” in the New Covenant. Since Jesus Christ has fulfilled the conditions of the covenant—even “he himself absolutely work the condition [of faith] in us”—the requirement of covenantal justice from us should be “evangelical” rather than “legal.” *Ibid.*, 8-9, 12, 16,

Second, accordingly, Rutherford makes a distinction between “legal” and “evangelical obedience.” While the purpose of the former is to gain merits (for Adam in his pre-Fall state), the latter’s motivation is to obey God’s law out of filial duty and love toward the commandments of “our Father.”⁷²

Finally, those who are under the Covenant of Grace, Rutherford emphasizes, find a “threefold sweetness in obedience,” which are “an inbred sweetness in the command,” “the strength by which he acts,” and an “inbred sweetness in a communion with God.”⁷³ Our sweet communion with Christ, according to Rutherford, must be the fundamental source of all kinds of benefits in our covenantal relationship with God. In every believer who is in the Covenant of Grace and enjoys this sweet communion with Christ, those two aspects of the bilateral covenant—God’s absolute free grace and man’s evangelical obedience—will ultimately work in perfect harmony.

In sum, detailed study of Rutherford’s Covenant of Grace reveals that the fundamental substance of covenantal unity between the Old and the New Covenant is Christ, the “promised seed.” Even in the Covenant of Works, he repeatedly emphasizes, it was always God’s unchanging *intention* to save man through the “evangelical remedy,” which is Christ.⁷⁴

But where do we find this eternal *intention* or decree of God? And how can we be assured that it is Christ who has always been the ultimate foundation of all dispensation of God’s covenant in the Scripture? In reply, Rutherford would argue that “The covenant of

216-17, 344-45, 338, 355-56.

⁷² Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 311, 315.

⁷³ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 70-71.

⁷⁴ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 59-60.

Suretyship” (Redemption) as revealed in many parts of Scripture is the very place where one should find those answers.

4. The Covenant of Redemption⁷⁵

The definition of the Covenant of Suretyship, according to Rutherford, must be considered in a twofold way: First, it is an “in time” transaction between Jehovah and Christ, in his actual discharge of his threefold office of King, Priest, and Prophet. Second, it is an “eternall transaction and compact between Jehovah and the second Person the Son of God, who gave personall consent that he should be the Undertaker, and no other” for the salvation of humanity:

Jehovah from eternity decrees that the Son be the designed person who shall take on our nature, and lay down his life for sinners: The Lord promises he shall have a redeemed seed for a reward. In this offer Jehovah ingadges that we shall be Christs seed, and so shall be, by the immortall seed, born again, and shall believe and be gifted to Christ as saved; here Jehovah undertakes that we shall believe. 2. *Christ* agrees to the designed person: *It is written of me*, and so decreed of God from eternity, *I delight to do thy will*, I shall lay down my life for these given to me: And here the other party, *Jesus Christ* coming by his own consent, does also undertake, 1. In dying to ransome us from hell, and merit life to us, and make us his purchase. So 2. he being a Saviour by merit, he by his death purchaseth the Spirit, and meriteth the new heart, and so undertakes for us.⁷⁶

This covenant is a “closed and concluded” or “an ended bargain from everlasting” because the Parties in the covenant were eternally coexistent God Jehovah and His Son:

⁷⁵ As for the major texts for Rutherford’s view of the Covenant of Redemption, see *The Covenant of Life Opened*, part II, 225-368.; *The Tryal and Triumph of Faith*, Sermon VII & VIII, 44-65. For the contemporary scholarly discussion of the Covenant of Redemption, see Steven M. Baugh, “Galatians 3:20 and the Covenant of Redemption,” *Westminster Theological Journal*, 66:1(2004): 49-70; Carol A. Williams, “The Decree of Redemption is in Effect a Covenant: David Dickson and the Covenant of Redemption” (Ph.D. diss., Calvin Theological Seminary, 2005); Carl R. Trueman, “From Calvin to Gillespie on Covenant: Mythological Excess or an Exercise in Doctrinal Development?” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 11: 4 (2009): 378-397.

⁷⁶ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 333.

“The Lord Jehovah and the Son party consenting before time, and his Manhood in time becoming one who imbraces the Covenant of Suretyship, and calls the Lord his God.”⁷⁷

Also, Christ’s relationship to this covenant requires a “double consideration.” On the one hand, he is the “one as God; so he is one with the Father and Spirit and the Lord and the Author of the Covenant.” On the other hand, he is the Mediator “and so he is on our side of the Covenant.” Thus, the Covenant of Redemption should be considered as an eternal covenant made between the triune God and Christ.⁷⁸

For Rutherford, this eternal covenant between Jehovah and the Son is significant for a number of reasons. First, it is the eternal foundation for the covenantal unity; second, it is the eternal ground of the Covenant of Grace; third, Rutherford used this covenant in refuting the erroneous doctrines of the Arminians and the Socinians; fourth, he also used it in a very practical way, as the doctrine of assurance.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 302, 309, 333.

⁷⁸ As for the Holy Spirit, Rutherford states that the Spirit also participates in this Covenant of Redemption—though not as a formal party. Only Jehovah and the Son, Rutherford says, are the “formal parties in this compact”: “And the Spirit being the same very *God* with the *Father* and the *Son*, also is by his own consent designed comforter and actor in his way by the anointing without measure, that he puts on the Man Christ, and the grace given to his members: But the only formall parties in the compact are the *Lord Jehovah* and the *Son* party consenting before time, and his Manhood in time becoming one who imbraces the Covenant of Suretyship, and calls the Lord his God, *Ps.22.1. Joh.20.17. Rev.3.12. Isa.55.5.*” See Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 333.

⁷⁹ In addition, a detailed examination of Rutherford’s doctrine of the Covenant of Suretyship would provide a good occasion for modern scholarship to probe issues of the development of covenantal thought in continuity and discontinuity with earlier Reformed formulations. As for the detailed discussion about this issue, see Muller’s following works: Muller, “Covenant and Conscience in English Reformed Theology: Three Variations on a 17th Century Theme.” *Westminster Theological Journal* 42 (1980): 308-334; “The Spirit and the Covenant: John Gill’s Critique of the *Pactum Salutis*,” *Foundations: A Baptist Journal of History and Theology*. 24:1 (Jan. 1981): 4-14; “The Federal Motif in Seventeenth Century Arminian Theology,” *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis* 62:1(1982): 102-122; idem, *The Unaccommodated Calvin: Studies in the Foundation of a Theological Tradition* (Oxford University Press, 2000); “The Covenant of Works and the Stability of Divine Law in 17th C. Reformed Orthodoxy: A Study in the Theology of Herman Witsius and Wilhelmus à Brakel” *After Calvin: Studies in the development of a theological tradition* (Oxford University Press, 2003); “Divine Covenants, Absolute and Conditional: John Cameron and the Early Orthodox Development of Reformed Covenant Theology,” *Mid-America Journal of Theology*, 17(2006):11-56; “Toward the *Pactum Salutis*: Locating the Origins of a Concept.” *Mid-America Journal of Theology* (2007): 11-65.

1) *Rutherford's 13 Arguments* – Given the significance of the Covenant of Redemption, Rutherford seems to make a special effort to prove the existence of it with his thirteen arguments, which may be summarized as follows:

Rutherford's 13 Arguments for the Covenant of Suretyship

| | Title or Summary of Argument | Scriptural reference | Issues |
|----|--|--|--|
| 1 | Christ-Man's calling God "His God" proves that He must be in covenant with God (God became "their God" in OT through covenant) | Ps. 40:8; 45:7; 89; Isa.55.4; Rev.3:12 | "Covenant Word" or covenant compellation" |
| 2 | The Son is to be called God's "Servant" or "Mediator" (office) not by "necessity of nature" but by "free agreement & consent" | Isa.42:1,6;Ezek.34:23; Zech.13:7; Mal.3:1 | The "Office" of Mediator or Servant |
| 3 | Christ's free consent to be our Surety and Redeemer, offering His service to God proves a mutual agreement bet. Jehovah and the Son | Ps.40:6; Heb.7:22; 10:5 Matt.20:28; Lk.19 10;Isa.53:10;Rom.8:3, 32; Matt.21:37 | Christ's voluntary or free consent |
| 4 | The Father's giving of the elect to Christ to be redeemed, and the Son's willing to receive them proves a covenant gone before. | John.6:37,39 ⁸⁰ | "The elect" in the covenant of redemption |
| 5 | Christ's receiving of the Seals of the Old and New Covenant (Circumcision, Baptism) proves that there is such a Covenant. | John.1:29; Gen.17:7; Exod.12:48; Matt.28:20; Col.2:11,12 | "The Seals" of the Covenant. |
| 6 | The Liberty of the Father and the Son in taking "Gospel-way" (covenant condescension) instead of taking a "Law-way" | Gen.2:17 | God's "liberty" to take covenant condescension |
| 7 | The promises made to Christ (the seed) about forgiveness, peace, perseverance, a new heart, life eternal, actual influence, the knowledge of God etc on the condition that Christ fulfills his works of Mediator-God-Man proves a Covenant of Suretyship between Jehovah and Christ. | Jer.31:33,34; Heb. 8:12; Gal.3:16; Jer. 32:39,40;Isa.2:1,2;54:10;59:21;60:1-6 Ezek.34:25;36: 26, 27; Lev.26:6,11, 12; Ps.22:27; 2Cor. 1:20 | "The Promises" made to Christ |
| 8 | Christ's prayer in John 17 claiming the things promised and prophesied supposes a Covenant between the Father and the Son | John.17:5; Isa.22:22-23; Zech.3:8;6:12-13; Mic.5:4; Ps.72:7 | Christ's prayer suiting things promised. |
| 9 | Christ (the Son) is bidden by the Father ask a people from God and the Lord promised that He will hear and grant. | Ps.2:8; 89:26-28 | Christ's asking for a people at the Father's bidding |
| 10 | The relation of Christ's working for wages, and the Lord's paying him his wages, does prove this Covenant. | Isa.49:4-6; 53:10-12; Zech.11:12; Phil.2:9 | Christ's work for "wages" |
| 11 | The Lord's oath to Christ when He is made eternal Priest and King proves this Covenant. | Heb.7:21; Ps.110:4 Mal.2:5; Ps.89:35; Acts 2:30;Ps.132:11 | Christ's entering the office of Priest and King |

⁸⁰ Rutherford intentionally put "Covenant" in John 6:39 "*And this is the Fathers (Covenant-) will that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son and beleeveth on him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up (by Covenant and Gospel-promise) at the last day.*" Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 294.

| | | | |
|----|--|--|--|
| 12 | If Christ the Son was designed and fore-ordained before creation and if there existed the mutual delights of love between the Father and the Son in their thoughts of the covenant-love to man, “then was the bargain of love closed and subscribed before witnesses from eternity.” | Prov.8:22-31; Jer.31:3; 1Pet.1:20 | Mutual delights of “eternal love” between the Father and the Son in saving the elect |
| 13 | He who took not on him to be Priest and King, but upon the call of God must be made Priest and King by Covenant | Ps.2:6; Heb.5:5; 7:22 Acts13:33 Mal.2:5; 2King11: 17; 2Sam. 5:3 | Christ’s taking office of Priest and King by “God’s call” |

The above thirteen arguments point to an important fact that, given the absence of an explicit biblical proof for such a covenant, Rutherford follows the Reformed practice of juxtaposing texts and drawing what the Westminster divines called “good and necessary conclusions,” using combination of logical reasoning and biblical support in proving a pre-temporal covenant of Suretyship.⁸¹ For example, in his argument #6, Rutherford reads Genesis 2:17 and says “God might have followed a Law-way with al flesh [according to death-threatening in Gen.2:17], & not have sent his Son, & the Son might have refused to be sent. *Ergo*, by compact Christ came.”⁸² Rutherford uses a similar logic in Arguments #1, #2, #3, #7, #10, #11, and #13, but he pays particular attention to biblical words such as “servant (Isa.42:1),” “messenger (Mal.3:1),” “surety (Heb.7:22),” “king (Ps.2:6),” and “(eternal) priest (Ps.110:4).” Given the co-equal status of the persons of the Trinity, Rutherford argues, those titles or compellations found in biblical texts should be good evidences to show that a certain covenant was made between Jehovah and Christ. Rutherford’s reasoning, though somewhat speculative, nevertheless remains as “one of the final hermeneutical steps,” especially in light of the fact that, as G. M. Richard rightly

⁸¹ See, The Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter 1, article 6. As for the detailed discussion of Reformed use of logic in biblical interpretation, see Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, vol.2 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 497-501.

⁸² Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 296.

points out, it is largely done through his biblical exegesis.⁸³

Rutherford seems to be particularly interested in biblical passages, which may reveal, first, the *freedom* of God the Father and the Son in giving and receiving the covenantal promises (Argument #2, #3, #4, #6); second, the *free grace* of God as exemplified in the Davidic Covenant (Ps. 89, 110, 132 and Isa. 55 as in Argument #1, #9, #11); third, the *eternal Kingship* and *Priesthood* of Christ, which is fore-ordained before the foundations of the world (Argument #11, #13). These three elements of “freedom,” “free grace,” and “eternity,” according to Rutherford, are the three “properties of the Covenant of Suretyship.”⁸⁴

Furthermore, one may find another significant point that the Covenant of Redemption is the ultimate source of the covenantal unity: On the one hand, both the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace are closely connected in this eternal and “closed bargain,” where Christ became the mediator in both covenants. He is the mediator in the Covenant of Works as a “satisfier,” “doer,” and “obedient fulfiller” of it in all points. Also, he is the mediator in the Covenant of Grace as the “Evangelick Surety” for the elect.⁸⁵ Accordingly, the promise of eternal life, once attached to the Covenant of Works, is now given to all believers in the Covenant of Grace because of Christ, the “Mediator” in both covenants for the elect. On the other hand, both the Old and the New

⁸³ Richard, *The Supremacy of God*, 142. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, vol.2, 501. Both Rutherford’s use of logic in biblical interpretation and G. M. Richard’s evaluation of it seem to support Muller’s statement: “Few of the orthodox or scholastic Protestants lapsed into constant or exclusive recourse to syllogism as a method of exposition.” Muller, “Calvin and the Calvinists: Assessing Continuities and Discontinuities Between the Reformation and Orthodoxy,” (part I) *Calvin Theological Journal* 30 (1995), 369.

⁸⁴ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 361-363.

⁸⁵ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 225, 253, 260. Cf. See Trueman’s discussion of George Gillespie’s view of the covenant of redemption. “From Calvin to Gillespie on Covenant,” 387-393.

Covenant are also closely related in this Covenant of Redemption. The biblical references of Rutherford's thirteen arguments for the Covenant of Redemption are taken from almost every dispensation of God's Old and New Covenant—including the Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, and New Covenant. In short, while the subjects, promises, conditions, and wages of the Covenant of Redemption make it distinct from the Covenant of Grace, nevertheless, Rutherford concludes, the former should never be separated from the latter.⁸⁶ How, then, are these two covenants related?

2) *The Ground of the Covenant of Grace* – The Covenant of Redemption must be the ground of Christ's satisfaction for us: "No satisfaction could be at all except Christ had died," Rutherford argues, "because all the satisfaction of a Surety might in Law have been *refused*."⁸⁷ It is entirely possible, he continues, that there would be no satisfaction—and God might have eternally punished Adam and all his offspring "in a Law-way" —if there had not been a punishment agreed upon between the triune God and the Mediator by a "special Covenant." Also, believers' right to claim "freedom from the second death," "a new heart," and "everlasting life," promised in the Covenant of Grace, would have been impossible, if Christ did not get those promises for us as his "right of buying" or "wages" according to a special covenant of suretyship. Accordingly, Rutherford argues, the Covenant of Redemption must be the *ground* of the Covenant of Grace.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 308-311.

⁸⁷ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 228. [Emphasis added]

⁸⁸ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 228-250, Particularly, Rutherford understands the promised made to Christ in the covenant of Suretyship as the "key and corner stone" for the covenant of grace: "The Speciall and cardinall promise (*I will be his God, Psal. 89.26, and he shall cry to me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation*) is bound up with Christ in the Covenant of Suretyship, and is the key and corner stone of the frame and building of the Covenant of Grace." *Ibid*, 350-51.

Moreover, this eternal covenant between Jehovah and Christ becomes the “cause of the *stability* and *firmnesse* of the Covenant of Grace.”⁸⁹ The covenantal stability and firmness are derived exclusively from the fact that our salvation is based not upon us but ultimately on God’s saving will and Christ’s fulfilling the “condition of laying down his life for sinners.” At this point, Rutherford strongly criticizes both the Arminian and the Socinian doctrines of the Covenant of Redemption. It is true that they also teach a special covenant between the Lord and Christ. Nevertheless, Rutherford argues, their covenant cannot be a “true” Covenant of Redemption because their “God hath no forceable antecedent dominion to bow and determine the free-will of any one man.” From this viewpoint, Rutherford continues, both the “promises” and the “wages” made to Christ in this covenant—and Christ’s claiming us for His own in his prayer (John 17)—become meaningless because, for them, it must be men’s power (free will) to repent and believe that would ultimately decide one’s destiny to salvation.⁹⁰

But the Covenant of Suretyship which we teach, makes not the truth of God to depend upon our faith, or our unbelief; Yea the Lord promises that Christ without all fail, shall undeclineably see his seed...*He shall be King and Lord of the Iles, Isa.42.6...* not upon condition they be willing, over whom he is set... Nay, but the Covenant-promise faith, he shall be King of thy will. This is a part of his raign, *Psal.110:2*.⁹¹

Here, I think, Rutherford touches the very heart of his criticism against the Arminian doctrine of the covenant. The Arminian doctrine of the Covenant of Grace, Rutherford argues, is *actually* the Covenant of Works because their covenant “holds out life and

⁸⁹ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 309. [Emphasis added]

⁹⁰ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 327-328.

⁹¹ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 328-329.

pardon, upon condition that free will repent and believe and stand on its own feet.”⁹² On the contrary, the scriptural doctrine of the covenant of Suretyship, according to Rutherford’s viewpoint, makes the Covenant of Grace *truly* the Covenant of Grace.

3) *The Practical Implications* – Accordingly, Rutherford seems to understand the Covenant of Suretyship as the doctrine of assurance for all believers.⁹³ It should give us a *stronger* consolation to know that my own salvation is founded upon “the Father’s giving and the Son’s receiving of sinners”—thus, “I shall not be lost, nor casten out”—than to know that it should lean on “my undertaking for myself.”⁹⁴ Also, there should be “solid comfort” in knowing that I am one of those whom the Father gave to the Son and that both the Father and Christ know who they are (2 Tim. 2:19; John 17).⁹⁵ When one compares the Covenant of Redemption with the Covenant of Grace, Rutherford argues, one may find more “Covenant-mercy” or “Gospel-free-grace” in the former than in the latter. This must be true in a sense that the former is the “fountain-love” and “fountain-grace” for the latter. The Covenant of Redemption is not simply the ground of Christ’s redemptive works for us. It is the *spring of love* where God’s eternal love toward sinners has begun. At this point, Rutherford exclaimed with gratitude:

O what everlasting out-goings and issuing of eternall love came from the heart of

⁹² Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 65, 201.

⁹³ Rutherford, *The Tryal and Triumph of Faith*, 63-65.

⁹⁴ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 294.

⁹⁵ Here, Rutherford is quoting David Dickson: “Since the Father consents and wills that Christ die, and the Son willingly offers himself a sacrifice, the number.. and *these all, for whom Christ offered himself, were condescended upon betwixt the Father and the Mediatour. God knew those whom he gave to the Son, to be ransomed: and Christ knew those whom he bought.*” Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 324.

the Father and the Son in their eternall Covenant-delights *towards the sons of men!* ... Should the heart of God be taken, and (to speak so) be sick of love for so many *Nothings*, whom he was to make heirs? Far more being reconciled and justified we need not fear we shall be saved.⁹⁶

Thus, Rutherford does not allow this doctrine to be used in a negative way, making one fret over the question of whether one is in this covenant. To the troubled souls who are “hellish fretting” about the problem of assurance, Rutherford suggests,

Leave the Question concerning your self, whether ye be cast away or no, when you cannot come to a peaceable and quiet close about it, and dwell upon the duty of fiducially relying on Gods generall Covenant to Davids Son, Christ his ingadging with him, and Christ his gracious accepting of the condition.⁹⁷

This statement seems to reaffirm the usefulness of the Covenant of Redemption as the practical doctrine of assurance.

So far, I have discussed the practical implications of the Covenant of Redemption as well as Rutherford’s theological viewpoints of it. For Rutherford, it must be in perfect harmony with the Covenant of Grace because Christ in this covenant stands as the purest fountain-grace. From this perspective, it is interesting to note that Bell’s reading of Rutherford is very opposite of what Rutherford actually said. Bell alleges that Rutherford understands the nature of the Covenant of Redemption as “conditional” and that his covenant theology is greatly shaped by his emphasis on its conditionality rather than God’s free grace.

Rutherford, however, adopted the covenant theology of Rollock, and actually formulated his concept of the new covenant in terms of the old. This led him to teach a conditional covenant of grace. We also see in his writings the beginnings

⁹⁶ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 326. The exclamation mark is added.

⁹⁷ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 338.

of a threefold covenant scheme. His formulation of a conditional covenant of redemption, as distinguished from the covenant of grace, marks a further advance in Scottish covenant theology. This element of conditionality, and the use of contemporary mercantile language, combined with an active view of faith, led Rutherford to present faith *more as a work of man, than as a gift of God's grace to man.*⁹⁸

Given this one-sided reading of Rutherford, Bell proceeds to conclude that there exists a radical discontinuity between Calvin's theology of grace and Rutherford's covenant theology: "The writings of Samuel Rutherford represent a further step in the development of Scottish theology away from that of John Calvin."⁹⁹ Like Bell, both Charles McCoy and J. Wayne Baker attempt to put Rutherford's federal theology in Bullinger's line (Zurich's bilateral covenant tradition) over against Calvin's unilateral covenant tradition (Geneva) in their so called "two traditions" thesis.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Bell, *Calvin and Scottish Theology*, 83. [Emphasis added]

⁹⁹ Bell, *Calvin and Scottish Theology*, 83.

¹⁰⁰ Charles S. McCoy and J. Wayne Baker, *Fountainhead of Federalism: Heinrich Bullinger and the Covenantal Tradition* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 12, 27, 42-43. There are two opposing views in understanding the development of Reformed covenant theology. On the one hand, scholars such as L. Trinterud, J. Moeller, R. Greaves and J. Wayne Baker put forward the theory of "two traditions": "According to these writers," Muller says, "the bilateral or two-sided covenant scheme associated with Bullinger and the Rhenish reformers stands as a counter to a unilateral with Calvin and the Genevan Reformation." On the other hand, theologians such as A. Hoekema, E. Emerson, L. Bierma, C. Venema and Muller himself argue "against this bifurcation of the Reformed tradition and do not view covenant theology as representing a point of tension or conflict with Reformed predestinarianism." These scholars tend to emphasize two significant facts: First, both Calvin with his followers and Bullinger were well aware of the double aspect—a unilateral and a bilateral/conditional dimension—of the biblical covenant of grace. Second, there was a substantial continuity between the so-called "two traditions." Venema, for instance, argues that it would be impossible to argue that they had a "fundamentally different theological system" despite the "characteristic emphases of Bullinger's doctrine of predestination." For Bullinger, he points out, "unconditional election and conditional covenant are not theologically antagonists. Rather, election calls for covenant and renders it as an instrument of salvation." Therefore, to argue that Bullinger was—by virtue of his covenant doctrine—the author of "the other Reformed tradition," Venema concludes, is to overlook "substantial continuities" between his doctrine and that of the Augustinian/Calvinist tradition. Wayne Baker, "Heinrich Bullinger, the Covenant, and the Reformed Tradition in Retrospect" in *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 29:2(1998):359-76; Muller, "The Covenant of Works and the Stability of Divine Law," 176; Lyle D. Bierma, "Federal Theology in the Sixteenth Century: Two Traditions?" *Westminster Theological Journal*, 45 (1983): 304-310; C. P. Venema, *Heinrich Bullinger and*

However, a closer study of Rutherford's teaching of covenant would perplex those scholars who accept either Bell's thesis or the "two traditions" thesis of McCoy and Baker. Because Rutherford's federal theology does not fit into Bell's model. He has so far established that our salvation must be based upon God's free grace and the exclusive role of Christ. This gracious nature of God's Covenant of Grace is deeply rooted in the eternal covenant of Suretyship.

Also, Rutherford's covenant thought, as we have already discussed, emphasizes both so-called the "unilateral" and "bilateral" aspects of covenant—God's free grace and man's covenantal duty. Again, the root of both dimensions may be found in the eternal the Covenant of Redemption. Just like there exists an eternal harmony between mercy and justice in the Covenant of Redemption, there exists a harmonious relationship between God's free grace and man's duty under the Covenant of Grace.¹⁰¹

IV. Conclusion: The Ecclesiastical Implications

So far, we have discussed Rutherford's covenant theology focusing on his defense of the unity of the Covenant of Grace, which may best be understood in his polemical context on the one hand, and from his viewpoint of the Covenant of Redemption on the other. In the course of his discussion of the covenantal unity, Rutherford made some important points regarding the ecclesiastical implications of his covenant theology. As a conclusion of this chapter, I will specifically discuss three

the Doctrine of Predestination: Author of "the Other Reformed Tradition?" (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002): 118-20.

¹⁰¹ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 304.

significant points which are relevant to our discussion about his view of the church and church covenant.

First, the unity between the Old and the New Covenant must be understood according to the distinction of external and internal covenant. Both external and internal covenants have always co-existed in both the Old and the New Testament Church. Rutherford, in his refutation against a false dichotomy between the Old and the New Covenant, tends to emphasize the existence of the internal covenant in the former dispensation and the external covenant in the latter. It is evident, for him, that even under the New Covenant dispensation “all and every one of the Visible Church are not really and personally confederates.”¹⁰² While the promise of a “new heart” is made only to the elect (invisible church), nevertheless, the reprobate as well as the elect in the visible church “must have right to hear the Gospel preached” according to the “approving and commanding will of God.”¹⁰³ To deny the existence of Ishmael, Esau, Simon Magus, Judas, the Pharisees, and all the hypocrites in the visible church of the New Testament, Rutherford emphasizes, is to commit the serious error of the Anabaptists and others. As for the problems of the Independents, Rutherford argues that they failed to properly understand this external/internal distinction and tended to identify all “visible professors” with the elect who are internally called.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 119.

¹⁰³ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 77-78, 131-32, 339-343. From this viewpoint, Rutherford argues that Jer.31, Ezek.36, and Heb.8— major biblical texts about the new covenant—alone do not represent the “whole of the New Covenant” because, here, the “Covenant Preached” is missing. While the Anabaptists mistakenly understand those texts as the whole of the New Covenant, the Socinians erroneously understand them as “the Covenant as Preached” only. Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 343-344, 347.

¹⁰⁴ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 130.

Second, the covenantal unity, according to Rutherford, is deeply rooted in “one and the same eternal love” of God. The love of our Redeemer did not start with the Abrahamic covenant nor in the Paradise with Adam’s fall. The “Charters and Writtes of Gospel grace” given to Adam was not first drawn in the Paradise. Adam received only their “copies and doubles” in the Garden of Eden. The love of God is *eternal* love and, thus, it is one and the same at all times without change or growth:

The love of God is no younger then God, and was never younger to sinners; and woe to us, if grace and mercy to redeemed ones should wax old and weaker through age, and at length die and turn in everlasting hatred. I desire to hold fast by that, *Jer.31.3. I have loved thee with an everlasting love.*¹⁰⁵

Given his emphasis on this unchanging characteristic of covenantal love, Rutherford proceeds to assert that there must be no more dispensation of the covenant beyond the Covenant of Grace: “The Covenant of Grace stands as the only way under heaven, by which sinners may be saved, and *after the Covenant of Grace there is no dispensation.*”¹⁰⁶ The Covenant of Grace itself is complete—one and the same—and eternal because its ground is eternal. From Rutherford’s viewpoint, any attempts to introduce a new or the so-called a “more spiritual” covenant into the Covenant of Grace should be considered as unbiblical or even heretical—mostly associated, Rutherford points out, with the Anabaptists, Familists, Libertines, and Separatists.¹⁰⁷

Third, the promises made to Christ in the Covenant of Redemption contain a “rod” for the children of Christ. When they sin, therefore, God would correct them “in a

¹⁰⁵ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 308.

¹⁰⁶ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 215. [Emphasis added]

¹⁰⁷ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 72-95, 85-86, 129-133, 215.

Fatherly way,” leading them to repentance. God’s disciplinary rod, however, never removes the “Covenant-mercy.” Our rods themselves, Rutherford emphasizes, must be considered as the “Covenanted mercies” which are written in both the Covenant of Redemption and the Covenant of Grace:

So hath the Lord Covenanted and articed in the writ with his Son, a rod to children, to difference them from bastards *Heb.12*... our rods are Covenanted mercies in the compact between the Lord and Christ, and written in the Gospel-book of the Covenant of Grace.¹⁰⁸

This passage is significant in understanding Rutherford’s view of church discipline. While Hooker and other Congregationalists attempted to find a theological ground of church discipline in their concept of church covenant, from Rutherford’s viewpoint, their efforts may be entirely useless. Because, Rutherford argues, the Gospel Covenant has already provided a more firm and solid basis for church discipline. After I examine Hooker’s covenant theology in the next chapter, I will discuss in more detail their differing views of many ecclesiastical issues including the nature of the visible/invisible church, church membership, the sacraments (as the seals of the covenant), church discipline, and church covenant.

¹⁰⁸ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 353.

CHAPTER 4.

THE COVENANT THEOLOGY OF THOMAS HOOKER

I. Introduction

This chapter examines the covenant theology of Thomas Hooker. It will demonstrate that there exists a consistency between Hooker's defense of the church covenant and his view of the biblical covenants. For Hooker, God's administration of the covenants as revealed in the Bible shows the ever-changing, dynamic and evolving nature of God's covenantal dispensation. Given his conviction that the completion of the Reformation must include the abolition of a hierarchical episcopacy and the establishment of "a Parity in the Ministry," Hooker argues that congregational polity must be understood as a divinely appointed *duty* in the climax of Christian history.¹ Accordingly, Hooker believes that the church covenant as the basis of the congregational polity belongs to the final stage in God's dispensation of the covenants.²

¹ Thomas Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline* (London: A. M. for John Bellamy, 1648), "The Preface," 1-18.

² William Ames, perhaps, offered a theological background to this kind of covenant-historical thinking on church polity. Ames argues, "Although the free, and saving Covenant of God hath beene onely one from the beginning, yet the manner of the application of Christ or of administring this new Covenant, hath not always beene one and the same, but diverse, according to the ages in which the Church hath been gathered." This statement is written in his masterpiece, *Medulla Theologiae* (Franeker, 1623; Amsterdam, 1627; London: Apud Robertum Allottum, 1629, 1638, 1642), which had a great influence on both Hooker and Richard Mather. The concluding chapters of Ames' *The Marrow of Sacred Divinity* deal with several ecclesiastical issues: "Of Ecclesiasticall discipline" (Chap.37); "Of the administration of the Covenant of grace before the Coming of Christ" (Chap.38); "Of the administration of the covenant from Christ exhibited to the end of the world" (Chap.39); "Of Baptisme and the supper of the Lord" (Chap.40); "Of the end of the world" (Chap.41). According to Cotton Mather, Hooker studied Ames' *Medulla Theologiae* in Latin and thoroughly understood it. Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana or the Ecclesiastical History of New England*, vol.1, Book III (London: Printed for Thomas Parkburts, 1702), 61. Richard Mather also seemed to be greatly influenced by Ames' book. Particularly, in his *Church Government and Church Covenant Discussed* (London: R.O. and G.D. [and T.P. and M.S.] for Benjamin Allen, 1643), Mather quotes over twelve times from Ames two works, *Medulla Theologia* and *Conscience with the Power and Cases Thereof*

How, then, would Hooker and his brethren understand the relationship between the biblical covenants and the church covenant? And on what ground does Hooker justify his concept of the church covenant while there is no explicit mention of such a covenant in the Scripture? In dealing with these questions, this chapter will show that Hooker attempted to use the biblical doctrine of the Covenant of Grace as the theological basis of his church covenant while making distinction between the two covenants.

II. Thomas Hooker and New England Covenant Theology

1. Survey of Scholarship

1) *Perry Miller's Thesis* — Perry Miller is one of the first major scholars to examine the covenant theology of the New England Puritans including Hooker. Miller's *Orthodoxy in Massachusetts, 1630-1650, The Errand into the Wilderness* and his two volume works, *The New England Mind*, became classic works in Puritan studies, in which he offered fresh and enduring insights into our understanding of New England Puritans and their use of covenant.³ The early New England Puritans, according to Miller, attempted to use the biblical concept of covenant as a theoretical framework by which both society and church should be ordered.⁴ Miller particularly focused on a long and complicated relationship

(London: W. Christiaens, E. Griffin, J. Dawson, 1639).

³ Miller, *Orthodoxy in Massachusetts, 1630-1650* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1933); *The New England Mind*, vol. 1, *The Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Belknap, 1939) and vol. 2, *From Colony to Province* (Cambridge: Belknap, 1953). Miller's other important works for Puritan studies must include *Jonathan Edwards* (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1949); *Roger Williams: His Contribution to the American Tradition* (Indianapolis and New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1953); *Errand into the Wilderness* (Cambridge/London: Belknap, 1956). Particularly, in his essay, "The Marrow of Puritan Divinity" in *Errand into the Wilderness*, 48-98, Miller defines Puritan covenant theology as the core of Puritanism. As for his view of Thomas Hooker, see his article "Thomas Hooker and the Democracy of Connecticut," in *Errand into the Wilderness*, 16-47, or *New England Quarterly*, 4(1931): 663-712.

⁴ Particularly see Miller's first volume of *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century*, chapter 13

between Calvin and Puritan covenant theology. He argued that the federal theology of New England Puritans—including John Cotton, Thomas Shepard, and Thomas Hooker—was a significant *revision* of Calvinism. Unlike Calvin, Miller argues, Puritan covenant theology tended to put much more emphasis on human response than on God’s grace.⁵ Hooker, for example, showed a marked tendency to reduce God’s “intrusion of grace to a very minute point.” Both Hooker and Shepard, according to Miller, taught that believers, by fulfilling the conditions of the covenant, could be assured of their own salvation. Thus, Miller argues,

The final outcome in all New England preaching of the covenant theory was a shamelessly pragmatic injunction. It permitted the ministers to inform their congregations that if any of them could fulfill the Covenant, they were elected.⁶

Miller believes that the covenant theology of Hooker and other New England divines, while not departing from “essential Calvinism,” was a Puritan solution to “clear God of the charges of arbitrary government and to place the onus for success or failure upon men.”⁷

2) *Critics of Miller’s Thesis* —Miller’s attempt to set Puritan covenant theology in opposition to Calvin’s so-called decretal theology, however, has been criticized by many scholars such as Jens Møller, George Marsden, William K. B. Stoeber, Michael McGiffert,

through 16, 365-491.

⁵ In Puritan covenant theology, Miller argues, “the tiniest particle [of grace] is sufficient to start a man on the road to salvation.” Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century*, 395.

⁶ Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century*, 395.

⁷ Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century*, 395-96; idem, “The Marrow of Puritan Divinity,” 48-98.

and John von Rohr.⁸ These critics have made some significant points: First, Miller's approach to Puritan covenant theology is influenced by his primary interest in an intellectual history and sociology rather than theology (Møller). As a result, Miller failed to say that the Puritan concept of covenant was directly derived from the Bible (Marsden); second, Miller also failed to understand the gracious nature of the Covenant of Grace. Miller placed undue stress upon the legal character of the covenant (von Rohr). In reality, however, the Reformation principle of *sola gratia* actually excluded a possibility that any human act could merit God's pardon (Stoever). It is the gracious work of Christ which occupied the center of Puritan teaching of the Covenant of Grace. Thus, Marsden argues,

His [Miller's] implication is that New England ministers were informing their congregations that if they tried to fulfill the moral law they would contribute something to their salvation. *But this would be the exact opposite of what the Puritans actually said about the covenant of grace.* The covenant was of *grace* precisely because it could not be fulfilled by good works. There had been a "covenant of works" with Adam; but when Adam fell this was replaced by the Covenant of Grace.⁹

The Puritan teaching of the Covenant of Works, according to McGiffert, intensified the theme of unmerited grace because Puritans, after or by keeping the law in its place—the Covenant of Works—could freely affirm "the very graciousness of grace" in the

⁸ Møller, Jens. "The Beginnings of Puritan Covenant Theology," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 14 (April 1963): 46-67; George Marsden, "Perry Miller's rehabilitation of the Puritans: A Critique," *Church History*, 39 (1970): 91-105; Stoever, William K. B. *'A Faire and Easie Way to Heaven': Covenant Theology and Antinomianism in Early Massachusetts* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1978); Michael McGiffert, "American Puritan Studies in the 1960's," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 27 (1970): 36-67; idem, "William Tyndale's Conception of Covenant," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 32(1981): 167-184; idem, "Grace and Works: The Rise and Division of Covenant Divinity in Elizabethan Puritanism," *Harvard Theological Review* 75 (1982): 463-502; idem, "From Moses to Adam: the Making of the Covenant of Works," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 19:2 (1988):131-55; idem, "The Perkinsian Moment of Federal Theology," *Calvin Theological Journal* 29:1(1994): 117-48; John von Rohr, *The Covenant of Grace in Puritan Thought*, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986); idem, "Covenant and Assurance in Early English Puritanism," *Church History* 34 (1965): 195-203.

⁹ Marsden, "Perry Miller's rehabilitation of the Puritans: A Critique," 100. [Emphasis added]

Covenant of Grace.¹⁰ Finally, Miller's assumption of an incompatibility between Calvin and Puritan covenant theology has been criticized on the ground that Calvin as well as Puritans could address the bilateral dimension of covenantal life. Marsden particularly points out Calvin's sermons on Deuteronomy preached in 1555 and 1556 where he emphasizes human responsibility.¹¹ In sum, most critics seem to agree that Puritan covenant theology with its emphasis on the bilateral aspect of covenant would not compromise the sovereign grace of God.

As for Miller's view of Hooker's federal theology, Everett Emerson argues that Miller overstated the case.¹² Refuting Miller's assertion that covenant theologians used human's natural ability to prepare for grace, Emerson argues that Hooker's view of conversion is in line with Reformed orthodox position.¹³ On the one hand, Hooker's doctrine of the "means of grace" is different from Arminianism and quite compatible with Reformed concept that a human lacks spiritual ability in the matter of salvation.¹⁴ On the

¹⁰ McGiffert, "Grace and Works," 135.

¹¹ Marsden, "Perry Miller's rehabilitation of the Puritans: A Critique," 102-103. For a detailed discussion of Calvin's view of covenant see Peter Lillback's *The Binding of God: Calvin's Role in the Development of Covenant Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001); "The Continuing Conundrum: Calvin and the Conditionality of the Covenant," *Calvin Theological Journal* 29 (April 1994): 42-74; "Ursinus' Development of the Covenant of Creation: A Debt to Melancthon or Calvin?" *Westminster Theological Journal* 43 (Spring 1981): 247-88; Osterhaven, M. Eugene, "Calvin on the Covenant." *Reformed Review* 33 (1979): 136-49; James F. Veninga, "Covenant Theology and Ethics in the Thought of John Calvin and John Preston," (Ph.D. diss., Rice University, 1974). As for Calvin's view of the bilateral aspect of covenant, see John Calvin, *The Covenant Enforced: Sermons on Deuteronomy 27 and 28*, ed. by James B. Jordan (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1990).

¹² Particularly see Emerson's three works. Everett H. Emerson, "Thomas Hooker and the Reformed Theology: The Relationship of Hooker's Conversion Preaching to its Background," Ph.D dissertation (Louisiana State University, 1955); idem, "Calvin and Covenant Theology," *Church History*, 25/2(June, 1956): 136-144; idem, "Thomas Hooker: The Puritan as Theologian," *Anglican Theological Review*. XLIV (April 1967): 190-203.

¹³ Emerson, "Thomas Hooker and the Reformed Theology, 156.

¹⁴ Emerson, "Thomas Hooker and the Reformed Theology," 184, 242-45.

other hand, using Heinrich Heppe's summary of the Reformed position on conversion, Emerson emphasizes that the Reformed view of the redemptive process includes a person's willingness to be converted.¹⁵ God's irresistible grace, for example, is accompanied by persuasion, which is the "outward accompaniment of grace for the elect."¹⁶ Furthermore, Hooker's view of the conditionality of covenant and his emphasis on evangelical obedience, Emerson argues, are different from the Covenant of Works because, for Hooker, the condition of the Covenant of Grace itself is graced: "While God's covenants rely on the condition of faith and thus are never absolutes, grace effects the condition."¹⁷ In sum, Emerson concludes that Hooker's covenant theology is not different from the teaching of Calvin in the way that Miller has suggested.¹⁸

3) *Is Covenant Essential for Hooker's Theology?* — While Emerson made some significant points in his criticism of Miller, he also raised a controversial issue regarding the importance of covenant for Hooker's whole theology. Emerson seems to believe that covenant is not essential to Hooker's theology because the covenant theme or metaphor is not often found in Hooker's entire works. Thus, Emerson argues, "Although it may be regarded that Hooker was a covenant theologian, he made little use of the covenant of grace concept."¹⁹ Both J. W. Jones III and Frank Shuffelton seem to agree with Emerson

¹⁵ Heinrich Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics Set Forth and Illustrated from the Sources*, ed. Ernst Bizer, trans. G. T. Thomson (London: Allen & Unwin, 1950), 521.

¹⁶ Emerson, "Thomas Hooker and the Reformed Theology," 156.

¹⁷ Emerson, "Thomas Hooker and the Reformed Theology," 151. Emerson is summarizing Hooker's view as expressed in his *The Application of Redemption: The First Eight Books* (London: Peter Cole, 1656), 30-38.

¹⁸ Emerson, "Thomas Hooker and the Reformed Theology," 181.

¹⁹ Emerson, "Thomas Hooker and the Reformed Theology," 242. Also, he made a similar statement in

on this point. In refuting Miller's thesis that Hooker's use of covenant and preparation should be read in an anthropocentric direction, Jones argues that Hooker rarely used the image of the covenant in his "Christocentric theology of preparation."²⁰ Shuffelton, after having compared Hooker with John Cotton, argues that the latter was "far more of a covenant theologian" than the former because "Hooker, unlike Cotton, rarely spoke of the covenant."²¹

However, there are some scholars who strongly disagree with Emerson and argue that covenant is truly essential in understanding Hooker's theology as a whole. Diane M. Darrow, for example, argues that the notion of covenant is so important to Hooker that the first two books of his *The Application of Redemption*, where Hooker discusses a basic framework of God's redemption, "are almost entirely shaped by an underlying covenant assumption."²² R. H. Bainton also found that covenant is used by Hooker as one of the "usual themes" in his evangelical sermons.²³

I have found that Hooker deals specifically with covenant in more than three treatises—*The Paterne of Perfection: Exhibited in Gods Image on Adam and Gods Covenant made with him* (1640), *The Covenant of Grace Opened* (1649), and *The*

"Thomas Hooker: The Puritan as Theologian," 197.

²⁰ J. W. III. Jones, "Beginnings of American Theology: John Cotton, Thomas Hooker, Thomas Shepard and Peter Bulkeley," (Ph.D. diss., Brown University, 1970), 122, 135. Jones is quoting from Emerson. It should be noted that Jones' phrase, here, is a rather anachronistic way of characterizing early modern theology. It is very much associated with the twentieth century neo-orthodox expression.

²¹ Frank Shuffelton, *Thomas Hooker 1586-1647* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 255.

²² Diane M. Darrow, "Thomas Hooker and the Puritan Art of Preaching," (Ph.D. diss., University of California, 1968), 39-41, 68. Hooker's *The Application of Redemption* consists in ten books. *The Application of Redemption...*, the first eight books, part I (London: Peter Cole, 1656); *The Application of Redemption...*, books 9 and 10, part II (London: Peter Cole, 1657).

²³ Bainton, Ronald H. *Thomas Hooker and the Puritan Contribution to Democracy*, booklet reprinted from the *Bulletin of the Congregational Library*. Vol. 10, No. 1(October 1958): 5-15.

Application of Redemption (1656-57)—and many sermons including *The Poor Doubting Christian Drawn Unto Christ* (1629), *The Soules Humiliation* (1637), *The Faithful Covenanter* (1644), and *The Saint's Dignitie and Dutie* (1651). As for the church covenant, Hooker's detailed discussion can be found in his major ecclesiastical work, *A Survey of the Summe of Church Discipline* (1648).²⁴ It may be true that the number of these works is relatively small when we consider the entirety of Hooker's voluminous output. Still, however, those works may be sufficient enough for us to discuss Hooker's covenant theology in depth and argue that covenant is actually important in understanding his theology.²⁵ Thus, I agree with Andrew T. Denholm's statement that there can be no real understanding of the New England mind apart from a close acquaintance with covenant theology.²⁶ Hooker, Denholm would argue, should be no exception.

What, then, is the major characteristic of Hooker's approach to the biblical covenants as expressed in his covenantal works? On the one hand, like Rutherford, Hooker defends the unity of the Covenant of Grace. For example, in *The Covenant of Grace Opened*, Hooker, as Denholm rightly points out, tries to express how the Covenant of Grace is the same *in kind* for Abraham and for believers under the Gospel.²⁷ Here

²⁴ Also, Hooker briefly discusses the theme of covenant in *The Soules Implantation* (London: R. Young, 1637); *The Soules Vocation or Effectual Calling to Christ* (London: John Haviland, for Andrew Croke, 1638); *The Unbelievers Preparing for Christ* (London: Tho Cotes for Andrew Croke, 1638), and *The Danger of Desertion or A Farewell Sermon* (London: G. M. for George Edwards, 1640).

²⁵ It may be helpful to remember that while Emerson seems to think that Hooker deals specifically with covenant theology only in two works—*The Covenant of Grace Opened* and *The Faithful Covenanter*—other scholars have found that one may need to add Hooker's other works—that I have listed above—to his covenant bibliography.

²⁶ Andrew Thomas Denholm, "Thomas Hooker: Puritan Teacher, 1586-1647," Ph.D dissertation (Hartford Seminary Foundation, 1961), 247.

²⁷ Denholm, "Thomas Hooker: Puritan Teacher, 1586-1647," 248. Hooker, *The Covenant of Grace Opened* (London: Printed by G. Dawson, 1649), 4.

Hooker is responding to the general threat of Anabaptist view of infant baptism and the church covenant.²⁸ Accordingly, like Rutherford, Hooker attempts to use the Abrahamic covenant as a biblical ground for his defense of paedo-baptism. In doing so, Hooker emphasizes that the *substance* of the Old and the New Covenant of Grace is always one and the same.

On the other hand, however, Hooker also focuses on the difference between the Old and the New Covenant. The scope and degree of God's grace as revealed in the latter is much different from the former. Also, there exists an even greater difference between the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace in Hooker's formulation than in Rutherford's.

2. Hooker and the Covenant of Works

1) *Making Covenant with Adam* — Like Rutherford, Hooker believes that there existed a special compact between God and Adam, which may be called the Covenant of Works.²⁹

Quest. *What is the Covenant God made with Adam?* Ans. That which was of works, was, *Doe this and live*; by *living* is meant a promise which God made unto *Adam*, that if hee kept Gods Commandements he would preserve him for ever.³⁰

Why did God make this covenant with Adam? Because, Hooker answers, "it was the only way to convey an immutable condition to Adam." Since God had furnished Adam with

²⁸ Hooker particularly deals with John Spilbury's attack on infant baptism and his view of covenant. In 1643, Spilbury published *A Treatise Concerning the Lawfull Subject of Baptisme* (London: Henry Hills, 1643).

²⁹ Hooker, *The Paterne of Perfection: Exhibited in Gods Image on Adam and Gods Covenant made with him* (London: R. Young for R. Y[oung] and F. Clifton, 1640), 210.

³⁰ Hooker, *An Exposition of the Principles of Religion* (London: Printed for R. Dawlman, 1645), 8-9.

all things, he lacked nothing but immutability, which is an essential property belonging to God (Mal. 3:6. James 1:17).³¹ The promise of immutability or constancy, according to Hooker, was given to Adam when God declared, in Genesis 2:17, “When you eat of it you will surely die.” This statement, Hooker believes, must be read “as if God had said, If thou will doe what I command, I will unchangeably supply life to thee. I will expresse it by the contrary.”³² Or “If thou will keep my Lawes, I will support thee, and thou shalt never bee subject to any evil.”³³ In short, Hooker seems to agree with Rutherford that God’s goodness has been revealed in both making covenant with Adam and giving him a promise of everlasting life.³⁴

2) *The Unique State of Adam* — Unlike Rutherford, however, whose main purpose is to emphasize the gracious nature of the Covenant of Works focusing on God’s *intention* to save Adam through free grace in Christ,³⁵ Hooker, in his *The Patterne of Perfection*, devotes many more pages to discussing the difference between the two covenants particularly comparing Adam’s excellence with the imperfect state of believers under the Covenant of Grace.

To begin with, Hooker argues that the substance of the Covenant of Works, which is “Doe this, and live,” is totally different from the “Beleeve, and live” principle of

³¹ Hooker, *The Paterne of Perfection*, 238-39.

³² Hooker, *The Paterne of Perfection*, 236-37.

³³ Hooker, *The Paterne of Perfection*, 238.

³⁴ Hooker refers to the concept of God’s goodness and grace for the original state of Adam. “That God would so continue *good* to Adam, that if hee would obey God, hee would so support him with his *grace*, that hee should have pleased him for ever.” Hooker, *The Paterne of Perfection*, 236.

³⁵ Rutherford emphasizes that Adam as a private person was saved by the same faith as we have in Christ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 2.

the Covenant of Grace.³⁶ The former is based upon the principle of the law while the latter is founded on faith. This is the reason why both covenants of doing and believing must be put in opposition (Gal. 3:12).³⁷ Given Adam's unique state under the Covenant of Works, Hooker proceeds to discuss in detail the meanings of "the excellency of Adams condition."

First, Adam had a natural power and principle in himself to keep God's commandments. Adam had an uncontrollable liberty of will, whereby he could begin his own work. He needed only an "ordinary concourse of Providence," which God gives to other creatures³⁸: "Adam, out of his speciall liberty hee had, was able to put himself under the streame of Providence, and so to bee carried on to holy duties."³⁹ Hooker believes that God was indebted to Adam to bestow ability on him if God required obedience.⁴⁰ Unlike Adam, however, all believers under the Covenant of Grace lack such a natural ability and, accordingly, need a special grace from Christ: "wee must see ourselves lost in regard of our owne ability to service, and therefore wee are bound by faith to go out to another; which Adam needed not. We that are weake of our selves, must fetch power from Christ."⁴¹

Second, Adam had sufficiency in himself to keep the Law in all of its rigor. Adam's heart and the Law, Hooker argues, "were of an equall breadth and latitude." The

³⁶ Hooker, *The Paterne of Perfection*, 208-210.

³⁷ Hooker, *The Paterne of Perfection*, 211, 215; idem, *The Application of Redemption*, 302.

³⁸ Hooker, *The Paterne of Perfection*, 213.

³⁹ Hooker, *The Paterne of Perfection*, 233.

⁴⁰ Hooker, *The Paterne of Perfection*, 214.

⁴¹ Hooker, *The Paterne of Perfection*, 213-14.

Law took up Adam's whole heart, and he was able to performe the whole Law.⁴² Again, this is not the case with believers under the Covenant of Grace, whose faith and obedience are mixed with imperfection: "wee are not able to think a good thought. Our faith is like a graine of mustard-seed, mingled with imperfection, 1Cor.13 *We know in part, and we beleeeve in part*; our graces are mingled with many frailties."⁴³ Given our human frailties, evil or corruption is always right there with us even when we do good works or perform our duties (Rom. 7:21; Heb. 12:1).⁴⁴

Third, Adam might have challenged a recompence of reward by way of *justice*, for his doing. If Adam had obeyed the Law, Hooker argues, "he needed to crave no pardon... because there would be no fault in his performance." Quoting "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt" (Rom. 4:4), Hooker insists that recompence should be due to Adam as a *debt*, which Adam was able to do, if he could performe the Law.⁴⁵ Hooker goes even further to argue that, for Adam, *boasting* would have been possible according to the law of works (Rom.3.27) if he had kept the law, while, for us, the law of faith must exclude boasting: "Could a man doe what the Law requires, hee might boast; but the law of faith excludeth boasting: if I can do nothing but what God helps mee in, and perfect nothing but what God perfects in mee, why should I boast?"⁴⁶

⁴² Hooker, *The Paterne of Perfection*, 217.

⁴³ Hooker, *The Paterne of Perfection*, 218.

⁴⁴ Hooker, *The Paterne of Perfection*, 218.

⁴⁵ Hooker, *The Paterne of Perfection*, 219.

⁴⁶ Hooker, *The Paterne of Perfection*, 219. Hooker, quoting Ps.130:3: "If thou, Lord, shouldest mark our iniquities, O Lord, who could stand," says that Adam could have endured it because he had no flaw in his obedience, while "we (poore creatures) cannot doe this. Dost thou think to bee saved by thy services and merits? No, Happy is the man whose iniquities are forgiven, and whole sinnes are covered: those works

Fourth, Adam as a public figure made a compact for all his posterity as well as for himself. Thus, if he had kept the Law, we could have lived in him. And if Adam broke the Law and died, his posterity must also die.⁴⁷ Unlike Adam, every one under the Covenant of Grace must believe for oneself: “it is not the faith of thy father that will doe thee good. *Thy faith hath made thee whole*, not another mans; another mans digesting of meat cannot help thee; so another mans faith cannot save thy soule.”⁴⁸

In sum, the above four points clearly indicate that Hooker could see a radical discontinuity between Adam’s original state and the condition of his offspring, which led him to conclude as follows:

So that the substance is this; Adam needed not to deny himself, wee must deny our selves. Wee are dead in sins and trespasses, and therefore *it is not I*, saith St. Paul, *but Christ in mee*. . . He that beleeveth, saith, I can doe nothing; Adam might say, I can doe all things. I say, Beleeving in Christ is not a performance of a worke of the Law, but of a worke of the Gospel. . . *If any one had been saved by his owne works, as Adam might have been, hee had been saved by himself; but now it is through Christ.*⁴⁹

This passage seems to make a significant contrast with Rutherford’s statement that Adam, according to God’s intention, was never predestinated to a law glory. Instead, Rutherford emphasizes that Adam, before the foundation of the world, was predestinated to eternal life through Jesus Christ.⁵⁰ To be sure, Rutherford does not refuse to consider the

cannot save a man, in which there is enough to condemne him.” Hooker, *The Paterne of Perfection*, 220.

⁴⁷ “This is so by all rights,” according to Hooker, when we consider “the right of Nations” (right of any ambassadors), the right of “all Courts” (Parliament), and, finally, “the law of Nature” (Father’s debt to the son). Thus, Hooker concludes, “Adam was our Father, hee made a compact for all his posterity. Rom.5.12” Hooker, *The Paterne of Perfection*, 221-22.

⁴⁸ Hooker, *The Paterne of Perfection*, 222-23.

⁴⁹ Hooker, *The Paterne of Perfection*, 214-16. [Emphasis added]

⁵⁰ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 2.

possibility of Adam's fulfillment of the Covenant of Works.⁵¹ Nevertheless, unlike Hooker who has frequently discussed both Adam's ability to perform the law and a possibility for him to give a *law* glory to God,⁵² the primary focus of Rutherford seems to be upon God's free grace or His graceful intention to give Adam a life eternal through the "Gospel-election to glory."⁵³

Moreover, even if Adam had perfectly obeyed God's commandments, according to Rutherford, the promised *everlasting* life that he would have merited must be considered as "free reward" or "free gift of God" because there is no "innate proportion" (*ex natura rei*) between our natural obedience and the supernatural reward of God.⁵⁴ Unlike Rutherford, as we have already discussed, Hooker emphasizes that Adam could have a recompense of reward by way of *justice*, if he had obeyed the Law.

After Hooker has explained the uniqueness of Adam's state and the Covenant of Works, he moves on to discuss both the similarities and differences between the old and the new covenant in God's new dispensation of the Covenant of Grace.

3. Hooker and the Covenant of Grace

1) *Definitions and Distinctions* — What is the Covenant of Grace? Hooker defines it as follows:

⁵¹ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 180-81.

⁵² For Hooker, Adam's law-glory would have been entirely possible. "If a man can perform the Law, recompense is due to him as a debt; which Adam was able to do. He might glory in the performance of his duty, giving also glory to God." Hooker, *The Paterne of Perfection*, 218-19. 238.

⁵³ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 2-3.

⁵⁴ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 22-23.

What is meant by the Covenant of Grace? This Covenant of Grace, so much as serves my turn at this time, it is the special communication of God to a people, that, he will choose such, whereby he engages himself to be their God, and to make them to be his people. I adde that, to make them to be his people, because that is it, that bears up the Covenant and confirms it.⁵⁵

Unlike God of the Covenant of Works whose principle is “doe and live,” God of the Covenant of Grace is described as a God of free grace giving himself *freely* to his people.⁵⁶

To better understand his view of the Covenant of Grace, one needs to remember that Hooker, at the beginning of his discussion, considers it as a “double covenant,” an *inward* (internal) and an *outward* (external) covenant, making a clear distinction between them. The inward covenant refers to a spiritual and private relationship between God and the elect which can never be severed. God, in this covenant, makes himself theirs by faith. Hooker calls it an eternal and absolute covenant.

The outward covenant is a public relationship between God and a “choice people” based upon God’s outward dispensation of covenant. He declares himself to be their God, and thereby takes them to be his people in a choice manner, and peculiar to himself (Exod.19:5). It may require the vocal or visible profession of faith and federal holiness (obedience), which are outward, relative, temporal, and, accordingly, imperfect.⁵⁷ Hooker tries to be consistent in maintaining this primary distinction between the internal and external covenant in his discussion of the Covenant of Grace.

⁵⁵ Hooker, *The Covenant of Grace Opened*, 2.

⁵⁶ “But now in the covenant of grace... God gives himself *freely* to his, and makes them to be his people, so that he will be our God, and make us to be his people; this is the covenant of grace.” Hooker, *The Covenant of Grace Opened*, 2. Emphasis is added.

⁵⁷ Hooker, *The Covenant of Grace Opened*, 2-3; idem, *A Survey*, 36-37.

Also, it should be noted that both unity and diversity are two key concepts that underline much of the discussion and development in Hooker's approach to the biblical Covenant of Grace: On the one hand, Hooker emphasizes the covenantal unity between the Old and the New Covenant:

Here may be a question, whether the Covenant of grace be the same in the time of the Gospel, with that in the time of the Law? *Answer. In regard of the substance it is the same*; though it may differ in some outward ceremonies of circumstances, yet there is no difference in the substance of it.⁵⁸

The *substance* in this passage refers to Christ, who must be the ultimate foundation for the unity of the Covenant of Grace: "If there be one Mediator, then there is one covenant; he in whom the covenant is made, and he by whom the covenant is performed."⁵⁹

On the other hand, Hooker also focuses on the diversity in each dispensation of the Covenant of Grace, which is often related to "some outward ceremonies of circumstances." The sacraments in the Old Covenant, for example, are very different from those of the New Covenant in their outward forms. The validity of old sacraments was to be expired when the purpose of those sacraments was fulfilled.

God looks at them [sacraments in the Old Testament] as having attained their end and appointment, which was Christ to come: therefore when he was come, they had an end. Therefore now they were of no use, being out of date; and now they could not be used without sinne: he appoints now therefore to *abrogate* them, they were to cease because Christ was come: though they were alike at the first, now they were out of date, now they were not to be used.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Hooker, *The Covenant of Grace Opened*, 4. [Emphasis added]

⁵⁹ Hooker, *The Covenant of Grace Opened*, 5, 9, 12.

⁶⁰ Hooker, *The Covenant of Grace Opened*, 12 [Emphasis added]. Quoting 1Cor.7.19: "If thou be called being uncircumcised, be not circumcised," Hooker paraphrases it as follows "if you be uncircumcised, be not circumcised *now it is out of date*." [Emphasis is added].

It is interesting to note that Hooker, here, introduces the concept of *abrogation* into the history of God's covenantal dispensation. Some of the old sacraments are supposed to be abrogated or replaced by the new ones under the dispensation of the New Covenant. Circumcision, for example, must be abrogated with the advent of Christ's New Covenant. Otherwise, it would nullify the meanings of the Incarnation, which Hooker argues, must be considered as a heinous sin.

If he doe, hee nullifies the nature of Christ, because when Christ is come, it is to deny Christ to be come in the flesh. This is a heinous thing, Christ shall doe him no good. Christ will not save him. . . . False Apostles, that would have men partly saved by Christ, and partly by works; and so they nullifie Christ, and the work of grace: for he must have all or none, you cannot joyne works and grace together.⁶¹

This passage reveals a significant point that, for Hooker, God's redemptive history should be characterized by the ever-changing reality of his outward dispensation of the covenants as well as by the unchanging substance of his covenants. From this viewpoint, Hooker proceeds to discuss in detail both the unity and the diversity of the Abrahamic Covenant, the Mosaic Covenant, and the New Covenant.

2) *The Abrahamic Covenant* – In refuting the Anabaptists' view of the Abrahamic Covenant as a "carnall covenant,"⁶² Hooker strongly argues that it must be understood as a "Gospel Covenant," which contains all spirituall and saving grace:

⁶¹ Hooker, *The Covenant of Grace Opened*, 12, 13.

⁶² Hooker, in his *The Covenant of Grace Opened*, deals with the Anabaptist view of the Abrahamic Covenant as expressed by Mr. Spilsbery more than twelve places. See, *The Covenant of Grace Opened*, 28, 31, 38, 43, 44, 46, 53, 54, 62, 71, 81, 82.

*The Covenant of Abraham does contain the perfection of all spirituall and saving grace that belongs to the Saints of God, Matt.22.32. Christ disputes about the Resurrection of the dead, he saith, He is the God of Abraham, he is not the God of the dead but of the living; he disputes from the perfection of the covenant, it includes all the rest. This may suffice to shaw the covenant of grace is the same.*⁶³

Hooker specifically quotes Romans chapter 4 where Apostle Paul attempts to use Abraham as a telling example for justification by faith. Given that the Jews as well as the Gentiles would be saved by faith (Rom.3:29-30; Rom.4:1-25; Gal.3:8), Hooker argues that circumcision as a seal of the Abrahamic Covenant must be considered as “the seal of the righteousnesse of faith” (Rom.4:11).⁶⁴ Moreover, the substance of the Abrahamic Covenant is contained in the promised *Seed*, Christ himself, by which “all should be saved.”⁶⁵ Hooker concludes that the Abrahamic Covenant is the Covenant of Grace:

Hence it is plain, *that Abraham had, was the covenant of the Gospel and Grace: It is proved thus, That which was the Covenant of the righteousnesse of faith, is the covenant of the Gospel. . . . But Abrahams covenant is a covenant of the righteousnesse of faith:.. to say it was a carnall covenant, is grosse; and to say it was not a covenant of Faith, is to deny the text, and dig it up by the roots. So we see that it was a covenant of grace.*⁶⁶

Hooker, having reaffirmed the unity of the Covenant of Grace, moves on to discuss the difference between the Abrahamic Covenant and the New Covenant.

According to Hooker, there exist three major differences between the two covenants “in

⁶³ Hooker, *The Covenant of Grace Opened*, 5-6, 10. [Emphasis added]

⁶⁴ Hooker, *The Covenant of Grace Opened*, 4-10. “*Abraham received the signe of Circumcision, as the seal of the righteousnesse of faith, & c. that is, the righteousnesse of Christ received by faith, sealed by circumcision, that was the seal of the righteousnesse of faith by Gods appointment, so as they have spirituall efficacy with baptisme, they have the utmost power a Sacrament hath, to signifie, seale, and exhibite the spirituall good of the covenant of Grace.*” *Ibid.*, 10.

⁶⁵ Hooker used some biblical references including Rom.3.29 and Isa.49.6. Hooker, *The Covenant of Grace Opened*, 4.

⁶⁶ Hooker, *The Covenant of Grace Opened*, 10. [Emphasis added]

the manner of the dispensation” or in regard of the *circumstances* of them.

First, in regard of the *ordinance*, the circumcision of the Abrahamic covenant is very different from the baptism of the New Covenant. In the former there was “cutting away,” while in the latter there is “washing away”; the former was to the male only while the latter is to all; in the former, it was done on the eighth day, while, in the latter, it may be on any day; finally, the former looked at Christ to come and it was sealed by his Incarnation, while “by baptisme is sealed that Christ is come, and hath suffered, and is raised and set at the right hand of God.”⁶⁷

Second, *types* in the outward dispensation are different. God promised both a nation and the land of Canaan to Abraham. Hooker argues that the nation of the Jews and their land should be understood as typical: the former was a type of God’s elect while the latter was a type of the Kingdom of Heaven. The outward types of the covenant may be subject to change. For example, it was unlawful for a Jew to marry or even to keep company with a Gentile (Acts 10:28) in the period of the Old Covenant. Under the New Covenant, however, God ended the separation between the Jews and the Gentiles. The story of Peter’s visiting Cornelius (Acts 11), for instance, should be a strong evidence that the difference between them was taken away by God himself.⁶⁸

Third, the *efficacy of the seals of the sacraments* is different. For Hooker, the seals of the New Covenant must exceed those of the Abrahamic Covenant in regard of their clarity, measure, and liveliness. Indeed, the seals of the New Covenant more clearly manifest Christ than the old one, which “shewed Christ to come in the flesh; but ours

⁶⁷ Hooker, *The Covenant of Grace Opened*, 6, 62.

⁶⁸ Hooker, *The Covenant of Grace Opened*, 6.

manifest Christ is come and is dead and is risen; and ascended, and sits in heaven.” This is the reason why the Old Covenant is called shadows when compared to the New Covenant.⁶⁹ Also, our seals in the time of the Gospel, is of a larger measure, more abundant than they were in Abraham’s time: “after the great work of our redemption was accomplished, then was the season for the ful[1] accomplishment of a larger measure of grace to be declared.”⁷⁰ Finally, the new seals are livelier and more vigorous than the old ones. Hooker, quoting Hebrews 8:13: “The Old is decayed, but now it is New and fresh,” explains the liveliness and vigorousness of the new seals in terms of the fulfillment of the New Covenant as prophesied in Jeremiah 31:31-34.⁷¹ In short, Hooker concludes that there exist some significant differences between the Abrahamic Covenant and the New Covenant “in the *degrees* of efficacy,” though they would never deny the fact that the sacraments in the Old Covenant and ours must have the same spirituall efficacy “*in the kind.*”⁷²

3) *The Mosaic Covenant* – Hooker explains the Mosaic Covenant as a *mixed* form. Like Rutherford, he admits that the substance of it belongs to the Covenant of Grace. Given that the sum of the Gospel is contained in the Law and the Prophets,⁷³ Hooker describes

⁶⁹ Hooker, *The Covenant of Grace Opened*, 7-8.

⁷⁰ Hooker, *The Covenant of Grace Opened*, 8.

⁷¹ Hooker reads it as follows: “I will put my law in your heart, and all shall know me. We need not say, know me, for all shall know me, they shall all know the things of God and grace. Thus ours exceed theirs in the time of the Law in the degrees of efficacy.” Hooker, *The Covenant of Grace Opened*, 8.

⁷² Hooker, *The Covenant of Grace Opened*, 7-9. [Emphasis added]

⁷³ Hooker particularly quotes Acts 26:22: “If the summe of the Gospel be contained in the Law and the Prophets, then it is the same to us, as it is to them; but that it so, the proof is *Acts 26.22*. Paul did preach what Moses and the Prophets did say should come, that *Christ should suffer and rise from the dead, & c.* so as this was the summe of Pauls preaching, that they had spoken.” Hooker, *The Covenant of Grace Opened*,

the Mosaic Covenant as “the covenant of new obedience or of thankfulness,” which God made with *his people*.⁷⁴ Thus, Moses’ speech to the children of Israel as written in Exodus 14:13 must be read as a type of Christ’s redeeming believers from all iniquities.⁷⁵

Furthermore, the obedience that God requires of his people, as the Preface of the Decalogue indicates, must be an evangelical obedience in which people should keep God’s commandment not to expect life from it but to show thankfulness answerable to God’s grace already bestowed.⁷⁶ Indeed, the ultimate purpose of God’s Law is not legal but evangelical, by which God would drive his people to Christ and be pleased to accept “what we can do through Christ in way of thankfulness.”⁷⁷

Thus, the substance of the Mosaic Covenant must be found in Christ. Hooker, quoting 1 Corinthians 10:1-4, argues that just as we have Christ in the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, the old Israelites also had Christ when they passed through the Sea, walked under the cloud, ate Manna, and drank water from the rock, because,

The whole does signifie and exhibit CHRIST, it is like ours, the elements are not the same, but there is the same spirituall food, and they seal up the same Christ to them as to us, Christ is presented as spirituall refreshing to them and us.⁷⁸

5.

⁷⁴ Hooker, *The Faithful Covenanter: A Sermon Preached at the Lecture in Dedham in Essex* (London: Printed for Christopher Meredith, 1644), 11-12.

⁷⁵ Hooker, *The Saint Dignitie and Dutie* (London: G. D. for Francis Eglesfield, 1651), 33-34. Exod. 14:13: “Fear not stand still, see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew you this day.”

⁷⁶ Hooker, *The Faithful Covenanter*, 12-14.

⁷⁷ Hooker, *The Faithful Covenanter*, 12-13.

⁷⁸ Hooker, *The Covenant of Grace Opened*, 9.

In sum, for both Rutherford and Hooker, it is Christ himself who must be the fundamental ground of unity between the Mosaic Covenant and the New Covenant.⁷⁹

Unlike Rutherford, however, who rarely discusses the issue of continuity between the Covenant of Works and the Mosaic Covenant,⁸⁰ Hooker also sees a significant link between Adam and Moses:

This the Scripture shewes us in the renewal of the covenant, Exodus 19.5. If you obey my voice (saith God) you shall be my peculiar people: and in the 8. Verse the people answer, Whatever the lord hath said, we will doe. *This discovers unto us the covenant of Adam, though it were made many yeeres before.*⁸¹

How, then, should one harmonize the two aspects of the Mosaic Covenant? Hooker, here, attempts to apply the outward/inward distinction to the Mosaic Covenant.⁸² The Mosaic Covenant may be understood as a renewal of the Covenant of Works—with its conditional requirements based on work-principle “Do this and live”⁸³—according to God’s dispensation of an outward covenant:

There is an outward covenant, and this is more large; the dispensation of this, God gives on his part to Christians; and their ingagement on their part, is subjection to him; and by this, God does advance a people: *by outward dispensation he declares himself to be their God*, and thereby takes them to be his people in a choice manner, and peculiar to himself: *Exodus 19.5... This is done by the outward covenant, and it is if they keep his commandments; hence, when they embrace the ordinances*, God is said to draw near to them, *Deutr. 4.78.* and

⁷⁹ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 59-60.

⁸⁰ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 58-61.

⁸¹ Hooker, *The Paterne of Perfection*, 211. [Emphasis added]

⁸² There was debate or difference over the implications of the Mosaic Covenant. See Muller, “Divine Covenants, Absolute and Conditional: John Cameron and the Early Orthodox Development of Reformed Covenant Theology,” *Mid-America Journal of Theology*, 17(2006):11-56.

⁸³ Hooker, *An Exposition of the Principles of Religion*, 8.

they neer to him.⁸⁴

This passage shows some significant points about Hooker's view of the Mosaic Covenant: First, in the Mosaic Covenant, God's covenantal relationship with people became larger than in the Abrahamic Covenant. In the latter, God made a covenant with an individual while in the former God made it with a nation; second, the Jews as a nation became God's people according to an *outward* covenant⁸⁵; third, the conditional aspect of the covenant is emphasized in this outward dispensation of the covenant. It is effective *insofar as* "a choice people" may keep God's commandments; fourth, accordingly, this outward covenant does not guarantee that a person should be in an inward and everlasting covenantal relationship with God because it may arise from false ground. Also, this outward covenantal relationship between God and the Jews could be broken at any time when the latter failed to keep the covenant and rebelled against God.⁸⁶

What, then, would be the advantages of becoming God's choice people? As for the outward privileges of the Jews, Hooker enumerates them as follows:

He will discover himself to them, and impropriate them unto himself: hence they are called the lot of his inheritance, *Deutr.32.9.* and God is said to know them above all the Nations in the world; *Amos.3.2.* He doth ingage himself unto them, and if they answer the outward priviledge, he will make them a choice people, and own them in that ingagement, and improve himself for their good; if they

⁸⁴ Hooker, *The Covenant of Grace Opened*, 3. [Emphasis added]

⁸⁵ Hooker, *The Faithful Covenanter*, 16.

⁸⁶ Hooker, *The Faithful Covenanter*, 8-10, 16. Hooker, quoting Joshua 24:15, points out that even at the moment of making a covenant at Mt. Sinai, it was entirely possible for people's heart to be disobedient and stubborn against God: "When they saw the mountain burning, their consciences began to be awakened; and this made them speak well; but oh that there were such a heart in them, *but their heart would not hear to submit...* Thus we see, this outward covenant is more large, *and may arise from false grounds, Hosea 2.13. though she was married to God, yet her heart was not with him; so in Deur. 29.4. Yet the Lord hath not given a heart to perceive, nor eyes to see, nor ears so hear unto this day.*" Hooker, *The Covenant of Grace Opened*, 3-4. [Emphasis added]

yield their Allegiance to him, he will enlarge himself to be theirs, as they avouch the Lord to be their God... and therefore he is said to dwel among them, and they to dwel with him... God takes speciall notice of them, and he waters them every moment, and keeps them night and day: hence they are said to come under the wing of God, that is under the speciall expressions of his favour.⁸⁷

It is interesting to note that Hooker's discussion about the advantages as well as the limits of the *outward* covenant seems to be in line with Rutherford's view of the *external* covenant. Like Hooker, Rutherford would agree that the Mosaic Covenant as a national covenant should belong to an *external* covenant only, which is based upon "the Covenant Preached."⁸⁸ Also, Hooker's description of the outward privilege of the Jews seems to be in perfect harmony with Rutherford's explanation about the privileges of those in the "Covenant Preached":

But it is a rich mercy that Professours are dwelling in the work house of the Grace of God, within the Visible Church, they are at the pool side, near the fountain, and dwell in Immanuel's land where dwells Jehovah in his beauty, and where are the Golden Candle-sticks, and where there run Rivers of Wine and Milk, such are Exspectations of Grace and Glory, to such the marriage Table is covered, eat if they will.⁸⁹

The only significant difference between Hooker and Rutherford may be found in their views of the ecclesiastical implications of the Mosaic Covenant as a national covenant, which I will discuss later.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Hooker, *The Covenant of Grace Opened*, 3.

⁸⁸ Like Hooker's outward covenant, Rutherford's "Covenant Preached" is mainly related to the visible church—rather than God's eternal covenant acted upon the heart of the elect. Thus, the parties in the Covenant Preached, are God and all within the visible church, whether the elect or the reprobate. Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 118-119, 340-43.

⁸⁹ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 340.

⁹⁰ See the section entitled "The Ecclesiastical Implications: The Church Covenant" in this chapter.

4) *The New Covenant* – Like Rutherford, Hooker’s discussion of the New Covenant revolves around both the unilateral and the bilateral aspects of the Covenant of Grace. On the one hand, the primary significance of the New Covenant for Hooker may be best understood by reading his regeneration story. According to Cotton Mather, the promise of the New Covenant played a central role in Hooker’s regeneration experience. In the New Covenant, Hooker found “the Spirit of Adoption,” which ultimately would lead him to the assurance of salvation.

Having been a considerable while thus troubled with such impressions for the *Spirit of Bondage*,... *at length he received the Spirit of Adoption, with well-grounded Perswasions of his interest in the New Covenant.* It became his manner, at his lying down for Sleep in the Evening, to single out some certain *Promise of God*, which he would repeat and ponder, and keep his heart close unto it, until he found that Satisfaction of Soul wherewith he could say, *I will lay me down in Peace, and Sleep; for thou, O Lord, makest me dwell in Assurance.*⁹¹

Through his own regeneration experience, Hooker seems to have been quite impressed by the practical implications of the New Covenant. He began to counsel other people in trouble to take the same course, telling them “That the Promise [of the New Covenant] was the Boat which was to carry a perishing sinner over unto the Lord Jesus Christ.”⁹²

To be sure, the New Covenant does require a condition: “no man can be saved but he must beleeve.” The same covenant, however, also includes a promise that God will enable his people to fulfill this condition: “as he makes this condition with the soule, so also he keepeth us in performing the condition.”⁹³ For Hooker, the promise of the New

⁹¹ Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana or The Ecclesiastical History of New England from Its First Planting in the Year 1620 unto the Year of our LORD, 1698*, Book III (London: Printed for Thomas Parkburts, 1702), 58. [Emphasis added]

⁹² Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, 58.

⁹³ Hooker, *The Soules Vocation or Effectual Calling to Christ* (London: John Haviland, for Andrew Crooke,

Covenant, fulfilled by God's saving work in Christ for sinners, is a strong ground of assurance and consolation.

On the other hand, Hooker also emphasizes the duty of our obedience under the Covenant of Grace. Given that "It is God only that doth this work in us without us," or "It is not in our power to help ourselves," however, one may ask, "Why should we endeavor that we can never do?"⁹⁴ In reply, Hooker answers as follows:

Answ. I do not say thou canst do the work, but do thou go to him that can do it. Thou sayest thou canst not go; I confess thou canst not as a Christian, but that I exhort unto is, Do what thou canst as a man, improve those Faculties, and Parts, and Gifts that are yet left in thee; and come under, and keep under the Call of God. God meets his People in the place of his worship, in the use of the Ordinances which he appoints, therefore go thous thither to meet with him. . . . use that mind, and those thoughts, and that tongue of thine about the things of God and Jesus Christ. Thou mayest do this, thou shouldest do this.⁹⁵

The above passage reveals Hooker's strong conviction that, even under the New Covenant, we should do our best to use the *means of grace* in order to maintain our covenantal relationship with God. This effort, of course, does not mean that saving merit exists in human act. Thus, Hooker says,

Present thy self before God in the use of the Means of Grace, and when thou art there *renounce thy own abilities*, either to do good to thy self, or to receive good from God in al the Means that are appointed for thy good. Say therefore, Lord, *it is not in Man or Means to do any good to my soul*, keep thy heart here, and be sure thy soul be rightly possessed of it. . . . When you are got hither and keep here, be sure now not to leave the Ordinances of God, before you find some power beyond the power of Ordinances, and Man, and Means; leave them nor till you find the almighty power of God working upon your souls.⁹⁶

1638), 40-41.

⁹⁴ Hooker, *The Application of Redemption*, Book VIII, 448.

⁹⁵ Hooker, *The Application of Redemption*, Book VIII, 448.

⁹⁶ Hooker, *The Application of Redemption*, Book VIII, 448, 449, 450. [Emphasis added]

Likewise, our duty of obedience under the New Covenant must be understood as *evangelical* rather than legal. The difference between the two, as we have already discussed, is very significant. Hooker, in his *An Exposition of the Principles of Religion* (1645), points out three major differences: First, the legal obedience binds us to perfect or exact obedience, while the evangelical obedience require *sincerity* in the will, heart, and endeavor, which is taken for the deed; second, in the former one may obey the Law by way of merit—for Adam’s case, to get life as a reward—while in the latter, one obeys the Lord by way of *thankfulness*; third, in the former, one must bring something in oneself while in the latter Christians obey God in Christ as the Surety for them.⁹⁷

In sum, Hooker concludes that our duty of obedience under the New Covenant should become the very ground of comfort rather than a burden: “This is a ground of exceeding comfort to Gods people; though their abilities be not great, yet if they are sincere in heart, they may be comforted.”⁹⁸ This statement does indicate that, for Hooker, both the unilateral and bilateral aspects of the Covenant of Grace are closely interrelated and even fully compatible. And Hooker’s view is not different from what Rutherford about the “threefold sweetness” in our obedience under the new Covenant of Grace.⁹⁹

4. Hooker and the Covenant of Redemption

Like Rutherford, Hooker seems to be convinced that God and Christ made a

⁹⁷ Hooker, *An Exposition of the Principles of Religion*, 52-53.

⁹⁸ Hooker, *An Exposition of the Principles of Religion*, 53.

⁹⁹ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 70-71. See the section of “Evangelical Obedience under the New Covenant” in chapter 3 of this paper.

special compact together, which would be the firm and everlasting ground of the Covenant of Grace:

First, God and Christ made a compact, or a covenant together; God offereth Christ this (who was the second person in Trinitie) that he would become man, and in mans nature fulfill the Law, and suffer all that wrath of God that was due for the breach of the Law; God promised Christ that hee should acquit and discharge all such as beleevd in him. Christ he agreeth to this Covenant, and undertakes it, after the Covenant was made, he came and performed it; he became man and gave a perfect price, for the full payment of what ever was due, God abated him not a farthing, the uttermost farthing of that which beleevvers were condemned to pay, hee paid it, he perfectly kept the law, he perfectly suffered the uttermost of all that wrath of God that was due to sin.¹⁰⁰

Hooker does not explicitly define this compact as the Covenant of Redemption. His description of it, however, seems to be perfectly in line with Rutherford's definition of the Covenant of Redemption or Suretyship.¹⁰¹

Also, like Rutherford, Hooker is interested in its practical implications for a pastoral use. Hooker believes that it must be a sweet doctrine of consolation for all believers:

First of all, here is wonderfull sweet consolation to all you that are beleevvers, ... you are those happy ones for whom Christ gave himself, to redeem you from all iniquite, to redeem you from the power of sin, from the guilt of sin, from the punishment of sin. Be therefore of good comfort, thou that are a beleever, thou shalt certainly be delivered from all iniquitie. Hath Christ given himself for this end, and is not attainable?¹⁰²

For Hooker, God's covenant with the Christ must be a "sweet consolation" because, as Thomas Shepherd mentions in the Preface of *The Saint Dignitie and Dutie*, it becomes the

¹⁰⁰ Hooker, *The Saint Dignitie and Dutie*, 30.

¹⁰¹ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 333.

¹⁰² Hooker, *The Saint Dignitie and Dutie*, 32.

ultimate source of the privileges and dignity of all believers.¹⁰³

After using it as the doctrine of consolation, Hooker proceeds to discuss the second use of it, which is “Exhortation.” Given that we are redeemed by Christ with a costly redemption, Hooker argues, “It is as grosse a thing (my breathren) for us... as is ever the giving of himself, to rush again under the power of that iniquite, from which to redeem us, Christ hath given himself.”¹⁰⁴ Thus, Hooker continues,

When therefore thou art tempted to commit a sin, reason thus with thy self. Now that I am tempted to sin, here is presented to me, pleasure, or honour, or profit, or escape from trouble, and if I will commit the sin, I shall attain many of these; but let me remember, that to the end I might bee brought out of sin, *Christ gave himself*: Is not Christ more worth than profit? more worth than pleasure? of more worth then my life? why then to save my self from danger, or to gain profit, or pleasure, or honours, should I rush into a sinne, out of which, Christ to pluck me, hath given himself.¹⁰⁵

Finally, Hooker finishes his sermon with a vigorous exhortation emphasizing the duty of all believers to love Christ above all things including our own life:

It is a perpetuall ransome, he hath for ever redeemed you. .. O, then behold a costly ransome, a perfect ransome, a perpetuall ransome, an undeserved ransome! What doth this deserve but wonderfull love at your hands? .. Oh love Christ therefore above all, above your sins, above the world, above your friends, above your liberties, above your goods, above your lives, for he hath loved you above his life, he hath given himself to redeem you from all iniquitie.¹⁰⁶

Hooker, as this statement indicates, seems to take more interest in discussing the practical application of the doctrine than about finding biblical proof-texts for it—as Rutherford

¹⁰³ See Thomas Shepherd’s “To the Reader” in Hooker, *The Saint Dignitie and Dutie*.

¹⁰⁴ Hooker, *The Saint Dignitie and Dutie*, 35.

¹⁰⁵ Hooker, *The Saint Dignitie and Dutie*, 35-36.

¹⁰⁶ Hooker, *The Saint Dignitie and Dutie*, 42-43.

did who devoted much more pages in finding the biblical evidences for the existence of the Covenant of Redemption.¹⁰⁷

As for another significant difference between Rutherford and Hooker, one may need to remember that Hooker, unlike Rutherford, rarely discusses this doctrine—compared with other biblical doctrines.¹⁰⁸ Hooker seems to be more interested in studying how God made and applied his Covenant of Grace in the history of his redemption than in speculating about the *atemporal*, everlasting, and mystical foundation of his Covenant of Grace. This may account for the reason why Hooker could easily discover the practical applications of the covenant of grace¹⁰⁹—especially its ecclesiastical value for his church in New England.

So far, I have discussed Hooker's views of the covenants. It is true that Hooker took a different approach—from Rutherford's—to the history of the biblical covenants by emphasizing the diversity as well as unity in God's dispensation of the covenants in his redemptive history. Nevertheless, one may argue that, for Hooker, it does not make any significant difference from what Rutherford has to say about the Covenant of Works, the Covenant of Grace, and the Covenant of Redemption. Particularly, with regard to the substance of the covenants, the outward/inward distinction of the Covenant of Grace, and the bilateral aspects of the New Covenant, both theologians seem to be in general agreement with each other. Not much attention, however, has been dedicated to the

¹⁰⁷ See "Rutherford's 13 Arguments" section in the previous chapter of this paper.

¹⁰⁸ There seems to be only one major text for Hooker's view of the Covenant of Redemption, which is the first sermon in *The Saint Dignitie and Dutie* entitled, "The Gift of Gifts or The End why CHRIST Gave Himself," on Tit.2.14. 1-43.

¹⁰⁹ Also, this may be reason why Hooker likes to discuss the bilateral aspect of the covenant of grace. Unlike Miller's argument that Hooker's covenant theology reduces God's grace to "a very minute point," however, Hooker—as we have discussed so far—could consistently discuss God's free grace in each dispensation of the covenant of grace.

ecclesiastical implications of their covenant theology, where one may find a sharp difference between the two.

III. The Ecclesiastical Implications of Thomas Hooker's Covenant Theology

1. Infant Baptism and National Church

To begin with, Hooker agrees with Rutherford that there should be a theological continuity between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. Particularly, for both, the circumcision of the Abrahamic Covenant should become a theological ground of practicing infant baptism under the New Covenant. Abraham's children, though they had not the use of reason, had a right to have the seal of the Covenant by allowance from God. Therefore, Hooker argues, we must approve of the ordinances of God. It may be true that infants are *not* holy. However, Hooker answers, "there is no more holinesse required in us, then in the time of circumcision."¹¹⁰

From a viewpoint of God's redemptive history, the denial of infant baptism would ultimately make Christ's grace less than before, which, Hooker argues, should be considered as sinful:

If it be unlawfull for children to be baptized now, then the grace of Christ is of lesse force then it was before, or of lesse extent, but that is sinfull, and therefore it is an error to say so either that it is of lesse force or of lesse extent, or to say that now it is to men onely: the two parts are plain, that it is not of lesse force, or of

¹¹⁰ Hooker, *The Covenant of Grace Opened*, 73. Hooker's statement seems to be in line with William Ames' view of the conditions for infant baptism: I.40.13. "Faith and repentance doe no more make the covenant of God now then in the time of Abraham (who was the Father of the faithfull) therefore the want of those acts ought no more to hinder baptisme from Infants now, then it did forbid circumcision then." Ames, *The Marrow of Sacred Divinity*, I.40.13.

lesse extent then it was before.¹¹¹

Refuting John Spilsbury's view that infant baptism may corrupt and overthrow the body of Christ because it would make a *national* or carnall church, Hooker emphasizes that there should not be a necessary link between infant baptism and a national church:

But that baptizing of infants makes a nationall Church, that I deny; for it will not follow. *But the prerogative of a nationall Church did belong onely to the Jews,* and therefore it had nationall ordinances, they were to meet three times a yeare before the Lord; and they had nationall Officers, the High Priest, and all the males were bound to appeare three times a yeare, so all was nationall: *but now it is not so, but they are particular to particular churches, and particular ordinances, and particular officers, the Pastor and Teacher is or ought to be in their own congregation: and though children are baptized, they are made members of a particular congregation.* And besides, a National church in it selfe does not destroy the body of Christ: For that which God hath appointed for his church, that doth nor destroy the church; for then God may be said to destroy the church: but that were blasphemy to say so. *But now all are in a particular church.*¹¹²

This passage is very important in understanding a significant difference not only between Hooker and Spilsbury but also between Hooker and Rutherford: On the one hand, Hooker does not agree with Spilsbury that a national church would destroy the body of Christ. In reality, Hooker argues, it is God himself who established it for the Jews in the Old Testament period.

¹¹¹ Hooker, *The Covenant of Grace Opened*, 82. Again, Ames makes a very similar point: "But that the infants of the faithfull are not to be forbidden this Sacrament, it appeareth ...3. This covenant which is now administred to the faithfull, doth bring more large and full consolation to them, then of old it could before the coming of Christ. But if it should pertaine onely to them, and not to their Infants, then the grace of God and their consolation should be more narrow, and contracted after Christ is exhibited then before it was." Rutherford also would agree with both Ames and Hooker. See, Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 75-76.

¹¹² Hooker, *The Covenant of Grace Opened*, 65. [Emphasis added]

On the other hand, Hooker also disagrees with Rutherford that a national church must continue to exist under the New Covenant and that infant baptism should make a national church. Rutherford, as John Coffey rightly points out, believed that the visible church must be a comprehensive *national church*.¹¹³ All infants born within the visible church, Rutherford argues, “whatever the wickedness of their nearest parents” are to be received within the national church by infant baptism.¹¹⁴ For Hooker, however, this should not be the case.

Unlike both Spilsbury and Rutherford, Hooker denies any necessary link between infant baptism and a national church. To be sure, there existed such a national church, which required circumcision as an external seal of the national church covenant. However, this belonged *only* to the Jew under the Old Covenant. God dealt with them “as with children new come to schoole.”¹¹⁵ As this young church grew up to be the New Testament church, Hooker believes, God began to look at his people as they are in covenant with particular churches—instead of a national church. Accordingly, infant baptism under the New Covenant should belong to particular churches. The above passage indicates that Hooker’s view is influenced by the ever-changing reality of God’s covenantal dispensation in his redemptive history, by which Hooker, in his Preface of *Survey*, attempts to justify the introduction of the church covenant.

¹¹³ John Coffey, *Politics, Religion and British Revolutions: The Mind of Samuel Rutherford* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1997), 206.

¹¹⁴ Rutherford, *A Peaceable and Temperate Plea for Paul’s Presbytery in Scotland* (London: Printed for John Bartlet, 1642), 164. See its chapter 12, 164-87. Also see Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 72-91.

¹¹⁵ Hooker, *The Covenant of Grace Opened*, 62.

2. Church Covenant

One of the key arguments of Rutherford against Hooker's church covenant is that Hooker failed to keep the basic distinction between the invisible and the visible church. For example, Rutherford says, "Tho. Hooker argueth from confederacie with God to prove that we are to judge all visible professors to be justified internally called, and they are no Church-members except they be so in our esteem."¹¹⁶

Rutherford here is quoting from Hooker's *Survey*, part I. chapter III, page 39 and 40 where, according to Rutherford, Hooker attempts to interpret "the flock" (church) in Acts 20:28 as referring to the "really redeemed, reall beleevers." But Rutherford's reading of Hooker is biased and incorrect. Hooker's actual argument is as follows:

Act.20.28. Attend to the whole flock παντι τῷ ποιμνίῳ, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his blood. The Church here is according to us, Congregationall; to Mr. R. its Presbyteriall. But take it either way, it must needs be visible. That over whom Elders and officers are set to attend and fed, by doctrine and discipline, this must needs be a visible Church. For unless they did see them and know them, how could they execute censures upon them? But THESE are called the Church redeemed with the blood of God, then which stile, none can be more glorious. If any man say that the elect and invisible are only there intended by that name. I answer. That conceit is crosse to the very grain of the words, and the scope of the text, For they must attend παντι to the whole flock... whereas by the currant and common sense of the Scriptures, taking redeemed and sanctified as visibly, though not really such, the stream of the text runs pleasantly, without the least appearance of a doubt.¹¹⁷

This passage clearly shows that Hooker does *not* understand the flock as *really* redeemed and sanctified church. Hooker's point is simply that the visible church, though she is *not* the invisible church of the elect, should be called "the Church redeemed with the blood of

¹¹⁶ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 130.

¹¹⁷ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 39-40.

God.” Like Rutherford, Hooker insists that the visible church should include both the elect and hypocrites such as Ishmael, Esau, Simon Magus.¹¹⁸ In short, Hooker does agree with Rutherford on the visible/invisible distinction of the Church.

Moreover, Hooker does not attempt to associate the church covenant with the invisible church. On the contrary, he makes it clear that the church covenant, like other outward seals of the covenant, should belong to a visible church or the outward covenant only—instead of an invisible and inward covenant. Hooker’s viewpoint is well illustrated in his refutation of Spilisbury’s fourfold argument against infant baptism, which I have summarized as follows.¹¹⁹

| Arg. | John Spilisbury | Thomas Hooker |
|------|--|--|
| #1. | If Infants have an interest to grace, then men may fall from grace. | Yes, federal holiness and federal grace may be lost while saving grace is not. |
| #2. | Then the Covenant of Grace may be to vile persons, and a man may have the outward covenant, and not be engrafted into Christ. | Yes, The sacraments (including infant baptism) belong to outward covenant only. But God make good use of it for children. |
| #3. | This will bring in universal redemption, no federall grace does make a man redeemed, it dashes this. | Outward covenant is larger than inward one. But it does not introduce universalism. In the Old Testament not every person in Israel was saved. |
| #4. | It makes us believe an untruth, for Ishmael he did perish: but he may have federall grace, and this is the holinesse meant here. | Don’t be confused about the church covenant. It must include Demas, Simon Magus, Children of Kedura as well as Ishmael. As for inwardly wicked people “the Church hath free and full warrant from God... to dispence the ordinances to them..for it is her duty” |

Through his dialogue with Spilisbury, Hooker seems to make three important points for his ecclesiology. First, Hooker wanted to separate his own view from the Anabaptists’

¹¹⁸ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 131-32. Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 41-42; idem, *The Covenant of Grace Opened*, 59.

¹¹⁹ Hooker, *The Covenant of Grace Opened*, 44-61. As for the Church Covenant, see page 17, 19, 22-23, 35, 38, 67-68. Quotes are from page 58 and 60.

ecclesiology —as expressed by Spilisbury; second, Hooker, like Rutherford, maintains the outward/ inward distinction of the covenant throughout both the Old and the New Testament period; third, both the sacraments and the Church Covenant should belong to the outward seals of the covenant only.

The above three points, I think, are the key elements in understanding both differences and similarities between Rutherford and Hooker on the major ecclesiastical issues, which I will discuss in detail in the next two chapters.

IV. Conclusion

This chapter has examined Hooker's view of the biblical covenants, which, I believe, is a first important step in demonstrating a link between Hooker's defense of the church covenant and his covenant theology. Hooker, when compared to Rutherford, seems to be more interested in discussing the diversity or the differing characteristics of each covenant than simply addressing the covenantal unity.

For Hooker, the historical reality of biblical covenants should be found in the ever-changing and evolving characteristic of God's covenantal dispensation as well as in their unchanging substance of the Covenant of Grace. By locating his church covenant in the visible, outward, and ever-changing aspects of God's covenantal dispensation, Hooker could avoid being accused of introducing an entirely new kind of covenant to the Covenant of Grace.

To a critic like Rutherford, who asserts that there must be no more dispensation

of the covenant beyond the Covenant of Grace,¹²⁰ Hooker might answer that the church covenant belongs only to the *outward* dispensation of the Covenant of Grace, which has ever changed so far. Also, he has actually argued that the church covenant always existed during the long period of the Covenant of Grace in an *implicit* way even before his Congregationalism has finally expressed it in an explicit way.

Given Hooker's statement, however, one may ask "On what ground such an implicit/explicit distinction could be made?" and "Why then is it necessary for the present church to have the church covenant in an *explicit* way?" These questions constitute the major issues of the Rutherford-Hooker controversy over the nature of the visible church and the church covenant.

¹²⁰ Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 215. [Emphasis added]

CHAPTER 5.

**THE RUTHERFORD-HOOKER DISPUTE (1): THE NATURE OF
THE VISIBLE CHURCH AND THE CHURCH COVENANT**

I. Introduction

The difference between Rutherford's understanding of the church and Hooker's, at least from Rutherford's perspective, is enormous.¹ Rutherford believes that Hooker's church is a *new* church, which is unknown to Scripture. Both Church Fathers and Protestant divines, Rutherford claims, would not support her because Hooker and other Congregationalists have built "new Churches" in New England by adding their "after-birth inventions to the truth of God."²

In reply, Hooker answers that the difference between them should not be considered as substantial as Rutherford thinks. For example, regarding the issue of the church membership, Hooker says, "I hope I shall make it appear, that we require no *more Sainthood* to make men *fit matter for a visible Church*, then Mr. R. his *own grounds* will give us leave."³ Hooker's statement indicates that there might be a misinterpretation by Rutherford of what Congregational Church is really about. It is partly due to Rutherford's misunderstanding of Hooker's words such as "visible saints," "the judgment of charity" and "church covenant"—which will be discussed in detail in this chapter. Particularly, I

¹ See the "Preface" of Rutherford's *A Survey of the Survey of that Summe of Church-Discipline Penned by Mr. Thomas Hooker* (London: J.C. for Andr. Crook, 1658), A2-A7.

² Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 6, 18-19, 88. These "all Protestant divines," according to Rutherford, include Calvin, Beza, Bullinger, Peter Martyr, Bucanus, Tilenus, Piscator, Musculus, Gualter, Junius, Pareus, Zanchius, Professors of Leiden, Willet, Jewel, Reynold, Trelcatius, Sadeel, Polanus etc.

³ Thomas Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline* (London: A. M. for John Bellamy, 1648), 21.

will pay close attention to each man's differing view of the church covenant in relation to the nature of the visible church. In doing so, I will show why Rutherford considers the introduction of the church covenant as an arbitrary attempt to make the *invisible* church *visible* while Hooker does not believe so. According to Hooker, the introduction of church covenant was not meant to deny the nature of the *visible* church. At this point, one may wonder what the meanings of the nature of visible church are for both men and how they would explain it.

II. The Nature of the Visible Church

1. Visible Saints

1) *Edmund Morgan's Visible Saints* - Edmund S. Morgan, in his pioneering work, *Visible Saints* (1963), argues that the New England Congregationalists' concept of visible saints is deeply rooted in the Separatists' ideal of a pure church.⁴ Both the Separatists and the Congregationalists, he believes, shared a clear vision "to make the visible church as much as possible like the invisible."⁵ To achieve this goal, the latter went even further than their Separatist brethren and insisted that any candidates who hoped to be the members of a Congregational church should demonstrate the work of saving grace in their souls:⁶

It [the visible church] should have in appearance the same purity that the invisible

⁴ See the first chapters of Edmunds S. Morgan, *Visible Saints: The History of a Puritan Idea* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1963, reprint 1982), 1-32, 33-63.

⁵ Morgan, *Visible Saints*, 34.

⁶ According to Morgan, "the only radical difference" of the Congregationalist practice from Separatist practice "lay in the candidate's demonstration of the work of grace in his soul." The "demonstration of saving grace," Morgan argues, was "a distinct addition," which meant that "every member of a New England church must be able to describe personal experiences corresponding to those which theologians like Perkins and Hildersam had defined." Morgan, *Visible Saints*, 90.

church had in reality: it should admit to membership only those who appeared to be saved, only those who could demonstrate by their lives, their beliefs, and their religious experiences that they apparently (to a charitable judgment) had received saving faith.⁷

Morgan proceeds to describe the detailed procedure of admitting new members as recorded in John Cotton's *The Way of the Churches of Christ in New England* (1645), Richard Mather's *Church Government and Church Covenant Discussed* (1643) and other sources.⁸

Morgan's description of the "Congregational Way" of New England, however, needs to be carefully qualified by a further description of the primary sources that he uses. For example, Cotton, for the purpose of clearing away any misunderstanding, asks the following questions at the end of the section that Morgan quoted: "Now what offence is therein all this? or what scruple may arise in a godly mind against these things? Two or three things seem herein offensive, *but are not.*"⁹ These problems are summarized by Cotton into three issues:

⁷ Morgan, *Visible Saints*, 34-35.

⁸ Morgan, *Visible Saints*, 87-90. Morgan also uses Thomas Lechford, *Plain Dealing* (London: W. E. and I. G. for Nath, 1642), ed. J. Hammond Trumbull (Boston: J. K. Wiggin & W. M. Parsons Lunt, 1867), 12-29; Edward Johnson, *A History of New England* (London: Print for Nath, 1654), ed. J. F. Jameson (New York: Scribner, 1910), 214-217. Morgan's detailed account of this procedure is summarized by Michael G. Ditmore into seven steps as follows: (1) a private interview with the eldership to determine religious knowledge and experience, (2) followed by the elders propounding the candidate to the church at large; (3) if enough members offered endorsements in favor of the individual, (4) he or she was next required to deliver a confessional narration of personal religious experience to the church, either publicly or through the elders; (5) if a majority of the church felt satisfied with the confession, the candidate would make a profession of historical, doctrinal faith; (6) a majority vote in favor of the candidate would finally (7) authorize his or her own inclusion within the church's covenant. Ditmore, Michael G. "Preparation and Confession: Reconsidering Edmund s. Morgan's *Visible Saints*," *The New England Quarterly* 67:2 (1994), 301. At the fourth step, according to Morgan, the candidate was expected to make a narration about fifteen minutes in length "to demonstrate the work of God in his soul." It should be noted that this detailed description is not found in both Cotton's and Mather's work. Morgan, *Visible Saints*, 89.

⁹ Cotton's *The Way of the Churches of Christ in New England* (London: Matthew Simmons, 1645), 56. [Emphasis added]

First, That we require gracious qualifications in such as we receive to Church-fellowship: whereas the visible Church is said to consist of all sorts, good and bad, and to be a garner containing chaff and wheat, as a field wherein wheat and tares grow up together.

Secondly, That we receive such into the Church by a covenant

Thirdly, That we communicate too much power unto the people, and do not rather refer all power (in this case) into the hands of the *Elders*.¹⁰

In answering these problems, Cotton makes three significant points: First, given his distinction between the ordinary *hearers* of the Word and church members, Cotton and his brethren never expects their visible church filled with the elect only. Instead, Cotton says, “we willingly admit all comers to the hearing of the Word with us,”¹¹ which seems to affirm the traditional distinction of a visible and invisible church.

Second, it must be remembered that getting church membership of a Congregational church in New England was directly connected with exercising church-power—particularly in the matter of election, admission, excommunication, and other issues about church discipline. Given his statement, “we communicate so much power to the people,”¹² Cotton and his brethren might wish to argue that all candidates need be prepared and well informed about their duty and responsibility, which might be unnecessary if they were the members of the Anglican Church in England.

Finally, both Cotton and Mather indicate that one may become a member of a true visible church by entering into a covenant, which is not an *explicit* church covenant. Cotton argues that, in the Bible, the substance of church covenant is implied in many

¹⁰ Cotton’s *The Way of the Churches of Christ in New England*, 56.

¹¹ Cotton’s *The Way of the Churches of Christ in New England*, 56.

¹² Cotton’s *The Way of the Churches of Christ in New England*, 64.

ways such as “Parables and similitude.”¹³ Mather also agree that the substance of a visible church may be preserved by an *implicit* church covenant and that, accordingly, other forms of church government can be called true churches insofar as they carry the essence of church covenant.¹⁴

In short, Morgan’s one-sided description of New England Congregationalists’ vision for pure church needs to be tempered with more research on how New Englanders actually explained their own “New England system.”¹⁵ At this point, it should be noted that both Cotton’s and Mather’s views of a visible church are perfectly in line with Hooker’s. Particularly, the above three problems summarized by Cotton will continue to be addressed, defined, and discussed in more detail by Hooker.

2) *Hooker’s Visible Saints* – Saints, for Hooker, must be understood “under a double apprehension”: On the one hand, they may refer to *the elect*, who are *inwardly* called by God to be the members of the invisible church. On the other hand, saints may refer to those who are *externally* called to become the members of the visible church. The former

¹³ In the Old Testament, God’s making covenant with his people must be understood as making a church covenant because people, here, refers to a visible church. In the New Testament, the visible church is described as “City of God,” “New Jerusalem,” and spouse of Christ, which are established by some kind of confederacy or covenant. Also, “the mutual agreement” among fellow members in the church is interpreted by Cotton as referring to the substance of church covenant: “This is no other than what we call Church-Covenant.” Cotton’s *The Way of the Churches of Christ in New England*, 59-64.

¹⁴ Mather, *An Apologie of the Churches in New England for Church Covenant* (London: T.P. and M.S. for Benjamin Allen, 1643), 36-42. Mather argues that the substance of church covenant may be indirectly shown by profession of faith, worship, baptismal vows, and other voluntary agreements and consents among church members.

¹⁵ Moreover, Edmund’s thesis that Cotton was responsible for this “New England system,” which began in the mid-1630 is criticized by M.G. Ditmore. According to Ditmore, Morgan’s hypothesis depends solely on Cotton Mather’s *Magnalia Christi Americana* (London: Printed for Thomas Parkburts, 1702) and William Hubbard’s *General History of New England : from the discovery to MDCLXXX*, 2nd ed. (Boston: C.C. Little and J. Brown, 1848), which are not reliable. Ditmore “Preparation and Confession: Reconsidering Edmund s. Morgan’s *Visible Saints*,” 298-319.

is called by Hooker the saints “according to truth,” while the latter is the saints “according to Charity.” Hooker argues that those who make up the membership of a visible church are only visible (apparent) saints.¹⁶ To better understand Hooker’s view of the visible saints “according to Charity,” consider his following explanation:

*Saints according to charity are such, who in their practice and profession (if we look at them in their course, according to what we see by experience, or receive by report and testimony from others, or lastly, look we at their expressions) they favour so much, as though they had been with Jesus. From all which, as farre as rationall charity directed by rule from the Word, a man cannot but conclude, That there may be some seeds of some spirituall work of God in the soul. These we call visible Saints (leaving secret things to God) in our view, and according to the reach of rationall charity, which can go no further, then to hopefull fruits.*¹⁷

Hooker, here, makes sure that one should be considered as a visible saint according to the judgment of charity only. Accordingly, visible saints should include both the elect and hypocrites. If one should become a visible saint “according to truth” only then it means that all visible saints in a visible church must be *real* believers. And this is exactly what Rutherford accuses Hooker of, believing that Hooker’s visible saints must refer to “real believers” or “real converts”: “Both *Mr. Hooker* and *M. Robinson* and the Separatists teach that there can be none members of the visible Church but onely real converts, and such as are chosen to life..”¹⁸ Accordingly, Rutherford argues that hypocrites such as Demas, Annanias, Sapphira, and Simon Magus cannot be the members of Hooker’s church.¹⁹

¹⁶ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 14-23.

¹⁷ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 14-15.

¹⁸ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 39. Also see page 5, 6, 7.

¹⁹ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 42.

In reply, Hooker has already argued that even Judas, Demas, Simon Magus and Ananias may be admitted to a visible church as visible saints according to the judgment of charity because “our Saviour proceeds with such, not *as God* who knows the heart, but in a *Church-way*.”²⁰ Indeed, as Morgan rightly observes, Hooker did seem to advocate and practice a generous membership policy for his church in Connecticut.²¹ As a result, anyone could become a member of Hooker’s church “without any trouble, and prevent such curious inquisitions and niceties” if the person “live *not in the commission of any known sin, nor in the neglect of any known duty, and can give a reason of his hope towards God*.”²² Thus, Hooker argues,

When therefore we meet with such phrases printed and recorded, *Onely the Saints, faithfull, called, and sanctified are to be members of a Congregation*,²³ He must needs be exceeding weak, or exceeding wilfull, that will not easily and readily give such a construction as this, *Namely, Persons visibly, externally such to the judgment of Charity, not always really and internally such by the powerfull impression of Gods grace*. Let therefore such mistakes be for ever silenced in the minds and mouths of such as are wise hearted and moderate.²⁴

Accordingly, when the misunderstanding about visible saints is removed, Hooker believes, the difference between the membership of his church and that of Rutherford’s church may be minimized:

²⁰ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 15. Also see page 23-24, 204.

²¹ Morgan, *Visible Saints*, 106-108.

²² Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, part III, 5-6. Hooker, here, seems to criticize the tendency of “too great severity,” used for the rules of admission in other places in New England. Morgan, *Visible Saints*, 107.

²³ Hooker, here, is referring to Rutherford, *The Due Right of Presbyteries* (London: E. Griffin for Richard Whittaker & Andrew Crook, 1644), 259, in which Rutherford criticizes John Cotton’s view of the church.

²⁴ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 23.

So that we have expressions full. The Church consists of some who are faithfull and sincere hearted: Some counterfeit and false hearted. Some really good, some really bad, onely those who appear so bad and vile should not be accepted . And doeth not *Mr. R.* say the same?²⁵

2. The Judgment of Charity

1) *Rutherford's Criticism*– Refuting Hooker's statement, however, Rutherford insists that Hooker's church cannot include Magus and Demas.²⁶ Otherwise, Hooker will have to face the problem of inconsistency. Why does Rutherford think so? There seem to be three possible explanations why Rutherford would not accept Hooker's conclusion, considering either his distinction of the judgment of charity and truth as meaningless or Hooker as not being true to his own distinction.

First, Rutherford believes that Hooker is in line with the position of John Robinson, a well-known Separatist, on the issue of the membership of the visible church. Quoting Robinson's *Justification of Separation from the Church of England* (1639).²⁷ Rutherford argues, "M. *Robinson* & his maintain that the visible Church, as touching its essential constitution, should consist of onely reall converts, as the Church in paradise: and M. *Hooker* defends them in this."²⁸

The second reason why Rutherford refuses Hooker's use of the judgment of charity is because Rutherford seems to consider the distinction between the judgment of truth and charity as meaningless. Both the judgment of truth and the judgment of charity,

²⁵ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 22.

²⁶ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 42.

²⁷ John Robinson, *Justification of Separation from the Church of England* (Amsterdam: G. Thorp, 1639), 97-98.

²⁸ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 41.

Rutherford argues, belong to humanity's "after-birth invention," by which Hooker and his church attempt to find *real* converts for the visible church.²⁹ If there truly exists such a thing as the judgment of charity—or if Hooker is true to his own distinction between the judgment of truth and charity—Rutherford argues that "*M. H must make all Israel* favoury professors and reall converts in the judgement one of another, before ever the Lord of free grace called them to be his people."³⁰ Rutherford's point is that God's calling of Israel to be his people or to be a national church must not be judged nor denied by any human judgment—either the judgment of truth or that of charity.

In a similar way, Rutherford attempts to deal with the issue of "the flock" (church) in Acts 20:28—as we have already discussed in the previous chapter.³¹ Now, Rutherford seems to be aware of Hooker's external/internal distinction as an answer to Rutherford's criticism.³² Nevertheless, Rutherford still disagrees with Hooker and argues that Hooker is not true to his own external/internal distinction:

I shall desire Mr. *Hooker* to be true to his own distinction. If being externally in Covenant make a Church-member, as he expounds *Acts 2*. Then all to whom the Lord saith, *I am your God*, and to whom the Covenant is externally preached, and they by silence hear and accept of it, are to Mr. H. Church-members.³³

²⁹ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 74, 87-88.

³⁰ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 13.

³¹ See the section of "Church Covenant" of chapter 4. Rutherford argues that Hooker understands "the flock" as the "really redeemed, reall believers," which is not true. Hooker agrees with Rutherford on the traditional distinction of visible/invisible church and of external/internal covenant.

³² Rutherford's *A Survey of the Survey* was published in 1658 three years after *The Covenant of Grace Opened* (1655) where he first dealt this issue. Perhaps, Rutherford could re-read Hooker's argument and, as a result, now he wants to soften his criticism or at least modify the tone to a less threatening level.

³³ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 74.

³³ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 16-19.

The external/internal distinction as well as the distinction of the judgment of charity and truth, from Rutherford's viewpoint, should be meaningful insofar as the extent of the external covenant and the judgment of charity include everyone whom God calls to be "his people"—for example, Israel as a whole or as a national church.³⁴

Third, Rutherford wants to consider the use of human judgment itself in deciding the membership of the visible church as a violation of God's executing his decree.

Consider his following statement:

The Apostles are accurate in trying of some Church-members, to wit, of Elders and Deacons, and bid receive some, and reject others. *Act. 6.13, Act. 13.2,3. 1Tim. 3.1,2,3,4. & c. 10,11,12. Tit. 1.9,10,11. 2Tim. 2.2. 1Tim. 5.17,22.* But shew us rule, Canon, precept, practice of Apostles, for judiciall electing of Church-members; yet *to me it is one act of the Lords deep providence in the execution of his decrees of election and reprobation;* for when the Lord sends the word of his kingdome to a Nation, and calls them, and they professe to hear, there hath the Lord a visible kingdome, and the Lord builds his house, not *Moses, not Paul.*³⁵

It is God's providence, according to Rutherford, that where there is the settled preaching of the gospel and where there are the ordinary hearers of the preached word, these are the sufficient marks of the visible church.³⁶ However, Hooker argues that the settled preaching of the gospel to the ordinary hearers alone cannot make a true visible church. Hooker takes an example of a minister who has preached many years to a company of infidels in one place and concludes, "Here is *settled preaching*, and yet there is *no Church.*"³⁷ In reply, Rutherford said that, unlike "transient and occasionall preaching,"

³⁴ Rutherford's conviction, here, seems to be partly rooted in his defense of a national church, which will be discussed in the concluding chapter.

³⁵ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 60. [Emphasis is added]

³⁶ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 16-19.

³⁷ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 34. John Cotton makes a similar point: "the

settled preaching includes these elements:

1. The active calling of *God*, by Gods warrant and command to preach to such, for Ministers may not at randome set up a light among Infidels upon their own private choice and spirit, but if *God* so dispose that they have a faculty of speaking in their own tongue to Pagans, 2. If providence open a door for a call, that there be any passive call or accepting of him for these diverse years upon the part of these Infidels, and 3. If the *Lord* gift the man and stir up his Spirit *to preach diverse years to these infidels in one place*. I shall say there the Lord hath said to that man, *go and bid these Infidels and fooles come to the wedding, as Mat.12.9. and come to Wisdoms table, as Prov.9.4.* and there is a visible Church there.³⁸

Rutherford, again, emphasizes the preaching of gospel as the most significant mark of a true visible church. The problem in Hooker's congregational church, Rutherford argues, is that the human judgment—seeking after real believers for the membership of a visible church—may be an obstacle to God's providence in establishing God's churches in the world.

In addition, the pastors of Hooker's church cannot fulfill the duty of pastors, which is “to endeavour the conversion of all,” because “M. Hooker holdeth that pastors as pastors are called of God to convert no Church members, for they presuppose they were before converted.”³⁹

2) *Hooker's Answers* – Responding to Rutherford's criticism, Hooker points out some important points, which tended to be misunderstood by Rutherford.

preaching of the word alone”—even though it is preached *purely* or *constantly*—“will not constitute a Church of *Indians*, without some more porfessed subjection to it, then constant attendance upon the hearing of it will reach unto.” Cotton, *Of the Holiness of Church Members*, 10-11.

³⁸ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 21-22.

³⁹ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 31-37. Quotes are from page 33 and 36.

First, though it is true that Hooker sometimes agreed with Robinson, calling Robinson “a man of pious and prudent,”⁴⁰ nevertheless, it is not because Hooker wished to defend the Separatist doctrine of the church, but because, Hooker found, Robinson himself was misunderstood. Thus, Hooker’s defense of Robinson was always focused on convincing Rutherford that Robinson’s church was the “visible or externall Church” instead of “internall and invisible” church.⁴¹ Indeed, Robinson seems to accept the traditional visible/invisible distinction for his church when he states,

for we doubt not but the purest Ch[urch] upon earth may consist of good and bad in Gods ey[e], of such as are truly faithfull, and sanctified, & of such as have onely for a tyme, put on the outside and vizard of sanctity, which the Lord will in due tyme pluck of, though in the mean while mans dim sight cannot pearce through it.⁴²

Thus, Hooker complains that Robinson and other brethren were not being dealt with fairly and candidly by Rutherford on this issue.⁴³

Second, Rutherford’s assertion that the use of human judgment itself in deciding

⁴⁰ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 22.

⁴¹ “It must be considered, that here the question is, about the visible or externall Church, which is by men discernable, and not of that Church, which is internall and invisible, which onely the Lord knoweth, we speak here of visible and externall holiness onely, whereof men may judge, and not of that which is within and hid from mens eyes.” Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 22. Hooker, here, is quoting Robinson, *Justification of Separation from the Church of England* (Amsterdam: G. Thorp, 1610), 112.

⁴² Robinson, *Justification of Separation from the Church of England*, 112.

⁴³ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, p.38. 41. It is interesting to note that Rutherford was already aware of Robinson’s point. Rutherford, however, would not accept it because Robinson is not consistent: Sometimes, he seemed to accept the traditional distinction of visible/invisible church while, in other places, he expresses the Separatists’ view of a pure church. Rutherford, here, seems to think of Robinson’s statement “To proceed, In the restoring of mankind and planting the first Church in the covenant of grace established (a) the seed of the woman, there were onely saints, without any such mixture as Mr. B[ernards] makes. Now as all true Churches from the beginning to the end of the world, are one in nature & essentiall constitution, and the first the rule of the rest, so the first being gathered of good matter not bad, declares both Mr. B. Church and opinion to be bad and not good.” Robinson, *Justification of Separation from the Church of England*, 98.

the membership of a visible church must be a violation of God's execution of decree, also needs to be carefully considered. Hooker would wish to remind Rutherford of the distinction between the judgement of truth and charity. The human judgment which plays a role in selecting members for Hooker's Congregational church is not the judgment of truth but the judgment of charity. Accordingly, the human judgment of charity would not attempt to probe in the secret works of God's decree—"leaving secret things to God."⁴⁴

Third, Rutherford's another accusation that the pastors of Hooker's church cannot fulfill the duty of pastors to convert the unbelievers because all church members are supposed to be the converts, is also groundless.⁴⁵ Given the presence of the ordinary hearers and hypocrites—even among the church members—the pastor of Hooker's Congregational church should be able to preach the gospel endeavoring to convert the congregation.

Fourth, given that both Cotton and Hooker make a clear distinction between the *hearers* and the members of the church, and that one may enter Hooker's church as an ordinary hearer of God's word, they wish to emphasize that the Congregational church in New England is actually open to anyone including the hypocrites. In responding to an accusation that the Congregationalism fosters an exclusive or separatist church, Cotton, for example, argues,

The objector is too credulous, if he believe every such fabulous Report, *That we exclude any from our Churches whom we grant to be truly gracious and elect.* We exclude none such, and much less, upon this Ground alone, *Because they cannot approve of our Independency and Covenant.* We have received some members in our Churches, who are not only Presbyterian in judgement, but

⁴⁴ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 14-15.

⁴⁵ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 31-37. Quotes are from page 33 and 36.

Episcopal also. Nor do I know, that ever we refused any approved godly person upon point of difference in judgment about Church-government.⁴⁶

In addition to the above four points, Rutherford's claim that Hooker falls into the problem of inconsistency, especially because he takes side with Cotton—whose view, Rutherford believes, is in line with the Separatists—is not well-founded.⁴⁷ Quoting Cotton's *The Way of the Churches of Christ in New England* (1645), chapter 3, section III, Rutherford criticized Cotton of his tendency to identify the visible members of his congregational church with real saints or real converts.⁴⁸ Indeed, Cotton argues,

Though wee willingly admit all comers to the *hearing* of the Word with us (as the *Corinthians* admitted Infidels, 1 *Cor.* 14.24,25.) yet wee *receive none as members into the Church*, but such as (according to the judgement of charitable Christians) may be conceived to be received of God into fellowship with Christ, the head of the Church.⁴⁹

Rutherford seemed to be troubled by such a statement. So he asked, “then how shall *Demas, Magus*, find rooms in the visible *Church*, as true members since they were not such?”⁵⁰

However, Rutherford failed to quote the very conclusion of the same section of

⁴⁶ Cotton's *Of The Holiness of Church Members*, 60.

⁴⁷ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 38, 41-44, 55-55.

⁴⁸ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 26-31. See John Cotton, *The Way of the Churches of Christ in New England* (London: Matthew Simmons, 1645), 56-58.

⁴⁹ Cotton, *The Way of the Churches of Christ in New England*, 56. Indeed, by the time Cotton left England in 1633, he seemed to accept a view that a visible church must be gathered by explicit covenant. According to William Hubbard, both Cotton and Hooker played a key role in the establishment of the “Congregational Way.” Especially, Cotton is described as the principal author of the test of saving faith. William Hubbard, *A General History of New England from the Discovery to 1680*, second edition, edited by William T. Harris (Boston: C.C. Little and J. Brown, 1848), 181-94. Morgan, *Visible Saints*, 94-98.

⁵⁰ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 27.

the chapter where Cotton does seem to provide a room for hypocrites.

Nevertheless, in this trial, wee doe not exact eminent measure, either of knowledge, or holinesse, but doe willingly stretch out our hands to receive *the weake in faith*... for we had rather 99 hypocrites should perish through presumption, then one humble soule belonging to Christ, should sinke under discouragement or despaire; and by reason of these hypocrites received into the Church, it is that the Church is said to have in it good and bad, wheate and tares; for tares, (as *Hierome* saith) are like to wheate.⁵¹

Indeed, on the one hand, Rutherford may well be suspicious of Hooker who freely quotes Robinson and Cotton. Some statements of Robinson and Cotton may sound too strong—for Rutherford—and need to be qualified. Nevertheless, on the other hand, Hooker’s complaint about Rutherford’s superficial reading of his brethren is also valid and important.

In sum, our discussion to this point has emphasized some of the problems of Rutherford-Hooker dispute. First, Rutherford tends to misunderstand or misrepresent Hooker’s concepts of “visible saints” and “the judgment of charity.” Second, Hooker seems to have successfully dealt with the challenges of Rutherford and demonstrated that his church, as least in principles, is true to the traditional distinction of the visible and invisible church.

Nevertheless, Rutherford would not renounce his conviction that Hooker introduced a *new* church in New England, making the visible church invisible by using the human judgment in selecting the real believers for the membership of their

⁵¹ Cotton, *The Way of the Churches of Christ in New England*, 58. See also Cotton’s *Of the Holiness of Church Members* (London: F.N. for Hanna Allen, 1650), 16-18. Cotton explicitly says, “That hypocrites, and false brethren may creep into the Church, yea into the purest Churches.” *Ibid.*, 17.

congregational church. Why would Rutherford insist on this? On the one hand, Rutherford throughout the debate assumes that the separatist background of Hooker's thought—specifically its roots in the work of Robinson—determines Hooker's ecclesiology. Rutherford's conviction is also rooted in his view that human judgment must not be an obstacle to God's execution of the decree in establishing the church. Accordingly, as Perry Miller rightly indicates, Rutherford would agree with other Presbyterians that it is “safer to gather everybody in to the fold by the rule of force and leave the selection to God”—rather than using any human judgement.⁵² On the other hand, Rutherford also seems to be convinced that the newness of Hooker's church is *proved* by Hooker's use of the *church covenant* as both theological and practical grounds of his congregational church.

III. Samuel Rutherford's Criticism of the Church Covenant

1. The Church Covenant as a “Scriptureless Imagination”

The most fundamental problem of Hooker's church covenant, Rutherford argues, is that it lacks scriptural support: “There is no such thing [church covenant] in Gods Word,”⁵³ “There is no ground in Scripture for a Church-covenant.”⁵⁴ Both in the Old and the New Testament, Rutherford emphasizes, there is no mention of the church covenant: In the Old Testament, Abraham's family became the member of God's family even

⁵² Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1939), 452-53.

⁵³ Rutherford, *The Due Right of Presbyteries*, 83.

⁵⁴ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 138, 143. Quote is from page 143.

before they performed circumcision.⁵⁵ In the New Testament, many churches established by Apostle Paul show no evidence that they made church covenant.⁵⁶ Accordingly, Rutherford understands Hooker's doctrine of church covenant as *not* being warranted by Scripture, or simply as a "Scriptureless imagination."⁵⁷

First, Hooker's view that the free agreement of the church covenant or voluntary combination makes one a member of a congregation, Rutherford asserts, is not supported by the Bible.⁵⁸ Neither the Corinthians nor three thousand people of Acts chapter 2, nor the Samaritans, nor any planted churches of Ephesus, Berea, Philippi, Thessalonica and Rome, Rutherford argues, give any hint of getting church-membership by making any mutual agreement or a church covenant.⁵⁹ Using an analogy of being a father or a master, Rutherford argues that as the free agreement to the duties of a father and a master does not make them a father and a master, a free agreement or a new church covenant does not make a pastor or the members of a particular church.⁶⁰ The visible church is established

⁵⁵ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 167.

⁵⁶ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 167-168.

⁵⁷ Rutherford, *The Due Right of Presbyteries*, 83-88. Idem, *A Survey of the Survey*, 95-115, 138-156, 162-171, 162. Quote is from page 96. Rutherford, here, well represents a significant point about the church covenant that was already expressed in *A Letter of Many Ministers in Old England, Requesting the Judgement of their Reverend Brethren in New England concerning Nine Positions Written Anno Dom. 1637*, edited by Simeon Ash (London: Printed for Thomas Underhill, 1643). Particularly, see page 79.

⁵⁸ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 112-113. Rutherford is quoting Hooker's *Survey*, 53-54.

⁵⁹ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 142-146, 156. As for Act 2, Hooker reminds Rutherford of the four important facts: first, the uniqueness of the event—which "carried such an apparent discovery of the presence and power of Christ; second, they were already the members of the Jewish Church; third, they professed their glad receiving of the word, and renouncing that froward generation; fourth, being baptized they continued in church fellowship. These facts, Hooker argues, "carry the reality of a Covenant"—even if there was no *explicit* church covenant. Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 75-76. Quote is from page 76.

⁶⁰ Rutherford, *The Due Right of Presbyteries*, 83-87, 128-129. Particularly, as for being a pastor, Rutherford argues, "the people's chusing of him hath not any influence at all in the essence of a Pastor." Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 142.

by diverse other elements such as the Covenant of Grace, the gospel, faith, hope, baptism, and, finally, Christ as one and the same head.⁶¹

For all Congregations visible have 1. The same Charter, the Covenant of Grace, one Faith and Doctrine of the Gospel. 2. One inheritance and hope of glory, *Eph. 4*. 3. One and the same visible Head Christ. 4. The same Baptism, and are all visible brethren and members, having the same right to the Seals all the World over, without any new Church Covenant.⁶²

Second, the idea of the church covenant which would *marry* church members to a particular Congregation is a “Scriptureless conceit.” Quoting 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, Rutherford argues that all Christians should belong to one body which is “Catholick, not a single Congregation onely.”⁶³ Furthermore, Hooker’s use of marriage metaphor for the relationship between a pastor and a particular congregation, Rutherford argues, is a popish idea.⁶⁴ The reformers such as Luther, Calvin, Bullinger and Musculus, Rutherford emphasizes, have always taught that the Lord— not a pastor—is the husband of the

⁶¹ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 106, 115, 138. The ultimate ground of the above elements, for Rutherford, must be God’s “free grace, sending the Gospel to whom he will, *Deut. 7.7. Deut. 10.14, 15. Psal. 147.10, 29. Acts 16.6, 9.10. Acts 18:6, 7, 8, 9.*” Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 122. Missing Rutherford’s point, Hooker argues that Rutherford considers baptism as the formal cause of visible membership. But Rutherford replies that Hooker misread Rutherford. Baptism, for Rutherford, is “no more to me the formal cause of Membership, than the ceremony of Coronation, or the delivery of a Sword, is the specific form of a King, and of a Major.” Or, Rutherford continues, “For to me Baptism is not a means of a Church-membership simply, but of a Church-member *tali modo*, that is, of a member conspicuously and solemnly differenced from a Pagan.” See, Rutherford . *A Survey of the Survey*, chapter 21, 115-122. Quote is from 118-119.

⁶² Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 106.

⁶³ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 99, 153. In reply, Hooker argues that the church in 1 Corinthians 12:13 must be interpreted as a “particular church” rather than “the Catholike visible Church.” Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, part III, 27-28.

⁶⁴ Rutherford, *The Due Right of Presbyteries*, 127-128. Idem, *A Survey of the Survey*, 163-165. For example, the Council of Carthage, Sardis, and Antioch, and Pope Innocent III actually used marriage metaphor for the relationship between bishop and the congregation.

Church.⁶⁵ “Onely Christ,” Rutherford concludes, “is the Bridegroom, Spouse, Husband of his Church.”⁶⁶

Third, Hooker’s idea that the church covenant gives people a right to church *ordinances* only with a single body of congregation also lacks biblical support:

The state of trying these persons and their seed to be baptized onely into the single Body, is a dream, even to *Mr. Robinson*, and the engagement that gives them right to Ordinances onely with that single Congregation, and in one place, and with no society else to partake of one Bread, and of one Christ, *1 Cor. 10. 16, 17.* is a Scriptureless imagination.⁶⁷

Accordingly, anyone who do not belong to a Congregational church cannot eat of *one* bread with Hooker and his brethren, which, Rutherford argues, is contrary to Scripture (1Cor. 10:17; 12:13).⁶⁸ In the Lord’s Supper, Rutherford emphasizes, people—“not of one single Congregation onely, but of several Congregations”—get united into one Spirit “whether they be engaged Mr. H.’s way or not.”⁶⁹

Fourth, the preaching of God’s word to a particular church and all worship should be done voluntarily. However, it must be so, Rutherford argues, not because of the church covenant but because of God’s commandment. For instance, God had commanded all to come to the house (Prov. 1:20; 9:1-3; Matt. 22:3-5; Luke 14:16). Rutherford, here, seems

⁶⁵ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 155-56, 163.

⁶⁶ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 164.

⁶⁷ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 96.

⁶⁸ To be sure, Rutherford, here, seems to exaggerate the issue: he argues that the members of Hooker’s church cannot eat of one bread with him nor love him as a visible brother. However, according to John Cotton, anyone from sister churches in New England may participate in the Lord’s Supper at another congregation. Cotton, *The Way of the Churches of Christ in New England*, 102-110.

⁶⁹ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 96-97. Likewise, Rutherford argues that profession makes one not a member visible of onely this one congregation. Instead, it declares the professor to be a Church member in all congregations on earth. Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 128.

to emphasize that the preaching ministry of God’s word in a particular church must be based on God’s command rather than the mutual engagement (church covenant) among church members.⁷⁰

Finally, Scripture never supports Hooker’s view that church discipline should be based upon the free agreement of the church covenant. Nor does it support Hooker’s view of church discipline as being tied to a particular church. Rutherford argues that church discipline must not be limited to any particular congregation:

Not one word of God is alledged, that this engagement gives power to watch over one another in this Congregation onely, and not in all Congregations . . . all precious Church members of other Congregations of which we are not Members.⁷¹

According to the Rule of the Gospel, Rutherford suggests that ten or even more neighboring sister churches—instead of one particular church—are obliged to watch over one another. Thus, if one member of a church offends a brother in a particular church, all brethren of other congregations would be offended as well. In a similar way, in interpreting Matthew 18:15: “If thy brother trespass, if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother,” Rutherford argues that gaining a trespassing brother must not be limited to the particular church where the offended member remains. “Brother” in the text, Rutherford argues, must be understood as the brother of any churches in the world.⁷²

In short, all the above five points lead Rutherford to reaffirm his conviction that Hooker’s church covenant is a man-made invention which does not come from the truth

⁷⁰ Rutherford does not discuss this point in further detail. Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 99.

⁷¹ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 100.

⁷² Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 102, 111. The issue of church discipline will be discussed in detail in following chapter.

of God's word:

Concl. The Former considerations being cleare, we hold that such a *Covenant-covenant* is a conceit destitute of all authority of Gods Word, *Old* or *New Testament*, and therefore to be rejected as a way of mens devising.⁷³

2. Other Problems of Hooker's Church Covenant

Besides the problem of the lack of biblical support for church covenant, according to Rutherford, Hooker's church covenant would create a series of other practical problems: First, Congregationalism based on the church covenant may destroy the brotherhood among the members of the sister churches: "This destroys the communion of Churches as Churches."⁷⁴ Given that entering the Covenant of Grace and professed faith in baptism are not sufficient to put one in a state of brotherhood to any other Christians, Rutherford argues:

To Christs second coming, none can be made my Church-Brother, though visibly and professedly he have with me one hope of Calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God, one Father of all, *Eph.4.4,5,6*. But one of the same Congregation, and that by this new covenant.⁷⁵

Also, the church covenant destroys the church discipline among sister churches. For example, Hooker's church covenant may become a big problem when a conflict happens among sister churches. Given that one congregation is not supposed to exercise church discipline over another church, an offender of one congregation—who offended

⁷³ Rutherford, *The Due Right of Presbyteries*, 88.

⁷⁴ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 164.

⁷⁵ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 154.

the member of another church—may not be properly disciplined.

Mr. R. said indeed, *That one Congregation hath no power of Jurisdiction over another*, but each may complain of another to a Presbytery, or to a Church above both, else the remedy of Christ to remove scandals between Church and Church, is too narrow, and very nothing; and sister-Churches offending each against others, are not to rebuke, and labour (by Mr. H. his way) to gain one another to Christ; and nothing can be more contrary to love and edification, than this, and more contrary to our Saviours intent, *Mat. 18.*⁷⁶

Furthermore, the church covenant also causes “Cruel Inconvenience”⁷⁷ – particularly for faithful sojourners, strangers and those who flee from persecutions. These faithful people of God, Rutherford argues, may not be able to fully participate in the benefits in the congregational church where they have to tentatively stay. Moreover, given a particular marriage church covenant, Rutherford points out, one may need to *divorce* the previous church under persecution in order to move into a new [congregational] church.⁷⁸ It is a false idea, Rutherford asserts, that when one moves to another church, the one should lose all church right to seals and all “church power” or duty of church discipline.⁷⁹

Finally, Hooker’s argument that the church covenant of parents should be

⁷⁶ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 111-112. Emphasis is his.

⁷⁷ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 103.

⁷⁸ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 104.

⁷⁹ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 111. However, Hooker strongly indicates that his church covenant should not create such “cruel inconveniences,” when he says, “Our Covenant once entered upon, all the relations, that depend upon that, or may be inferred from that, are included in that Covenant, and therefore needs no more.” Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 82. Refuting Rutherford’s view that a member of one visible congregation is the member of all he congregations on earth, Hooker argues that it is Rutherford church—rather than Hooker’s church—which draws many *inconveniences*: “*If he be a member of all the Congregations on earth, then he can perform the duty of a member unto all. But that is impossible.*” Also, it would create a serious problem in exercising church discipline: “*Then he cannot be cast out of one Congregation, unless all the Officers of all others do cast him out. . . . Nay no Officers of one Congregation shall proceed against him, for he will depart to another, because he hath as much right there as here.*” Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 64-65.

communicated to their seeds, Rutherford argues, may have a significant problem.

According to Hooker, covenant, once made by parents with their free consent, may be communicated to their seed without their [children's] consent:

Covenants are attended either in the *rise* of them, by such as are the *first makers* of them, or else in the *communication* of them, or the bonds they lay upon others, *after* the entrance made. Thus *the covenant once made* by the mutuall and *free* agreement of the parties, it may be communicated to others without *their consent*, as namely to their children, because they are as the Scriptures speak *in their loins*, under their power and dispose, and therefore can make such an agreement and ingagement for them. ... *So that a Minister is Minister to the children born of the parents who have chosen him, and the children of covenanting parents are in covenant with the Church by virtue of their parents covenant.*⁸⁰

However, such a practice, Rutherford points out, would create a problem for the next generation of Hooker's Congregational church. Rutherford proposes a critical question for Hooker and his brethren:

How are then children of covenanting parents born Church-members; yet, when come to age, if they cannot evidence their regeneration holden all their life, for no Church-members are debarred from the Lords Supper, living and dying Pagan? Are Ministers, because of their covenant, Ministers to Pagans?⁸¹

Rutherford's point would become a really important question for the next generations of Hooker in New England.⁸² Besides, Rutherford continues, "it is an absurd idea that children, even before they are born, must belong to a particular church—such as the Congregation of Boston only or of only Hartford—alone."⁸³

⁸⁰ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 68-69. Rutherford's quote is in Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 139.

⁸¹ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 139.

⁸² "The half-way covenant" was a tentative solution for them. It will be discussed in the concluding chapter.

⁸³ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 139.

3. The Sufficiency of the Covenant of Grace

Given his conviction of the sufficiency of the Covenant of Grace for the visible church, Rutherford repeatedly argues that another [church] covenant should not be added to the Covenant of Grace because it is not necessary. Regarding the issue of the relationship between the Covenant of Grace and the church covenant, Hooker has earlier argued that the Covenant of Grace must be considered in a double perspective and he made a distinction between the Covenant of Grace “in the narrowest sense,” and the Covenant of Grace “in the broader sense”: the former only means “Believe and live” primarily referring to the relationship between the soul of the elect and God. But when one takes the Covenant of Grace in the broader sense, Hooker argues that it should include the church covenant.⁸⁴

In reply, however, Rutherford argues that the Covenant of Grace (Believe and live) is neither the narrowest nor invisible. First, the Gospel-covenant or the Covenant of Grace should be sufficient to make one a member of a visible church. Second, the Covenant of Grace obliges anyone within the church to keep all duties:

But my argument is, that the covenant of grace gives marriage membership to the man who entereth it, to all Congregations on earth, and warrants the sound professor to gaine a trespassing brother in all Congregations, without the new fancied marriage, or covenant between him and them. And the covenant of grace entred did this.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 69-70, part III, 24-25.

⁸⁵ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 155-56. This covenant of grace, according to Rutherford, is to be professed at the time of baptism: “The vow in Baptism, and the Gospel-covenant professed by me, without any new engagements, obligeth me in all Churches I am in, to be my brothers keeper, and watch for his soul.” Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 140.

In short, given the sufficiency of the Covenant of Grace, one should not enter into a *new* church covenant in order to become a member of the visible church and to perform all duties. The Covenant of Grace, for Rutherford, must be the sufficient ground for executing church discipline as well as getting the membership of the visible church: “Vow in baptism and the Gospel Covenant professed by me, without any new engagement,” Rutherford concludes, “obligeth me in all Churches I am in, to be my brothers keeper, and watch for his soul.”⁸⁶

IV. Thomas Hooker’s Defense of the Church Covenant

1. The Church Covenant for Congregational Church

For Hooker, the church covenant is closely related to his systematic defense of New England Congregationalism. Given his conviction that the people of the particular Churches should share ecclesiastical power, and that the exercise of ecclesiastical authority must be found in the free consent of people themselves,⁸⁷ Hooker wishes to provide the theological foundation of his congregationalism. Church covenant, for Hooker, is well fitted for this purpose.

Hooker defines the church covenant as the *formal cause* of the visible church. The causes of a visible church, according to Hooker, consist in three: the efficient cause, the material cause and formal cause. The efficient cause of the church is the triune God.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 140.

⁸⁷ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 51-55.

⁸⁸ “The institution of the Church issues from the speciall appointment of God, the Father, thorough the Lord Jesus Christ, as the head thereof, by the holy Ghost, sent and set on work for that end.” Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 12.

The material cause is “visible saints.”⁸⁹ They are called saints, as we have already discussed, not according to the judgment of truth but according to the judgment of charity. Finally, the formal cause of a visible church, Hooker argues, is the church covenant. Without this formal cause of the church, all saints may exist like scattered stones in the street:

For take all the faithfull whether they be seemingly or sincerely such, scattered up and down the face of the whole earth, these are but like scattered stones in the street, or timber felled in the woods, as yet there is neither wall made up, nor frame erected.⁹⁰

What gives these scattered-stone-like saints the formality of a visible church, Hooker argues, is the church covenant: “*Mutuall covenanting and confederating of the Saints in the fellowship of the faith according to the order of the Gospel, is that which gives constitution and being to a visible church.*”⁹¹ The church covenant is like “cement” which solders the whole together and like “brazing of the building,” which gives fashion, frame and firmness to the whole.⁹² In short, the church covenant is what “*makes the Church to be that which it is.*”⁹³ Without the church covenant, thus, there can be no visible church.⁹⁴

⁸⁹ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 14.

⁹⁰ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 45.

⁹¹ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 46.

⁹² Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 46.

⁹³ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 45.

⁹⁴ Both Richard Mather’s and John Cotton’s view of the visible church seems to be perfectly in line with Hooker’s. Richard Mather, *Church Government and Church Covenant Discussed* (London: R.O. and G.D. [and T.P. and M.S.] for Benjamin Allen, 1643), 8-9; Idem, *An Apology of the Churches in New England for Church Covenant* (London, 1643), 5; John Cotton, *The Way of the Churches of Christ in New England* (London: Matthew Simmons, 1645), 2-6, 59-64.

Accordingly, each person becomes the member of a particular church by entering into this church covenant, which must be done “by their own *free consent* and mutual ingagement on both sides.”⁹⁵ Why does Hooker emphasize “free consent” or mutual agreement as an essential characteristic of the church covenant? Because Hooker seems to be convinced that the ecclesiastical power should be ground on it:

This *ingagement* gives each *power over another*, and maintains and holds up *communion* each with other, which cannot but be attended, according to the *termes* of the agreement.⁹⁶

This power over each other, Hooker continues, should be limited to a particular church because the church covenant, as a visible practice, is a *particular* covenant rather than a general covenant. Hooker argues that Rutherford put too much emphasis on “the generall nature of a church.” Profession in the general truth of the gospel, for Rutherford, should make one a member of *all* particular churches on earth. On the contrary, using the analogy of marriage, Hooker argues, “The generall nature of marriage contract, comes to be determined only in this particular [contract]” between “this man and this woman: else they will never be man and wife.” Accordingly, Hooker said that it is a strange idea that, given that marriage covenant is common to all, a man or woman should be a general spouse to all men or women in the world.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 46. Emphasis added. See also page 69.

⁹⁶ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 46. Emphasis is his.

⁹⁷ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 66-67, 220-222, 267, 281. part III, 19. Quote is from page 221.

2. The Church Covenant for Other Forms of Church Government

Hooker's definition of the church covenant as the formal cause of a visible church and his strong conviction that congregational church government belongs to the climax of Christian history entails a serious question: Then, how should he evaluate other forms of church government? Given that both Episcopal and Presbyterian Church in England do not have such a church covenant, would Hooker deny them as true visible churches? Rutherford, for instance, argues, "If this Church-covenant be the essence and forme of a visible Church, which differenceth between the visible and invisible; Then there have been no visible Churches since the Apostle's date, nor are there any in the Christian world this day, save only in N.E. and some other places."⁹⁸

In reply to this problem, Hooker proposes another significant distinction between "explicit" and "implicit" [church] covenant:

This Covenant is dispensed or acted after a double manner. Either *Explicite*, or *Implicite*. An *Explicite* Covenant is, when there is an *open expression* and *profession* of this ingagement in the face of the Assembly, which persons by mutuall consent undertake in the waies of Christ. An *Implicite* Covenant, when in their practice they *do, that*, whereby they *make* themselves *ingaged* to walk in such a society, according to such rules of government, which are exercised amongst them, and so submit themselves thereunto: but doe *not* make any *verball profession* thereof.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 167-168. Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 83. The issue that Rutherford brings up here has been discussed since the early debate of the mid-1630s—as documented in the Robert Bernard-Richard Mather debate: See Mather's *Church Government and Church Covenant Discussed* (London: R.O. and G.D. [and T.P. and M.S.] for Benjamin Allen, 1643). As for Cotton's dealing with this problem, see Cotton's *The Way of the Churches of Christ in New England*, 59-64.

⁹⁹ The explicit covenant refers to the church covenant of Hooker's Congregational churches. Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 47. Hooker's distinction of implicit/explicit church covenant seems to be influenced by William Ames. See Ames' *Medulla Theologiae* (Londini, : Apud Robertum Allottum, 1629) lib.1, cap.32, section 15 "*Vinculum hoc est foedus, vel expressum, vel implicitem, quo obligant sese fideles particulatim ad omnia illa officia praestanda, & erga Deum, & erga se mutuo, quae spectant ad Ecclesiae rationem & aedificationem*" (This bond is a covenant, either expresse or implicite whereby believers doe particularly bind themselves, to performe all those duties, both toward god and one toward another, which pertaine to the respect and edification of the Church). As for the relationship between Hooker and Ames, see the biographical section of chapter 2 in this dissertation.

To be sure, Hooker believes that the explicit church covenant must be the most desirable because all members in the church may be best informed of their duties and rights.

However, as the above passage clearly indicates, the implicit form of church covenant may also be acceptable. In any properly gathered congregation, according to Hooker, implicit covenant may preserve the nature of the true church. For example, any congregation in the parishes in England— even though their ministers were appointed by patrons or bishops—may enter into their implicit church covenant by declaring or fulfilling its terms with *actions* or *practices* rather than with word.¹⁰⁰ What are these actions or practices?

Hooker points out at least four important elements: First, there must be the “fellowship” of the people. Second, all church “ordinances” must be performed and the people should participate in them. Third, there must be the dispensation of the “minister” and people should submit unto it. Fourth, there must be “fixed attendance” upon all services and duties.¹⁰¹ Thus, Hooker argues,

It is either *implicite* or *explicite*. The Covenant is preserved for the *substance* of it, whether of the waies it comes to be acted. And all the Churches that ever were, or now are, true Churches, either in *England, Holland, France, & c.* have, at least, in them an *implicite* Covenant, which is abundantly evidenced by the constant practice, which is performed, and is also required at the hands of all that are members therein.¹⁰²

The churches of England, Holland and France may be called “true Churches,” Hooker

¹⁰⁰ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 47.

¹⁰¹ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 47-48.

¹⁰² Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 84.

concludes, insofar as they carry the *substance* of the church covenant—either in an explicit *or* implicit way.

Hooker’s argument for the implicit church covenant, here, is significant in several respects. From a polemical perspective, for Hooker, it is a very useful concept in dealing with Rutherford’s criticism that Hooker would nullify all other churches beside his congregational church. To Rutherford, Hooker says,

This Mr. R. cannot be ignorant of, as *our opinion* and *professed* apprehension: and I would intreat the *Reader* to observe once for all: that if he meet with such accusations, that we nullifie all Churches beside our own: that upon our grounds received there must be no Churches in the world, but in N. *England*, or some few set up lately in old: that we are rigid *Separatists*, & c. Such bitter clamours, a wise meek spirit passeth by them, as an unworthy and ungrounded aspersion: but the wise-hearted and conscientious *Reader*, will reserve an ear for the innocent. *Audi alteram partem*.¹⁰³ [Hear the other side]

Hooker, as the above statement indicates, wishes to make sure that the introduction of the church covenant *never* means the creation of a new church—nor establishment of a separatist church. Instead, Hooker points out a continuity between New England Congregational church and other forms of church government by emphasizing the *implicit* church covenant.

Furthermore, the implicit church covenant would lead him to take a much broader view of the church covenant than Rutherford typically has. Rutherford, for instance, tends to understand the church covenant as *a practice* newly invented by Hooker and his brethren in New England,¹⁰⁴ while Hooker could explain it in terms of a *principle* as well

¹⁰³ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 48.

¹⁰⁴ Particularly see Rutherford’s discussion of the church covenant in his *The Due Right of Presbyteries*, 83-139. He understands church covenant as a unique practice, which requires “an explicit, and vocall or professed Covenant” from all who are to be the members of New England Congregational church. The expression of an *explicit, vocal and professed covenant* is frequently found in pages 84, 85, 86, 87.

as a practice which is deeply rooted in both Scripture—particularly the biblical doctrine of the covenant¹⁰⁵—and the traditional understanding of the visible church. Also, Rutherford tends to see the church covenant as tethered to only one particular congregation, while Hooker wishes to emphasize both the particular and the general nature—as the *formal* cause of the visible church—of it.¹⁰⁶ Given Hooker’s broad view of the church covenant, he attempts to defend it with the support of many biblical passages—though there is no explicit mention of it in the Bible.

3. The Scriptural Grounds for the Church Covenant

Given Hooker’s concept of the *implicit* church covenant and his conviction that the church covenant is a part of the Covenant of Grace, he does not hesitate to quote both the Old and the New Testament wishing to make the Bible the most fundamental source for his doctrine of church covenant.

For example, God’s calling of Israel, as revealed in Amos 3:2 “You only have I known, of all the nations of all the nations of the world” and Exodus 19:5 “If you obey my voice (saith God) you shall bee my peculiar people,” and the people’s answer, as written in Exodus 19:8: “Whatever the Lord hath said, wee will do,” must be understood as the act of making a visible *church* covenant between God and his people “to walk in the waies of God, and the truth of his worship; and God ingaged himself, that he would

¹⁰⁵ As for the relationship between Hooker’s church covenant and the covenant of grace, see Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 69-70.

¹⁰⁶ For the detailed discussion of the definitions of the church covenant, see chapter 2, section I, “1. Definitions.”

bless those privileges.”¹⁰⁷

Also, all sacraments—which are performed within the church—by themselves show that God always sees his people *as they are in the church covenant*. Both circumcision and baptism, for example, presume such a covenant: “When there is a solemn baptizing into a Church,” Hooker argues, “that ever implies that the person is made a disciple of Christ, Mat.28.19.” Becoming a disciple, Hooker continues, is different from the mere approval of the doctrine. It requires more “Church work,” by which they make themselves and their children *engaged* or *covenanted* to follow the truth of the Gospel. In short, the ordinance of baptism itself should carry the *reality* of the church covenant.¹⁰⁸

Furthermore, the exercise of church discipline—as shown in 2 Corinthians 2:1-11—confirms the existence of such a covenant by which people might swear and bind themselves to God and to each other to perform all duties of church discipline.¹⁰⁹ Hooker’s use of the Bible as proof texts for the church covenant may further be shown in his “*Answer to Arguments made against the Church covenant*.” Refuting Rutherford’s view of the church covenant as a “Scriptureless imagination,” Hooker here proposes four major arguments for the church covenant:

Argument #1. Given the resemblance between the body politic or corporations and the church as “spirituall or Ecclesiasticall corporation,” Hooker has compared the hewn stones with the visible saints and the *house* with a visible church. Unless the *matter* of the stones are “conjoynd and compacted together,” they are not given the *form* of a

¹⁰⁷ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 71; idem, *The Covenant of Grace Opened*, 211.

¹⁰⁸ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 76-78.

¹⁰⁹ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 73-74.

house. Likewise, Hooker explains that a visible church requires both matter and form: the former is visible saints and the latter is “their union and combination,” which is the church covenant. To show that a visible church is a corporation or house-like entity, Hooker points out some scriptural images of a visible church as a “house” (1 Tim. 3:15), a “city” (Heb.12.22) and “the body of Christ” (Eph.4.13,16; 1 Cor.12:12, 27, 28).¹¹⁰

Argument #2. The “legall and orderly way” which Jesus prescribes in Matthew 18:15-17, Hooker argues, shows that “the Church of beleevers have mutuall power each over other to command and constrain in case, *who were before free from each other.*”¹¹¹ This mutual power in a visible church should be based upon “*voluntary subjection and ingagement.*” The voluntary nature of this mutual engagement, according to Hooker, is indicated by Act 5:13 and Luke 7:30.

Thus we read, *Act.5.13 the rest durst not joyn. Luk.7.30.* when the *Publicanes* were baptized, the *Scribes* are said to *reject the counsell of God*, being not baptized: and neither *John* nor any else had power to constrain them to undertake such a service.¹¹²

Accordingly, Hooker concludes, “They must by mutuall agreement and ingagement be made partakers of that power.”¹¹³

Argument #3. Given that “voluntary combining Churches together, *makes them a Classicall or Presbyterian Church,*” and that Rutherford would defend the institution of

¹¹⁰ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 50-51. In reply, Rutherford argues that both Eph. 4:13,16 and 1 Cor. 1:12,13 should not be taken to mean a single particular congregation. Instead, they must refer to the “Catholicke visible body.” Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 102, 108-109.

¹¹¹ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 51. Emphasis is added.

¹¹² Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 53.

¹¹³ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 51.

a classis and synod from his reading of Matthew 18:17,¹¹⁴ “from the same place of Scripture,” Hooker argues for the legitimacy of “a voluntary combination” of the church covenant as a ground for his congregational church: “If thus a *voluntary combining makes a man a member of a Church classically, then a voluntary combination will make a member of a Church congregational.*”¹¹⁵

Argument #4. Refuting Rutherford’s view that the seal of baptism “is that which maketh one a member of the visible Church (1 Cor. 12:13),” Hooker argues that Genesis 17:10-11 demonstrates that the seal of circumcision does not constitute the member of the church because the “Church was visible when there was no seal, neither circumcision nor Baptisme.”¹¹⁶ For Hooker, it is a biblical truth that covenant itself—rather than the *seals* of covenant—should constitute the membership of the visible church.¹¹⁷

In sum, the above four arguments seem to reveal two significant points for Hooker: On the one hand, he needs to agree with Rutherford that there is no *explicit* mention of the church covenant in both the Old and the New Testament. On the other hand, however, Hooker would argue that the most biblical texts for the Covenant of Grace may be used positively for his doctrine of the church covenant because, for Hooker, the former—in a broad sense—should include the very substance or reality of the latter all the times throughout the history of the Old and the New Testament church.

Still, however, from Rutherford’s viewpoint, a more fundamental question

¹¹⁴ Hooker here refers to Rutherford’s *The Due Right of Presbyteries*, 310-324.

¹¹⁵ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 54. Emphasis is his.

¹¹⁶ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 54-58. Hooker’s quote is from page 58. Rutherford’s *The Due Right of Presbyteries*, 125. It should be remembered, however, that Rutherford does not believe that only baptism should constitute the membership of the visible church. See Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, chapter 21, 115-122.

¹¹⁷ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 77-78.

remains to be answered by Hooker: If it is true that the Covenant of Grace includes the *substance* of the church covenant, and that the *implicit* church covenant may be good enough for any visible churches to be called a true church, why do we still need such a covenant in an *explicit* way?

Hooker answers this question by highlighting the benefits of the explicit church covenant, which may be summarized in three ways: The explicit church covenant is superior to the implicit one because,

1. Thereby the *judgement* of the members comes to be informed and convinced of their *duty* more fully.
2. They are thereby *kept* from caviling and starting aside from the *tenure* and *terms* of the covenant, which they have professed and acknowledged, before the Lord and so many witnesses.
3. Thereby their hearts stand under a *stronger tye*; and are *more* quickened and *provoked to doe that*, which they have before God and the congregation, *ingaged* themselves to doe.¹¹⁸

The above benefits, Hooker argues, should not be limited to the privileged few. All the benefits and privileges of the church covenant—which his congregational church would show in an *explicit* way—must be extended to *all* because, Hooker believes, this change by itself would be the fulfillment of God’s promise as prophesied in Habakkuk 2:14, Ezekiel 43:11; 47:4-5, Daniel 12:4, Proverbs 2:2-5; Isaiah 25:7; 30:25; Zachariah 12:8 and Jeremiah 31:33-34:¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 48-49.

¹¹⁹ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, “Preface,” 7-9. It is interesting to note that Richard Mather also makes a very similar point. Mather refers to Isaiah 56:6-7; 44:5, Jeremiah 50:5, Ezekiel 20:37. Isaiah 44:5, for example, plainly hold forth that “in the days of the New Testament, men should openly professe their faith, and solemnly bind themselves by Covenant to be the Lords people.... These words are so plaine for open professing of faith in the Lord, and open binding of mens selves by Covenant unto him, as we conceive nothing need be more.” Richard Mather, *An Apology of the Churches in New England for Church Covenant*, 31.

*These are the times, when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the water the Sea... These are the times when people shall be fitted for such priviledges, fir I say to obtain them, and fit to use them.*¹²⁰

In short, for Hooker, the church covenant is not a “Scriptureless imagination.” It is, by itself, *warranted* by the truth of God’s word.

V. Conclusion: Summary and Evaluation

At the beginning of this chapter, I introduced Rutherford’s criticism of Hooker’s congregational church that Hooker and his brethren have established a *new* church in New England. Why did he believe so? So far, our discussion of the Rutherford-Hooker dispute has indicated that such a radical assertion is closely interconnected with Rutherford’s criticism of Hooker’s church covenant. Also, it is based on Rutherford’s assumption that Hooker was carrying forward the Separatistic program of Robinson and other Congregationalists of the earlier part of the seventeenth century.¹²¹

For Rutherford, Hooker’s church must be a new church because it is established upon a *new* covenant other than the Covenant of Grace. Rutherford believes that there should not be any other covenant except the Covenant of Grace as the ground for the visible church. If one wishes to add another covenant to the Covenant of Grace, one must assert it against the Bible:

The Covenant of grace, and the whole Evangell, teach us to confess *Christ* before

¹²⁰ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, “Preface,” 7.

¹²¹ Rutherford, here, seems to represent what most Presbyterian brethren felt about New England Congregationalists. This prejudice continued to appear throughout the 1650s. See Cotton’s complain about this false accusation. Cotton’s *Of The Holiness of Church Members* (London: F.N. for Hanna Allen, 1650), 60.

men, and to walke before God, and be perfect, and so that we *should joyn ourselves to the true visible Church*. But none can in right reason conclude, that it is a divine Law that necessiateth me to sweare another Covenant, then the Covenant of grace, in relation to those particular duties, or to sweare over againe the Covenant of grace, in relation to the duties that I owe to the visible *Church*, else I am not a member thereof.¹²²

This passage shows that Rutherford sees a radical discontinuity between the Covenant of Grace and Hooker's church covenant. Regarding this issue, Hooker's concept of the *implicit* church covenant, as we have discussed so far, may be a solution to this problem, by which he could claim a substantial continuity between the church covenant and the Covenant of Grace—in the broader sense.

Still, however, Hooker's defense of the distinction between the explicit and implicit church covenant would not be accepted by Rutherford.¹²³ Rutherford seems to believe that such a distinction is meaningless because, from Rutherford's viewpoint, even the implicit church covenant is simply none other than the *external* Covenant of Grace—or, it must be a different covenant:

My argument is this, The Church covenant is either one and the same, or a branch of the covenant of grace, as it offers grace externally to all, to *Peter and Magus*, or then it is a different covenant. That it is different Mr. *H.* denies, for then it should not be warranted in the Gospel, if it be a part of the Gospel-covenant, how can they debar men of approved godliness and visibly within the covenant of grace from ordinances? For such are implicitly in this covenant.¹²⁴

Rutherford, as this passage indicates, is well aware of Hooker's point that the church

¹²² Rutherford's *The Due Right of Presbyteries*, 93-94.

¹²³ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 168. Rutherford, again, emphasizes the differences between Presbyterian Church and Hooker's Congregational church in terms of the membership and the practice of juridical power. Moreover, "If an implicit covenant suffice," Rutherford argues, "we shall find popish Churches to have much of that."

¹²⁴ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 152-53.

covenant should be a part of the *external* Covenant of Grace—or, using Hooker’s phrase, “the covenant of grace in the broad sense.” Again, Why, then, does he think that the practice of making an *explicit* church covenant must be *incompatible* with the external Covenant of Grace?

Rutherford seems to be convinced that Hooker’s *explicit* church covenant is an attempt to identify the external Covenant of Grace for the visible church with the internal Covenant of Grace for the invisible church by excluding the hypocrites such as Simon Magus and Demas. However, such a view, as we have already discussed, is largely mistaken and grounded in the misunderstanding of Hooker’s concepts of “visible saints,” “judgment of charity,” and the “church covenant.” Both Magus and Demas, for instance, may be called the visible saints according to the judgment of charity and become the members of Hooker’s church by entering into an explicit church covenant. Moreover, our detailed study of Rutherford-Hooker dispute has suggested that some of Rutherford’s arguments are biased and often make an unfair exaggeration as if Hooker’s congregational church falls into, for instance, a rigid particularism—denying all other forms of church government and even the Christian fellowship among the sister churches. This is the reason why Hooker complains, “Did ever any of us deny the *consociation* of Churches in *way of counsel and advice*?”¹²⁵

However, despite the fact that Rutherford’s reading of Hooker is often incorrect and his judgment is not fair, some of his criticisms about the weakness of Hooker’s Church are valid. For example, both the issue of the membership of the second generation and the problem of church discipline among the sister churches seem to be very

¹²⁵ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 87.

significant and may become a practical problem for Hooker's congregational church. Foremost among these weaknesses is the lack of biblical evidence for the practice of making an *explicit* church covenant. Hooker must admit that, in the Bible, there is no explicit mention of the church covenant—as practiced in an *explicit* way by his congregational churches. Accordingly, Hooker sometimes had to argue for the legitimacy of the church covenant from human reason or “impression of nature” —rather than directly from his Bible.

Amongst such who by no impression of nature, no rule of providence, or appointment from God, or reason, have power each over other, *there must of necessity be a mutuall ingagement*, each of the other, by their free consent, before by any rule of God they have any right or power, or can exercise either, each towards the other. This appears in all covenants betwixt *Prince and People, Husband and Wife, Master and Servants*, and most palpable is the expression of this in all *confederations and corporations*.¹²⁶

Given that the visible church is a “spiritual or Ecclesiastical corporation,” Hooker continues, it should be our “reason and common sense” which would lead to a conclusion that the visible church also must be established upon the mutual church covenant.¹²⁷

Furthermore, Hooker proceeds to explain the ground of the *covenantal* relationship between the pastor and the flock using the similar *logic*:

It is so here in a *Church way*. ... As it is in the covenant of any corporation civill. The like may be said touching a Minister and his people, That which makes him a Pastor to this people, is the choice of the people, as freely taking of the person to

¹²⁶ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 69. Hooker makes a very similar argument in other places including page 72 “For I will ask any man living, that will not lay aside human consideration, whether any man can charge another to be his servant, or he challenge another to be his master, unless there be a mutuall covenant and ingagement passed betwixt each to other, the one to pay and provide for him, during his time: The other ties himself to do him honest and faithfull service such a time for such wages, do not mens *speeches* proclaim as much? He is such a mans covenant servant.”

¹²⁷ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 50.

be their shepherd and guide, and the ingaging of themselves to submit unto him in the dispensation of his office according to God: The acceptance of the call and ingagement of himself to take that office and charge according to Gods appointment and their choice, makes them his flock. And without this covenanting there neither is, nor ever was, or will be, Pastor and Flock¹²⁸

Hooker's arguments, from Rutherford's viewpoint, should not be considered as sound because his teaching is not primarily based on God's word but on human reason or "his own devising without Scripture."¹²⁹

Hooker, being aware of Rutherford's criticism, would answer that his doctrine of the church covenant is an *inferred* truth from both Scripture and reason rather than the *explicit* truth of the Bible only. This may be the reason why Hooker, using *both* Scripture and reason, has attempted to *prove* that his congregational church and church covenant are "*warranted* out of the word."¹³⁰ In doing so, Hooker's initial use of the church covenant was mostly defensive rather than offensive, defending it against Rutherford's severe criticism. Soon, however, the Rutherford-Hooker dispute became even more heated when Rutherford began to sense that Hooker's church covenant would threaten the very foundation of Rutherford's Presbyterian Church, which will be discussed in following chapter.

¹²⁸ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 72.

¹²⁹ Rutherford often complains using such a phrase whenever, he thinks, Hooker attempts to put human logic before Scripture. See Rutherford's criticism of Hooker's *logical*—rather than *scriptural*—defense of the church covenant as the formal cause of the visible church. Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 117-118. Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 55-56, 58. Quote is from Rutherford's *Survey*, 117.

¹³⁰ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 69-70. See also the full title of his book "A Survey of the Summe of Church-Discipline, wherein The Way of the Churches of New-England is warranted out of the Word..." Richard Mather also argues that the church covenant must be considered as a *warranted* doctrine—though it may not be proven by Scripture in an explicit way—by both the Old and the New Testaments. Particularly he points out Exod. 19:5-6, Deut. 29:9-10, Ps. 50:5 and Jer. 50:5 as the biblical ground for the church covenant. Mather, *An Apology of the Churches in New England for Church Covenant*, 1-5, 8-10, 25, 30-32.

CHAPTER 6.
THE RUTHERFORD-HOOKER DISPUTE (2):
THE CHURCH COVENANT AND THE POWER OF THE KEYS

I. Introduction

A new round of controversy in the Rutherford-Hooker dispute was sparked by Hooker's statement, "The Church of Visible Saints-confederating together to walk in the fellowship of the Faith, as thus, it is *Totum essentiale*, It is *before* all Officers."¹ Hooker, here, defines Church as *totum essentiale* as Church "[as] its first rise and essence."² Hooker, quoting 1Corinthians 12:28 and Acts14:23, argues that since God sets officers in the church, the church is *before* the officers.³ He concludes, "*This Church is before all Officers, and may be without them.*"⁴ For Rutherford, this is a very provoking and disturbing statement because people may understand it as a threat to his Presbyterian Church. Accordingly, Rutherford replied by asking whether or not a congregation without any officers may be truly called a church:

*Whether or not a company of Believers destitute as yet of Officers, and combined together by this new Covenant, be truly called, and be in truth and indeed a Church?*⁵

¹ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline* (London: A. M. for John Bellamy, 1648), 90, 245. At the beginning of Book II of Rutherford's *Survey*, he responds to this statement with a sharp criticism. Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey of that Summe of Church-Discipline Penned by Mr. Thomas Hooker* (London: J.C. for Andr. Crook, 1658), Lib.II, Chap. I. 173.

² Also, Hooker describes Church as *totum organicum* as the Church "as completed with all her Officers." Hooker, *A Survey of the Summe of Church-Discipline*, 17

³ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 91, 207.

⁴ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 93.

⁵ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, Lib.II, 173.

Rutherford proceeds to point out more than ten biblical verses wishing to demonstrate that the officers or rulers are the *integral* part of the organical body of church rather than simply “a separable adjunct.”⁶ Also, refuting Hooker’s analogy of candlestick (the church) and candle (officers), Rutherford, comparing the officers with the fathers begetting children (visible believers), argues, “The officers cannot be the effect of this Church, for they are the onely causes of the very materials of the Church.”⁷ In short, for Rutherford, Hooker’s argument is neither biblical nor logical.⁸

While Rutherford makes some significant points about the difference between him and Hooker, he often tends to oversimplify Hooker’s view of church officers. Hooker’s above statement, for example, must be read according to his distinction between the church as *totum essentiale* and the church as *totum organicum*:

The Church in her Constitution is considered two waies, as *Totum Essentiale*, Or [as *Totum*] *Integrale*. As *totum Essentiale* or *Homogencum*, look at it as in the first causes, out of which she exists, and comes to be gathered, and this is called, *Ecclesia prima*. This Church hath the right of electing and choosing Officers, and when these are set in it, it becomes *totum Organicum*.⁹

⁶ These Scriptural verses include 1Cor.4:14; 1Tim. 1:3, 17, 3:1-3, 10, 16, 22, 4:14, 5:15, 22, 6:13; 2Tim.2:2, 14-15, 4:1-2; Tit.1:5-8, Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 174-75, 183-84.

⁷ For Rutherford, the officers are the “onely causes” of the members of the visible church because they must beget them by the preaching of the Word. They “must convert, gather a flock to God, and baptize them.” Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 179. Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 91.

⁸ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 174, 175, 177, 179, 183.

⁹ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 11. It should be noted that Rutherford himself seemed to be aware of the usefulness of this distinction when he answered a difficult question posed by Hooker: *If the church be not a church without officers, then as often as the officers die, does the church die also?* “If the officers die,” Rutherford answers, “sure the organical Church dies, and the organical, and the ministerial and political essence of that visible Church, as it is *totum integrale*, dies.” [underlines added] Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 92. Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 182.

Hooker never denies, as this passage indicates, the place of the officers in the church as *totum organicum*. Instead, he would agree with Rutherford that the organic church must consist of both ruling officers and people.¹⁰ Now, given that both theologians would understand the officers as the essential part of the organic visible church, the focus must be narrowed to the specific issue of whether or not the officers should be the integral part of the church as *totum essentiale*. Rutherford would say yes while Hooker says no because the essence of the visible church, for the former, is a “ruling Church,” while it is not for the latter.¹¹ For Hooker, it is the “Body of a congregation” or “the Church of confederate Saints”—rather than the rulers of the congregation—who is the “first and proper subject” of the power of the keys and, thus, should have the right to call their own officers and must have “sufficient power in her self, to exercise the power of the keys.”¹²

Hooker’s statement indicates that one should pay a closer attention to the issues of the *power of the keys*—to whom it is given and how it should be exercised—in order to better understand their differing ecclesiastical views.¹³ Indeed, Hooker says,

This controversy touching the first subject of the power of the keyes, is of all other of greatest worth and waight, and therefore both needs and deserves most serious search and triall.¹⁴

¹⁰ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 90, 133, 134, 207-208. Correcting Rutherford’s misunderstanding, John Cotton also makes a similar point that he would never deny the position of officers in the organic church. John Cotton, *The Way of Congregational Churches Cleared* (London: Matthew Simmons for John Bellamie, 1648), part II, 20.

¹¹ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 184.

¹² Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, “The Preface,” 11, 16, part I, 187, 192, 193, 195-199.

¹³ For the detailed discussion see Hooker’s *Survey*, part I. chapter 9, 11, 12, 13, 14 and part II chapter 2. As for Rutherford’s discussion see his *A Survey of the Survey*, Lib.II, chapter 1; Lib III, chapter 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6; Lib.IV, chapter 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10; idem, *The Due Right of Presbyteries*, 1-33, 289-354; idem, *A Peaceful and Temperate Pleas for Pauls Presbyterie in Scotland* (London: Printed for John Bartlet, 1642), chapter 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

¹⁴ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 192.

Accordingly, this chapter will discuss the relationship between the church covenant and the power of the keys focusing on how their differing views of it¹⁵ would play in their dispute about the sacraments, church discipline and the church government. In doing so, this chapter will show that the Rutherford-Hooker dispute revolves around a complex set of theological, exegetical and practical issues, which are closely interconnected with the ecclesiastical doctrine of church covenant.

II. The Power of the Keys

1. Thomas Hooker and the Power of the Keys¹⁶

Most scholars seem to agree that the Reformation, through the reformation of the keys, contributed to the transference of religious authority from the clergy to the laity. The “golden Ball” [Church-power] of the clergy in the former darker times, according to Thomas Goodwin and Philip Nye, has been moved into “a body of the people” in their times.¹⁷ In the medieval Roman Catholic Church, the power of the keys had been used as

¹⁵ The subject of the keys, according to Hooker, is the whole body of a particular church while the principal subject of it is the church as *totum essentiale* united by a church covenant. For Rutherford, the subject of the keys is the catholic visible church, and he describes the first subject of it in three different ways: First, the principal subject of the power of the keys are the *officers and stewards* of an organic church—which includes the officers as the essential part of a visible church; second, an ecumenical council, *Catholic representative Church*, may be understood as the first subject of the power of the keys; third, at one point, he identifies the Catholic Invisible Church as the principal subject of the keys. Rutherford’s, rather, unclear view about the first subject of the keys are criticized by Hooker. For a detailed discussion, read the section “Samuel Rutherford and the Power of the Keys” in this chapter.

¹⁶ Hooker understands the meaning of the keys as follows: “*The Keyes of the Kingdome by way of Metaphor signify all that Ministeriall power by Christ dispensed, and from Christ received, whereby all the affaires of his house may be acted, and ordered, according to his mind, for the attaining of his ends purposed and appointed by himself. All that power.. is called Keyes.*” Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 194, 200.

¹⁷ Thomas Goodwin and Philip Nye, “To the Reader” in John Cotton, *The Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven*

an important doctrine for the priest's power of sacramentary absolution and the judicial power of the pope. With the advent of the Reformation, however, the traditional understanding of the principal subject of the power of the keys was challenged and redefined by the reformers.¹⁸ Hooker and his brethren, as the followers of the Reformation, would agree that the primary meaning of the power of the keys must be understood as the preaching of the Gospel—rather than a priest's mysterious power—“by which Kingdom of Heaven is opened and the Gospel dispensed.”¹⁹ Also, they believe that the judicial or ministerial power of the keys are committed to the Church, the whole body of the faithful, rather than to the pope or the clergy only: “This *potestas iudicii* appertains to all”—as indicated in Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Corinthians 5:12.²⁰

(London: M. Simmons for Henry Overton, 1644), A2 [1].

¹⁸ As for the relationship between the Reformation and the power of the keys, see Ronald K. Rittgers, *The Reformation of the Keys: Confession, Conscience, and Authority in sixteenth-century Germany* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 2004); Amy Nelson Burnett, *The Yoke of Christ: Martin Bucer and Christian Discipline* (Kirksville: Northeast Missouri State University, 1994); Carl M. Leth, “Balthasar Hubmaier's "Catholic" exegesis: Matthew 16:18-19 and the power of the keys,” *Biblical interpretation in the era of the Reformation : essays presented to David C Steinmetz in honor of his sixtieth birthday*, edited by Richard A. Muller (Grand Rapids: Eerderman, 1996):103-117; Hans Freiherr von Campenhausen, “Die Schlüsselgewalt der Kirche,” *Evangelische Theologie*, 4 no 4-5 (1937):143-169; Herman A. Preus, “Luther on the universal priesthood and the office of the ministry,” *Concordia Journal*, 5:2(March 1979): 55-62; Christian D Von Dehsen, “Matthew 16, the Reformation battleground for ecclesiastical hermeneutics,” *Lutheran Forum*, 41:3(Fall 2007): 29-44; Robert Hinckley, “Andreas Osiander and the fifth chief part,” *Logia*, 10:4(2001):37-42. In the early stage of the Reformation, according to both Rittgers and Burnett, the reformers tend to emphasize the preaching of the Gospel as the essence of the keys. Soon, however, the reformers and their followers began to emphasize the keys *in a broader sense* including the judicial aspect of it. From this viewpoint, Hooker's and his brethren's concept of the keys is well suited to the later stage of the Reformation.

¹⁹ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 200. John Cotton divides the meaning of the keys into two, “*Scientiae*, a key of knowledge” and “*Potestatis*, a key of power”: the former is also called “the key of faith,” which belongs to “all the faithfull, whether joined to any particular Church or no,” while the latter is subdivided into “a key of order” and “a key of jurisdiction.” Cotton, *The Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven*, 5-11.

²⁰ A Congregationalist's reading of Matt. 16 is well summarized in Hooker's *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 192-229; Cotton, *The Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven*, 1-59; idem, *The Way of Congregational Churches Cleared*, part II, section IV, 21-44. Both Hooker and Cotton emphasize that their interpretation is in line with the traditional reading of the text. For example, the Fathers including Origen, Hilary, Augustine and many others would agree that Peter, here, is speaking in the name of the Church, in which all believers are included. As for Matt. 18:15-17 and 1 Cor. 5:12, they will be discussed in the following section of “The

This power of the keys is a “subordinate power” or “delegated power” given by way of commission from Christ who as the “head and King of his Church” holds the “Key of Royalty.”²¹ To whom, then, these “Keys of subordinate power” are given? Hooker has already defined the whole body of the church as the subject of the keys. Though the power is given to the whole church, however, Hooker makes sure that all ecclesiastical power must be exercised by the “order and manner as Christ hath appointed” because God is not the God of confusion, but of order: “The power is in the whole firstly, but each part knows his rank, and acts after his owne order and manner.”²² In other words, though all members of a particular congregation are the subject of the keys, Hooker admits, there may be difference in their participation in “ruling in the Church” according to their ranks or position.²³

Given the significance of Christ’s order, Hooker proceeds to discuss who, within the church, should be the *first subject* of the keys and how this power of the keys may be *communicated* among church members.²⁴ Accordingly, Hooker divides the ecclesiastical works into two parts according to their principal subjects²⁵: On the one hand, Hooker

Church Covenant and Church Discipline” in this chapter. Quote is from Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 188.

²¹ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 194, 203, 218.

²² Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 186. Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 194-195. To be exact, Hooker defines the subject of the power of the Keys as the visible church combined in “a holy Covenant one with another.” *Ibid.*, 203.

²³ “but every part of it is not in the same manner and order to be attended for its ruling in the Church.” Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 195.

²⁴ Though the power is given to the whole church, Hooker points out, each person must act according to Christ’s order because God is not the God of confusion, but of order: “The power is in the whole firstly, but each part knows his rank, and acts after his owne order and manner.” Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 186.

²⁵ Hooker’s distinction seems to be corresponding to Cotton’s distinction between the “key of Church privilege or liberty” and the “key of rule or authority”: the former is given to the “Brethren of the church,”

believes that the church as *totum essentiale* is the first and proper subject of the keys.

Each congregation—since “the confederate Saints” is *before* the office and “each man is a *judge of his brother*”—should exercise the power of the keys in admission of members, in election and deposition of officers, and in censuring both church members and officers by admonition—either in a private way or a judicial way (*in foro externo*).²⁶

On the other hand, the power of dispensing both the word and the sacraments is to be exercised by pastors and teachers only.²⁷ As for the ministerial power, it may be exercised either by “the joint approbation of the people” or by “some particular and speciall members”—“the Rulers”—who receive the official power of their administration from their congregation “according to the order and method of natures proceeding.”²⁸ At this point, Hooker asks his readers to lay aside *prejudice* that Hooker’s church tends to ignore the office power of the elders:

That we so give the power Ecclesiastick to the Church of believers radically, that by their means we communicate the power of office to the Elders, and do seat office-rule formally in them. So that they are not excluded from having power, but not to have it first, but receive it from the Church.²⁹

In short, Hooker emphasizes that the “Church of Covenanting Beleevers” is the first subject of the keys *firstly* and *originally*.³⁰ However, it does not necessarily follow

while the latter belongs to the elders of the church. Cotton, *The Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven*, 33.

²⁶ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 192, 195-196. The deposition of an officer by congregation may happen “in case of Heresy or other iniquity persisted in.” 196; The literal meaning of “*in foro externo*” is “in the external court.” 195.

²⁷ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, part III, 9, 46.

²⁸ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 196-197, 210, 212.

²⁹ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 206, 212-213.

³⁰ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 200. Cotton calls this a “Radical or Virtual power”

that the power of the elders may be denied or even weakened by a congregation. Instead, as the above statement shows, the office-power of ministers must be established by their congregation.³¹

Who are these rulers in Hooker's church? To begin with, the judicial power of the rulers, Hooker asserts, must come from the "Orders and Officers of Christ" *only*—such as the Apostles, elders, pastors, doctors (teachers) and deacons.³² All others, such as pope, cardinals and bishops, must be regarded as the product of "the pride and luxury, ambition and tyranny of that Man of sin:"

*All jurisdiction must issue from an Order or Officer. But there is none, but Officers of Christ allowed in the Church. Therefore no jurisdiction spirituall, ecclesiastick, can be exercised, but by an Officer of Christ. And therefore Surrogates, Chancellours, Arch-deacons, Deans, Officials, Vicars-general, Abbots, Monks, Friars, Cardinals, Jesuites, & c, which are hatched and spawned, by the pride and luxury, ambition and tyranny of that Man of sin, ... therefore have no authority by any right from him to exercise any jurisdiction in his Churches, or amongst his people.*³³

This passage seems to be in line with Hooker's conviction in the three principles of the juridical aspects of the keys. First, jurisdiction must come from office. "Therefore where there is no office, there is no right of Rule or jurisdiction"; second, all offices in the church must be instituted by Christ and Scripture; third, those who have the same or equall office must have the same and equall office-rule or jurisdiction.³⁴

given to the "Church of Believers." Cotton, *The Way of Congregational Churches Cleared*, part II, 22.

³¹ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 212-213.

³² Among elders, Hooker argues, the power of the teaching elders is superior to that of the ruling elders in its degree and office (cf. 1Tim.5:17). Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 94, 198.

³³ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 94.

³⁴ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 97, 98-99, 114, 121, 127.

These principles, Hooker argues, cannot be compatible with the three pillars of the Presbyterian Church, which are summarized by Hooker as follows:

1. There must be *severall* Congregations, made *entire* of such members, as Christ hath appointed, to make up an *integrall body*, of *Officers* which rule; and *people*, which are led and ruled by them.³⁵

2. *These Congregations neighbouring together*, so that their communion may be accommodated with more ease and incourageable conveniency, and the scandals ... may be more easily cured and removed: And *such a number* of them should enter into *combination* each with other in the concurrence of *common government*, which may relieve the *common good* of all.

3. *These so combined, are to send their Rulers*, according to mutuall agreement, *to manage the great censures of Christ*, and determine the emergent doubts and difficulties that may arise amongst the combine Congregations: and to such *dispensations* and determinations all the *severall Churches* combined are *to submit*, as to *acts of jurisdiction*, ... *These Elders and Presbyters* of these combined Churches, *thus assembled*, are called, *A Presbyterian Church*: because this *Representative body* is made up only of Presbyters and Elders.³⁶

Hooker argues that the above three principles of Presbyterian Church are neither biblical nor true to the principles of the Reformation. Most of all, Scripture never supports such a Presbyterian church “made up of the Elders of many Congregations appointed

³⁵ Given this principle, Rutherford imagines “a Church in an Island”—thus not actually associated with other churches—and argues that such a church “cannot in the full extent dispense all Ordinances of rebuking, comforting neighbor Churches.. because of the want of the object, not because of defect in the subject.” On the contrary, Hooker describes such an isolated church as a perfect church calling her “a little Kingdom of Christ”: “If a Church in an Island may dispense all Censures, and all Ordinances, then every particular congregation may.. For 1. It is a City and a little Kingdome of Christ. 2. The essential notes of a visible Church agree to it.” Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 233. Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 125. Cotton, *The Way of Congregational Churches Cleared*, part II, 25-26.

³⁶ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 94-95. As for the first and third pillar, Rutherford complains that Hooker’s summary has a “crack”: First, it is not essential to a Presbyterian Church that all the congregation must be entire, and *formed churches*, which must have their own officers distinct from other church’s officers; second, it is not necessary that Presbyterian churches must send rulers “by way of delegation” to whom they submit. Instead, it is entirely possible that “The whole Elders of six congregations in a City may all meet in one common Presbytery, without any delegation. and that is a Presbyterian Church, as is the meeting of a Congregational eldership” Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 186.

Classicwise, to rule all those Congregations.”³⁷ “In a word,” Hooker asserts, “let M. R. give me but one place of Scripture, or one sound reason for it.”³⁸

The jurisdiction of a Presbyterian church, Hooker continues, is a “*new power*,” which comes from the *combination* of many congregations.³⁹ Why is this power so problematic? Because, for Hooker, the power that the presbyters receive from this combination is not “office-power” as instituted by Christ, who has never appointed such a power of “Judge-like authority over so many other Churches” or “a power to many.”⁴⁰ In short, Hooker concludes that the power of Presbyterian Church is nothing but a “humane invention”:

*Therefore Combination gives some power to many, beside the power of office, that Christ hath not appointed, and that is a humane invention. And why may they not give the like power to one man? And let him take *Surrogates, Deans, Archdeacons, and Chancellours* to himself: this is but a humane invention, as the other.⁴¹*

Hooker, here, seems to regard Presbyterian Church as closely related to the hierarchical order of Roman Catholic Church. Indeed, Hooker does not hesitate to compare a “Classicall Elder” with a bishop focusing on several similarities between them: First, the classical elders, like bishop, are not *chosen* by the several *all* congregations [within their classis]; second, like a bishop, a classical elder is *not bound to preach* to the classical church; third, under a bishop or a classical elder, the “poor Pastor of a Congregation”—

³⁷ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, “Preface,” 16.

³⁸ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 124.

³⁹ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 121. 124.

⁴⁰ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 121-124.

⁴¹ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 124. [Italics are his while underline is mine]

who preaches and administer the sacraments—has no power to rule in chief acts of jurisdiction because it is the classis of the elders which keep “the key of Jurisdiction”; finally, given the power of a bishop or a classical elder, there must be a separation between the jurisdiction and preaching because the classical elders, like bishops, are not bound to preach to the classical church.⁴² In short, from Hooker’s viewpoint, the Presbyterian church government is likely to deviate from the Reformation and follow the footsteps of Roman Catholic Church:

True, But what if the Elders met in the *Classis*, should give power to *one man to take many to himself*, and exercise all the Jurisdiction without them, not as a Moderatour only, to order the actions of the Assembly, but as having the power of a judge[?] HE IS THEN A PERFECT BISHOP.⁴³

2. Samuel Rutherford and the Power of the Keys

“What if the firmament fall?” Rutherford asks a question in return, considering Hooker’s thought as an utterly groundless fear. “Synonical Elders,” Rutherford argues, “have nothing to do with Prelacy.”⁴⁴ A bishop is rather a “Pastor to Pastors, then to the Churches” *ex officio* and need “neither do by vote, or consent of other Elders or people,” while the synonical elders have the power of jurisdiction in *collegio* and “hath no

⁴² Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 117, 123.

⁴³ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 123. [Emphasis is his] In other places, Hooker seems to be convinced that Presbyterianism is very close to the papacy. “And in my retired meditations, I could not but observe a *secret Kind of divine dispensation* that the *Presbyterian way* must *need the helpe of a point of Popery*, not onely as a *pillar*, by which it must be under propped, but s a *foundation or head corner stone*, upon which *the whole building must rest and be erected*.” Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 251. Furthermore, both “the Papists” and Rutherford share, Hooker argues, the concept of “this Catholike visible Church.” The only difference is that the former have created and fancied a visible head to this visible body. Now, Hooker seems to be afraid of the possibility that the Presbyterian church may choose a “supreme visible Head.” Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 257.

⁴⁴ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 225-226.

majority of jurisdiction and ordination at all, as the Bishop hath.”⁴⁵

Like Hooker, Rutherford criticizes the Roman Catholic doctrine that the keys were given to Peter only (Matt. 16:19) as representing the Apostles and his successors (Popes).⁴⁶ Unlike Hooker—who considers the whole body of believers of a *particular* church as the subject of the keys—however, Rutherford believes that the keys are given to the *catholic* visible church:⁴⁷

*Jesus Christ hath now under the N. Testament a Catholique visible Church on earth... and to this Church universall, visible, hath the Lord given a ministry, and all his Ordinances of Word and Sacrament principally and primarily and to the ministry and guides of this Catholique visible Church hath the Lord committed the Keyes, as to the first subject.*⁴⁸

Also, criticizing Hooker’s view that the principal subject of the keys is the church as *totum essentiale*, Rutherford argues that it must be given to the “*Catholick representative*

⁴⁵ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 226.

⁴⁶ Rutherford, *The Due Right of Presbyteries*, 18-19.

⁴⁷ Hooker argues that Rutherford’s concept of a “Catholike visible Church” is not found in the New Testament. In reply, Rutherford points out the subject of 1 Cor. 12 as “*the Catholike body mysticall of Christ, and that as visible.*” To this, Hooker answers that it is our common and current sense to understand “the body *mysticall* of Christ” as invisible rather than visible. For Hooker, on the one hand, there is no such thing as “an externall visible particular body politick, either civill, or Ecclesiastick,” whose members never have “the sight or knowledge one of another,” and who “never entered into agreement of government one with another.” Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 244-245, 286-287. On the other hand, however, Hooker agrees that the term “Catholike Church visible” may be used insofar as it refers to the *mystical* body of the visible catholic church as *totum integrale* or *totum universal*. Hooker’s view is well expressed in the Cambridge Platform of 1648, chapter 2, where the “universal visible Church” as an “Ecclesiastical-Political” body is denied while she in respect of “the spiritual union”—which is “common to all believers”—may be acknowledged. *A Platform of Church Discipline*, printed by William Bentley (London, 1652), 2.

⁴⁸ Rutherford, *The Due Right of Presbyteries*, 289. Sometimes, Rutherford describes the invisible church of the elect as the subject of the keys. Given Christ’s statement that the gates of hell cannot prevail this church, Rutherford argues, the subject of the keys must be the invisible church of elect—because visible churches on earth may fall away as in the cases of those seven churches in Asia (Book of Revelation). Rutherford, *The Due Right of Presbyteries*, 14-15. Criticizing this view, Cotton replies, “The Invisible Catholic Church doth never convene for the Administration of Church power.” Cotton, *The Way of Congregational Churches Cleared*, part II, 25.

*Church*⁴⁹ or the “Officers and Stewards” of a ministerial church—of a church as *totum organicum*⁵⁰—because Peter in Matthew 16 is representing the whole Apostles and “Church-rulers” rather than “all believers” as Hooker believes.⁵¹

Accordingly, on the one hand, Rutherford argues that the church void of officers cannot be “the first and principal subject” of the power of the keys.⁵² On the other hand, however, Rutherford also emphasizes the congregation’s consent to the rule of the elders. Their submission to the elders of synod, for example, is not a blind obedience. Each congregation should reserve judgment of discretion and have liberty to appeal, while the synod’s rule and censure must be done according to both the “concurrence of the Elders”

⁴⁹ Particularly, discussing the power of a general council, Rutherford considers the “Catholick representative Church” as the *first* subject of the keys. Rutherford, *The Due Right of Presbyteries*, 305. To this, Hooker criticizes, “If the power of the keys should be given to an Oecumenicall councill as to the first subject: Then those should have and formally exercise the power of the keys, who were no Pastors nor officers in those acts.” Or, Hooker continues, “if the power of the keyes be in the Catholike representative Church, as the first subject, they cannot belong firstly to the Catholick Church, . . . because all particulars share in all equally and firstly [the power], as *species* partake of the nature of a *Genus*.” Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 232, 249, 250. For the detailed discussion about the issue of “Catholick representative Church” see Hooker’s *Survey*, 249-287. Hooker, here, sees it particularly as related to Roman Catholic Church.

⁵⁰ Rutherford, *The Due Right of Presbyteries*, 13-20; idem, *A Survey of the Survey*, 185, 314. Hooker tends to emphasize that Rutherford considers the officers—as separated from the congregation—*only* as the first subject of the power of the keys. Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 199. While it is true that Rutherford sees the officers as the principal subject of the keys, Rutherford’s major focus, here, is to refute Hooker’s doctrine of the church as *totum essentiale* as the first subject of the keys. Thus he repeatedly argues that the power of the keys given by Christ to the church is *not* the “Church of believers combined in *Church-covenant*, but wanting their Pastors and Teachers.” He also argues that, unlike Hooker’s thought that office power is “but a little part of the power of the Keys,” the office-power should not a part, but the whole power of the keys.

⁵¹ However, it must be also remembered that Rutherford never denies the power of the church of believers: “I deny not, but there is a power virtuall, not formall in the Church of believers, to supply the want of ordination of pastors, or some other acts of the keyes simply necessary, *hic & nunc*.” Again, Rutherford’s point is that the power of the keys is given to the organic, or “constituted” body of the church—rather than a company of believers as destitute of officers. Rutherford, *The Due Right of Presbyteries*, 1-4, 7-11. Quote is from page 7, 9; idem, *A Survey of the Survey*, 314. Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 200. Cotton also seems to be aware of Rutherford’s chief point. Cotton, *The Way of Congregational Churches Cleared*, part II, 25.

⁵² Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 185.

and “tacit consent of the people.”⁵³ Thus, Rutherford concludes, “Our Elders are neither over the faith of the people, nor can they dispence censures contrary to the mind of the Godly. So Mr. *H.* hath not found the prelate with us.”⁵⁴

As for the power of the classical elders, Rutherford argues that it must *not* be considered as a *new* power based upon a newly added office to elders—as Hooker believes.⁵⁵ To begin with, Rutherford argues that the elders of the presbytery must be understood in a double sense: On the one hand, the Presbyterian pastors are “properly, that is, *formally, essentially, habitu, actu primo*, Pastors in relation to all the flocks... all the visible Churches on earth”; on the other hand, they are “fixed and proper pastors, only to one flock.”⁵⁶ Thus, when Christ sent his pastor Archippus, Rutherford argues, it must be Christ’s *intention* to feed all his flocks in all field and, therefore, Archippus was essentially a pastor to them all. “But for the more convenient attaining of Christs end,” Rutherford continues, Christ “fixes him by the choice of the people to the Church of *Coloss.*”⁵⁷ From this viewpoint, Rutherford argues that it should not be necessary for an elder of a particular congregation to get a *new* office in order to become an elder of the presbytery. Accordingly, the power of a synonical elder is not differ in “nature and species” from the power of the eldership in a congregation⁵⁸: “It is, and must be the same office of a Pastor in reference to the congregation, and in reference to the Presbytery &

⁵³ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 186, 188.

⁵⁴ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 226.

⁵⁵ Rather it should be considered as an *extended* power having the same nature or specie with the power of the eldership in a congregation. Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 190, 202, 203, 224.

⁵⁶ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 192-193.

⁵⁷ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 193.

⁵⁸ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 190, 202; idem, *The Due Right of Presbyteries*, 328-329.

Synods superior.”⁵⁹ The only difference between them is the “extent of Jurisdiction:”

Its true, it is the same power of Christ, the same valid Excommunication, the same binding and loosing as to the specific nature of binding and loosing, that is exercised by five Churches in a City, and exercised by ten Churches about. *We multiply not species, to make all congregation to differ in nature and specie, as Mr. H. doth against Logick.... Nor are Presbyterian, and Provincial and National Churches different in nature, but onely in extent of jurisdiction.*⁶⁰

Reminding his readers once again that both classical elders and the elders of a particular congregation derive their power of jurisdiction from the *same* office, Rutherford proceeds to prove the biblical basis for the existence of the synonical elders. Refuting Hooker’s assertion that the jurisdiction of presbytery lacks biblical support and, thus, nothing but a human invention, Rutherford attempts to demonstrate that the early churches in the New Testament must have been Presbyterian Church.⁶¹

First, Rutherford argues that the Jerusalem council—as shown in Acts 15—must be considered as a Presbyterian synod because the elders of Jerusalem declared the power of jurisdiction over many other churches (Acts 15:22; 16:4; 21:25).⁶² Also, given that there were many thousands of people in the Church of Jerusalem (Acts 2, 4, 6), who daily convened from house to house (Acts 4:45; 5:42), Rutherford assumed that twelve Apostles might “feed 12 congregations in Jerusalem, or in some large city in common, not being fixed any of them to any one congregation,” and, thus, “all the 12 are pastors to

⁵⁹ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 224.

⁶⁰ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 190. [Emphasis added]

⁶¹ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 227-233.

⁶² Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 189, 205, 219, 220, 227. Quoting Acts 15:24: “Some men from us have troubled you, and said, Ye must be circumcised,” Rutherford emphasizes that Jerusalem Synod even “condemns some certain particular, individual men.”

all the 12 congregations.”⁶³

Second, like Jerusalem Church, the early churches established by Apostle Paul—such as the Churches of Thessalonica, Ephesus, Corinth, Galatia—could not be one single congregation: “There were divers small assemblies in one and the self same City,” Rutherford argues, while “these congregations were one Church,” ruled by “many Elders over them as one flock.”⁶⁴ Accordingly, Rutherford reads Titus 1:5 as saying that Apostle Paul has appointed “a Colledge” of Presbyterian elders in every city.⁶⁵

Finally, the Church of Rome also should *not* be considered as one single congregation: “The Church of Rome, though one body, had many members, Rom.12. and could not be one single Congregation.”⁶⁶ According to the final chapter of Romans, Rutherford asserts, there were many “Churches lesser as the house of *Aristobulus Rom.* 16.10. Of *Narcissus*, v.12 &14. *Philologus, Nereus, Julius, and all the Saints with them*, v.15, *the Church at the house of Aquila and Priscilla...* vers.3,9,12.”⁶⁷

The above biblical examples of the early churches are essential, for Rutherford, to prove that his defense of Presbyterian church is supported by the New Testament—rather than simply a product of human invention. Especially, it seems to be plausible that the council of Jerusalem in Acts 15 could exercise the power of jurisdiction over other

⁶³ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 191. Rutherford seems to believe that the diverse groups of Jerusalem church were gathered according to the diverse languages: “The Apostle spoke with diverse tongues, that these of all nations understood, *Act.2.1,2,3*. Therefore in diverse meetings; nor is it clear, that all the three thousand heard *Peter*: the Text saith (v.37) they that heard were pricked, *Act.2.11*. the rest of the Apostles also spoke, as Mr. *H.* thinketh.” Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 228.

⁶⁴ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 229-231.

⁶⁵ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 227.

⁶⁶ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 229.

⁶⁷ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 229.

particular churches regarding some specific issues including circumcision. Also, it seems to be true that twelve Apostles were not called to a particular congregation *only* and each Apostle's ministry was not exclusively fixed to a certain district.

Nevertheless, as Richard Mather points out, it does not necessarily follow that the early churches of the New Testament were actually structured according to Rutherford's idea of Presbyterian church. Given the fact that 5000 were gathered together to hear Jesus (Luke 12), Mather says, it seems more likely that the churches at Jerusalem, Thessalonica, Corinth, Ephesus and Antioch could meet in one congregation.⁶⁸

Likewise, Hooker also presents a different interpretation of the story of the Jerusalem council, using it as a proof text for his own model of Congregational synod or consociation. According to Hooker, the Jerusalem council was a type of the "consociation of the Churches" and her decision must be understood in terms of *counsel*.⁶⁹ This counsel, however, should not be taken as merely "the godly advice of women"—in Rutherford's phrase—which lacks divine authority.⁷⁰ Instead, the counsels of the Jerusalem council are "no other then Gods Commands" because her counsels is the expression of "Word of Scripture, from the Law in the Gospell" or "the truth and peace of the Gospell" in Cotton's phrase.⁷¹ Hooker's point is that the divine authority contained in the counsels of synod

⁶⁸ Richard Mather, *A Reply to Mr. Rutherford* (London: Printed for J. Rothwell, and H. Allen, 1647), 65-75.

⁶⁹ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, part IV, 3.

⁷⁰ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 194-195. Rutherford complains, "Mr. H. gives no power to Synods, but power of advising, such as women over men." Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 459. Counsel, for Rutherford, does not have divine authority: "Mr. Hooker errs not a little in calling the acts of the Synod, Act.15. Councils, such as godly men and women, who are not Apostles and Elders, may give to others: for counsels are not burndens laid upon the people and Churches, by the wisdom and authority of the *Holy Ghosts*." Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 463.

⁷¹ Cotton, *The Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven*, 26; Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, part IV, 3.

must be solely based on Scripture rather than the decision of synod—“act of Decreeing”—itself.⁷²

*Hence their sentence was not therefore Scripture or Canonically because they decreed it... But the thing or matter which was decreed, it was either expressed pregnantly, or infallibly collected out of the Word, and so being Scripture, it was therefore decreed by them, as the instances of the Decrees give in evidence.*⁷³

The purpose of synod, therefore, is, first, to discover and collect God’s commands out of the Word of God and, second, “to charge the truth of God upon the Churches” loading “their Consciences with the Decrees they published by way of *authoritative Councell*.” And a particular church should obey the counsels of the synod—considering them as “*authoritative Councell*”—*insofar as* they have the “Divine Authority of the Scripture”—or they are “*evidently expressed, or infallibly collected out of the Word.*”⁷⁴

Hooker’s argument seems to be in line with Richard Mather and John Cotton. Cotton, for example, even asserts that a synod has a power to *command* as well as to give counsel or advice.⁷⁵ Like Hooker, however, Cotton argues that her authority must be limited by Christ’s authority:

The Apostles are commanded to *teach the people to observe all things which Christ had commanded*. If then the Apostles teach the people to observe more than Christ hath commanded, they go beyond the bounds of their commission and a larger commission than that given to the Apostles, nor Elders, nor Synods, nor churches can challenge.⁷⁶

⁷² Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, part IV, 3, 6.

⁷³ “*To abstaine from Fornication*,” for example, must be considered as God’s command not because the council (synod) decreed it but because “it is the very letter of the Text.” Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, part IV, 4.

⁷⁴ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, part IV, 3-5.

⁷⁵ Mather, *A Reply to Mr. Rutherford*, 7-9; Cotton, *The Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven*, 23-29.

⁷⁶ Cotton, *The Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven*, 27.

Likewise, Mather also understand the power of decree of the Jerusalem council as the “power to cleare up the truth Dogmatically.”

In short, given that Hooker and his brethren could have room for different interpretation about the Jerusalem council and that they even attempt to use it as a supporting text for their own church, one may argue that there is no *explicit* evidence or statement of Scripture which can be used as a proof-text for Rutherford’s Presbyterian church *only*—especially as the most true to the New Testament model of the visible church.

As for the ministry of twelve Apostles, one may agree with Rutherford that they were not fixed to a particular congregation. But they may also pose a question about the general applicability of this model and—given the exceptional status of the Apostles—about whether or not it should be considered as a standard example for all churches of the following generations: “The naked truth is,” Hooker argues, “*the Apostles here, as in Matt.28.19. Mark 16.15. are extraordinary men, whom none succeed.*”⁷⁷

In dealing with this problem, Rutherford argues that we should make a distinction between the unique works of the Apostles—such as writing Scripture, working miracles, speaking with tongues—and the ordinary works that they performed as elders. The ministry of the Apostles as written in Acts 6, for example, should be understood as

⁷⁷ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 223. Also, Hooker says, “The *Apostle* in that Commission were *extraordinary* persons, and were sent into tall the world, to lay the foundation of the Gospell, by an Apostolicall power, and *in this sense they have no successors; nor did they stand in the roome of any.*” [Emphasis is his] Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 222. Hooker’s argument seems to be in line with the Independents’ view of the apostles at Westminster Assembly: “The Apostles were more than elders, *ergo* not elders” John Lightfoot, *Journal of the Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines from January 1st 1643 to December 31st 1644*, in Lightfoot, *The Whole Works of John Lightfoot, D.D.*, vol.13, ed., John R. Pitman (London: J.F. Dove, 1824), 190.

belonging to the latter:

What agreeth to the Apostles as Elders, agreeth to all Elders, but the Apostles *Act 6*, as Elders, *not as Apostles* (which is a Presbytery of twelve Elders over divers congregations) chose Deacons, lay hands on them, and praying ordain them, v.6. and use the joint concurrence of the people for the chusing of them, *as a standing example to the Churches.*⁷⁸

While Rutherford's distinction, which divides the Apostles' ministry into two— between the works of the Apostles and that of elders—may be useful or even plausible, Rutherford, again, seems to fail to provide any *explicit* biblical evidence for such a distinction.

3. Evaluations

So far, we have discussed the issue of the power of the keys focusing on Hooker's criticisms of the Presbyterian view of the keys and Rutherford's defense of it as a doctrine for his concept of Presbyterian church. It seems to be obvious that Hooker's criticism goes too far when he attempts to connect Presbyterian elders with the bishops of Roman Catholic Church. Also, Rutherford seems to have successfully demonstrated that Presbyterian church should not be considered simply as a human invention. Not all readers, however, will agree with Rutherford's argument that the Presbyterian form of church government is the most faithful to Scripture. Nevertheless, many of them may agree that Rutherford's defense of a synod and Presbyterian Church model as being compatible with—or even *warranted* by—the early churches in the New Testament.

Indeed, there seems to be no *explicit* biblical proof-text for a specific form of

⁷⁸ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 228, 305-306. Quote is from page 228. Rutherford's earlier view of the distinction between the unique works of the Apostles and the ordinary works of them as elders appeared in his debate with the Independents at Westminster Assembly. See Lightfoot, *Journal of the Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines*, 197-201.

church government, either Congregational or Presbyterian. The fact that both Hooker and Rutherford criticize equally each other's ecclesiology—especially about a church covenant for Hooker and a Presbytery for Rutherford—for the lack of biblical foundation, does seem to indicate that the Scriptures do not teach a single ideal form of church government, which can be used as a standard model for all visible churches.⁷⁹ At this point, one may wonder what, then, has influenced each of them to read the Scripture—particularly regarding the issue of the power of the keys—in a very different way.

Two questions, as I have already mentioned, are important in understanding their differing views of the keys: first, to whom the power of the keys is given and, second, how it should be exercised by the subject of the keys. As for the former, both men would agree that the keys are given to the church. The principal subject of the church, however, is understood differently—either the church as *totum essentiale* (Hooker) or the stewards of the organic church (Rutherford).

The difference seems to get bigger as they move on to discuss the second question. Hooker has a strict view that the ecclesiastical power of the key must be exercised over *only those* who have agreed to such jurisdiction by making a mutual engagement (church covenant) or “mutuall consent of subjection one to another”—particularly in an explicit way.⁸⁰ On the contrary, Rutherford seems to take a more moderate view: For Rutherford, the tacit consent of people—especially to the way of delegation—or, simply, the membership of a particular church would be sufficient

⁷⁹ This point is indicated in the Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter 1, article 6: “There are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.”

⁸⁰ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 187-88. Quote is from page 188.

grounds for being under the jurisdiction of the presbytery. The difference between them is well illustrated by their discussion about the nature of the Jerusalem council's jurisdiction. Consider Hooker's reasoning about why the decrees of Jerusalem synod must be applied to all the churches by way of "Christian Councell" rather than any "authoritative jurisdiction:"

[1] *The Decrees of a Synode bind onely such by an Ecclesiasticall Jurisdiction, who delegate messengers to the Synode.*

[2] *But the Decrees of this Synode bind more then those who delegated messengers to it; to wit, all the Churches of the Gentiles.*

[3] *Therefore, They did not intend to bind by Ecclesiasticall Jurisdiction, but by way of Christian Councell.*⁸¹

Also, Hooker explains it in a slightly different way as follows: "*But this Synode at Jeruslaem sent their Decrees to all the Churches of the Gentiles, who never sent their Commissioners thither, ... Ergo, They sent onely by way of Councell.*"⁸² These statements affirm Hooker's conviction that the ecclesiastical power of jurisdiction must be based upon the mutuall consent of people: Thus, "Where there is no delegation of Messengers by mutall consent," Hooker argues, "there is no right of jurisdiction."⁸³

Unlike Hooker, Rutherford argues that the decision of the Jerusalem council must be accepted "*as a Decree of an Ecclesiasticall Synode*" rather than simply "*as a Councell.*" And it should tie and bind all churches—whether or not a particular church could send their own commissions to the council—which are united in truth and peace as "one

⁸¹ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, part IV, 13.

⁸² Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, part IV, 13-14.

⁸³ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, part IV, 13.

visible Body.”⁸⁴ Thus, those who were absent from the Synod also need to obey the decrees that she made:

If they ought to send, and stand in need of light and peace, and send not, they are the same way tyed, that some hundreds absent, when *Jezabel* is sentenced and excommunicat, are obliged to withdraw from communion from her, though they were not present to consent to the sentence.⁸⁵

The above difference indicates that the Rutherford-Hooker debate about the power of the keys seems to be perfectly in line with their differing view of what constitutes the essence of the visible church. For Hooker, it is defined as a voluntary association of believers combined together by church covenant. And the extent of the power of the keys, Hooker argues, must not go beyond this community of mutual engagement: “So far, as by free consent their combination goes, so farre, *and no further*, the power they have one over another reacheth.”⁸⁶ As a result, Hooker’s jurisdiction of the keys must be exercised in a more limited field than Rutherford’s.

For Rutherford, this “voluntary combination” does not make a Presbyterian church.⁸⁷ The visible church, Rutherford argues, is established by Christ himself and the gospel covenant—and many other elements including faith, hope, and baptism—which is ultimately based on God’s “free grace, sending the Gospel to whom he will, *Deut.7.7. Deut.10.14,15. Psal.147.10,29. Acts 16.6,9.10. Acts 18:6,7,8,9.*”⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Rutherford, *The Due Right of Presbyteries*, 212; idem, Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 458-473. Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, part IV, 5.

⁸⁵ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 464.

⁸⁶ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 188, 190. Quote is from page 190. [Emphasis added]

⁸⁷ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 190.

⁸⁸ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 106, 115, 122, 138.

Accordingly, the jurisdiction of the keys that God has given to this visible church has nothing to do with a church covenant—as a separate covenant for a particular group of voluntary combination. The keys, at least in a principle, must cover all the visible churches on the earth. Such a difference between the two theologians is further highlighted by their discussion of more practical issues including dispensing sacraments and administrating church discipline.

III. The Church Covenant and the Sacraments

1. A Disputed Point

Regarding the sacraments, the Rutherford-Hooker dispute seems to revolve around many complicated issues, including both exegetical and practical problems. However, their differing views should not be exaggerated. There is far more agreement than disagreement between them on the key issues of the sacraments—such as their definition, number, nature, and even the manner of dispensation. Accordingly, they do not dispute about whether or not an unbeliever may partake in the privilege of the seals. Both men agree that the seals of covenant are limited to believers only. Also, they do not dispute whether or not the infants of the church members may become partakers of baptism. Both men would oppose the Anabaptists' practice to exclude the infants from the seal of baptism. Furthermore, their dispute is not about whether or not the church should give the seals to the hypocrites within the visible church. Both would agree that the church warrantably dispense the seals to the hypocrites because the church ordinances belong to the *external* Covenant of Grace.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, part III, 22. Thus, Hooker could say, “And it is as

Also, the readers of the Rutherford-Hooker dispute should be reminded that many parts of their controversy about the church ordinances are caused by misunderstanding of the texts rather than each man's accurate viewpoints. For example, Rutherford's criticisms that Hooker's church can do without the sacraments and that Hooker will not allow the members of one congregation to take the Lord's Supper from another congregation, are *not* well-founded—as will be explained and discussed in detail later in this section.

What, then, is the real issue? One of the key practical issues in Rutherford-Hooker dispute is about whether or not a *non*-member of any particular churches may possibly be admitted to the sacraments. Hooker simply denies such a possibility while Rutherford takes a very positive view on it. For Rutherford, any believers, where or not they are the members of a particular church, should be allowed to the seals of the covenant: “Wee hold that those who are not members of a particular Congregation, may lawfully be admitted to the seales of the Covenant.”⁹⁰ Rutherford argues that there exist, at least, four biblical grounds:

First, Because those to whom the promises are made, and professe the Covenant, these should be baptized. But men of approved piety are such, though they be not members of a particular Parish. The proposition is *Peters* argument, *Act.2.38*.

Secondly. Those who are not Members of a particular Church may be visible professors, and so members of a visible *Church* [in general], *Ergo*, the seales of the Covenant belongeth to them.

Thirdly, The contrary opinion hath no warrant in Gods Word.

undeniably evident, that *ordinances and Ministers are not given firstly to such*, I meane to *true beleevers*, as Mr. *Rutherford* is expresse in severall passages of his book.” Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 225.

⁹⁰ Rutherford, *The Due Right of Presbyteries*, Book II, 186.

Fourthly, The Apostles required no more of those whom they baptized, but profession of beleeve, as *Act.10.47. Can any forbid water that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost, as well as we? Act.8.37. If thou beleevest with all thy heart, thous mayest be baptized.* no more is sought for of the Jaylor, *Acts. 16.31, 34.*⁹¹

In reply, Hooker asserts that the above four points cannot be accepted because Rutherford's reading of the biblical texts are incorrect. First, Apostle Peter's command, "Repent and be baptized" (*Acts 2:38*) cannot be used as a biblical ground for the right of a non-member to get baptized. On the one hand, Peter, here, is speaking to the Jews and the proselytes who were already the members of a "visible Church-state." On the other hand, Peter's command to "*repent and be baptized*" indicates that the ordinance of baptism must be dispensed to them according to a certain procedure—so called "Christ's method and manner" in Hooker's phrase.⁹²

Second, Rutherford's concept of the visible catholic church—or "the visible church in generall"—cannot be used as a ground for a non-member of a particular church to receive the seals of the covenant. The reason is simply that, without first getting a visible membership of a particular church, it is impossible to get, if any, such a membership of "the visible Church in generall."⁹³ In this sense, from Hooker's viewpoint, Rutherford's argument is contrary to human reason:

⁹¹ Rutherford, *The Due Right of Presbyteries*, Book II, 186; Rutherford adds the stories of an Ethiopian eunuch (*Acts.9*) and the hearers of John the Baptist, who became the "baptized members of the universal Church, 1 Cor.12.12,13. where there was no particular congregation to receive, & admit them as members." *idem, A Survey of the Survey*, 305.

⁹² Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, part III, 18-19. In this manner of Christ, Hooker argues, the Apostle requires more than a simple profession of faith: "for *Peter* doth plainly require *more*, *Acts 2.38. Repent and be baptized.*" *Ibid.*, 21.

⁹³ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, part III, 19.

To be a member of the visible Church in the generall, and yet to have no particular existence of membership in any particular Congregation, is a meer conceit, which comes out of the same mint, crosse to the principles of reason.⁹⁴

Third, answering Rutherford's statement "The contrary opinion hath no warrant in Gods Word," Hooker argues, "This is nakedly and rawly affirmed, and is as readily denied, and shall be made good afterward."⁹⁵

Fourth, Rutherford's argument that nothing more than the profession of faith was required for baptism in the New Testament cannot be supported, Hooker argues, when we consider the sermon of Peter (Acts 2:38), the baptism of John the Baptist (Luke 3), and the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20). Both Peter and John the Baptist, for example, required *more* than a simple profession of faith—such as attending sermon and doing repentance—from all whom they administrated the ordinance of baptism.⁹⁶ In case of the Great Commission, Hooker pays a special attention to the command of "making disciples"—as it is *before* the command of baptizing:

The *generall commission* in the open terms of it calls for more: *Make Disciples, and then baptize*; and this *making Disciples* being understood in the *full breadth*, which is not to *beleeve* onely, as they did (*John 12.42.*) as thereby approving of the Doctrine of our Saviour, but did not *confesse* him, or shew themselves his

⁹⁴ Hooker compares it (general/particular) with the relationship between genus and species. See the following section of "Samuel Rutherford's Criticism" in this chapter. Also, it must be remembered that Hooker, here, is dealing with the concept of the *visible catholic church*—without denying the membership of the catholic *invisible* church. Accordingly, Hooker would agree that a hearer of Hooker church may become a believer and become a member of the invisible church. In this case, such a hearer will still not be able to receive the seals of covenant because, for Hooker, the seals are the ordinance of the *visible Church*. I will discuss this point in more detail in next section. Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, part III, 20.

⁹⁵ Hooker does not discuss in further detail Rutherford's third proposition. Hooker's first and fourth proposition where he attempts to verify the validity of Rutherford's interpretation of the major biblical texts may account for this brevity of his responding to this part of Rutherford's propositions. Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, part III, 20.

⁹⁶ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, part III, 21.

Disciples.⁹⁷

Making disciples, Hooker emphasizes, must include the *joining* procedures:

*John 9.28. Be thou his Disciple, but we are Moses his Disciples: Yea, those that magnified the Doctrine and profession of the Apostles, yet durst not joyn themselves to them. If then this joining, this being made a Disciple, so as the Jewes were to Moses, be added to an open profession, it then will imply, both their subjection to the Doctrine and fellowship of the Apostles, and their acceptance of them, and then it amounts to as much as we require, or Church-confederation calls for.*⁹⁸

Hooker's above interpretations of the biblical texts seems to reaffirm the fundamental difference between Rutherford and Hooker on the issue of the church covenant. While, for Rutherford, the Covenant of Grace should give "full right unto" the seals, Hooker does not believe so. For Hooker, both the Covenant of Grace and the church covenant are necessary for the seals of the covenant. Hooker takes an example of Job and his friends: "For *Job* and all his friends were in the Covenant of Grace, and yet neither Circumcision nor Passover did appertain to them." "Therefore," Hooker asserts, "it is a mistake of Mr. R. when he affirms the contrary."⁹⁹

2. The Church Covenant

1) *Church Covenant as the Foundation for the Sacraments* — Indeed, Hooker strongly

⁹⁷ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, part III, 21.

⁹⁸ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, part III, 21.

⁹⁹ To this, Rutherford argues that "Job and his friends did sacrifice which was peculiar to the Jews." In reply, Hooker answers, "It is a mistake: sacrificing was before the flood, and immediately after in Noah his time, and therefore could not be appropriated to the Jewes, but as it was peculiarly circumstantiated, according to God's appointment." Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, part III, 25. Rutherford, *The Due Right of Presbyteries*, 165.

believes that there exists an inseparable link between the seals and church covenant, which is to be shown through the membership of a visible church:

And here it's agreed of all hands; Such who are come to ripenesse of years, and are rightly received, and so stand members in the true visible Church of Christ; *such*, I say, have title to *all the seals* of the Covenant: being to the judgement of charity, not only really within the Covenant of Grace; but truly also within the compass of the Covenant of the *Church*.¹⁰⁰

All the seals of the covenant, Hooker argues, must be understood as a “peculiar privilege” to the members of a visible church *only*, because the seals should belong to “a Church as a Church.”¹⁰¹ Hooker, here, makes a distinction between a Christian action and a “Church action.” For example, preaching, hearing, and “a bare profession to attend the outward hearing of the word ordinarily”—though they may be considered as Christian actions—do not make a church action in themselves. To be called a “church action,” it must be done “in virtue of Church-power,” which comes from “*Church confederacy* and combination”¹⁰²

Accordingly, the hearing of the word may become a church-communion only when it is done in virtue of church covenant, by which church power may be exercised in dispensing God’s word. Likewise, a simple hearing of the sermon does not make the relationship between a pastor and the flock, while it does so when it is done in virtue of church covenant.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, part III, 10.

¹⁰¹ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 288-296. Quote is from page 289.

¹⁰² Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 290-292.

¹⁰³ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 293.

2) *Samuel Rutherford's Criticism* – Rutherford argues that Hooker cannot use church covenant as a foundation for the church ordinances without self-contradiction. Given Hooker's teaching that a visible church as *totum essentiale* is *before* the officers, Rutherford argues that the congregational church cannot feed the flock because she may not administer the sacraments—and may still be called a “perfect church.”

It is a wonder how a company of Believers united in *Church-Covenant*, cannot performe all these, for they are united, and so a perfect *Church*, and yet cannot administrate the Sacraments: for though they be so united, they many want *Pastors*, who onely can perfoeme these actions, as this Treatise saith, and *Robinson* and the Confession.¹⁰⁴

The visible church which Christ instituted in the gospel, Rutherford asserts, is not a company of believers joined by mutual consent. Instead, the instituted Church of the New Testament is “an organicall body of diverse members, of eyes, eares, feete, hands, of Elders governing, and a people governed. *1Cor.12.14,15. Rom.12.4,5,6. Act. 20.28.*”¹⁰⁵ In short, for Rutherford, Hooker's view of the church covenant as the ground of both the church as *totum essentiale* and sacrament is simply a human fancy, which would inevitably lead to the devaluation of the sacraments.¹⁰⁶

Rutherford's conclusion is not well founded, however, for the following reasons.

First, Hooker would not disagree with Rutherford that the visible churches of the New Testament are the *organic* church, which includes both elders and believers; second,

¹⁰⁴ Rutherford, *The Due Right of Presbyteries*, 3. Rutherford, here, is responding to the works of Cotton, Robinson and Henry Ainsworth: Cotton, *The Way of the Churches of Christ in New England* (London: Matthew Simmons, 1645), chapter 2; Robinson, *Justification of Separation from the Church of England*, 106; Henry Ainsworth, *A true confession of the faith* (Amsterdam: S.n., 1596). Article 37.

¹⁰⁵ Rutherford, *The Due Right of Presbyteries*, 3.

¹⁰⁶ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 162.

Hooker never says that the church as *totum essentiale* is a perfect church. Instead, Hooker argues that all visible members of a particular church are *perfected* by the ordinances of the church: “All visible members exist in particular Congregations, and are perfected by Ordinances therein”¹⁰⁷; finally, Hooker’s defense of “a Congregation of Covenanting visible Saints” as the first subject of the power of the keys never denies the importance of the church as *totum organicum*. Hooker compares the relationship between the Church as *totum essentiale* (or “a company of Believers united in *Church-Covenant*”) and the Church as *totum organicum* (or a particular church) with the relationship between genus and species.¹⁰⁸

The nature of genus, Hooker emphasizes, is only to be seen in species: “Genus is only existing in its species, and there only can be seene.”¹⁰⁹ For example, “The nature of Animal is only to be seen *in homine & bruto*. The nature of man, it only acts, only exists, in particular men”¹¹⁰ Thus, “When we say a congregation of visible Saints covenanting to walk in the ordinances of the Gospel is the prime and originall subject of the power of the keys,” Hooker argues, “we cannot understand it of *this or that individuall congregation*.”¹¹¹

Hooker’s point is that the *church as totum essentiale* (genus) cannot exist as a

¹⁰⁷ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 224. To be sure, Hooker would argue that the Church as *totum essential* should have the substance of the covenant, while the *visible* seals of the covenant must belong to the *visible* organic church, where those seals are to be dispensed by the officers of a visible church.

¹⁰⁸ “A Congregation of Covenanting visible Saints, being a GENUS to all the particular congregations, which are parts homogenex or species thereof.” Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 220.

¹⁰⁹ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 245.

¹¹⁰ Other examples for this logic are to be found in the analogy of “corporation” and “marriage.” Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 220-221, 257.

¹¹¹ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 219.

separate entity—it must always be seen in the church as *totum organicum* (species) or a particular church: *Genus cum forma constituit speciem*.¹¹² In this sense, Hooker’s concept of the church as *totum essentiale* should not be interpreted as incompatible with his view of church covenant as the theological ground for the administration of the sacraments.

Rutherford’s another criticism is related with a more practical issue of dispensing the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper to the members of another congregation. Rutherford argues that Hooker would not allow the members of one congregation to take the Lord’s Supper from another congregation unless they engage themselves to the same particular congregation.¹¹³ Why does Rutherford think so? Given the nature of church covenant as a particular covenant and Hooker’s use of marriage-analogy, Rutherford argues, the church covenant should not allow a pastor of a particular congregation to dispense the communion to another congregation:

Hence I infer, he cannot dispense the Lords Supper to one of another congregation, contrary to himself and his Brethren, except he be married by a Church-covenant to them; and so he must *be a husband, and perform that duties of a husband* to a hundred persons, of a hundred associate congregations.¹¹⁴

In reply, on the one hand, Hooker and John Cotton argue that they would welcome such a practice—without any sense of contradiction— among the members of their sister churches.¹¹⁵ On the other hand, however, Hooker would admit that there

¹¹² “Genus with form establishes species.” Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 220, 221. Also see pages 223-224, 228-229.

¹¹³ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 106

¹¹⁴ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 166.

¹¹⁵ Cotton considers it as a part of “liberty of the Church.” Furthermore, he highly recommends the occasional participation in the Lord’s Supper of another congregation because “For wee receive the Lords Supper, not onely as a Seale of our communion with the Lord Jesus, and with his members in our owne

exists a significant difference between attending the communion of one's own congregation and partaking in that of another congregation. To explain this, Hooker makes a distinction between the benefit/church-privileges and church-power. While the former must always be the same in all church dispensation, the latter may be different according to the relationship between the pastor and the congregation¹¹⁶:

A person may partake of a Sacrament authoritatively dispensed yet not communicate with the authority and power of the dispenser. i.e. as in either, to have relation to him, or them; as their officers."¹¹⁷

When a member of a particular congregation attends the Lord's Supper in another congregation, as the above statement indicates, the person may partake in church privileges (the benefits of the sacrament) while not partaking in church power—in the same way with other the members of the congregation.¹¹⁸

Accordingly, when a pastor administers the Communion both to his congregation and the members of another congregation, the pastor has a power to enjoin the former to receive it while the same pastor does not have such a "church-power" over the latter:

That the *benefit* of the ordinance dispensed and the *power* in the dispensing the Sacrament, are so different, that though the *Pastor* did *dispense it to a member of another* congregation, yet he had *no power* to *constraine* him to receive it.¹¹⁹

Church, but also in all the Churches of the Saints." Cotton, *The Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven*, 17. Still, however, Rutherford considers such a practice as a self-contradictory. Cf. Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 106-107. Rutherford is quoting John Cotton's *The Way of the Churches of New England*, chapter 6, section I & II, 103-105 and Hooker's *Survey* part III, chapter 2, page 10.

¹¹⁶ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 294.

¹¹⁷ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 296.

¹¹⁸ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 295.

¹¹⁹ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 295.

In a very similar way, Hooker argues that a person may receive the word authoritatively preached in any sister churches, and yet not communicate with the power and authority of the officer *as his*.

3. Evaluation

Detailed study of Hooker's answer to Rutherford's criticism has shown that, in practice, Hooker's doctrine of church covenant would not hinder the administration of the sacraments nor oppose dispensing the sacrament of the Lord's Supper among the members of the sister churches. Still, however, Rutherford seems not to be satisfied with Hooker's explanation. Particularly, he would not agree with Hooker's distinction between church privileges and church power.

For Hooker, only the members of a particular congregation may attend the sacraments of their own particular church "by authoritative Church-power."¹²⁰ On the contrary, Rutherford argues that any believers, whether or not they are the members of this or that particular congregation, must have a right to participate in the seals of the covenant by an equal "intrinsic authoritative church power": "The sister Churches receive members of other Churches to communion by an intrinsic authoritative Church power."¹²¹ In short, from Rutherford's viewpoint, Hooker's doctrine of church covenant would operate as a limit or restriction to the application of the seals, which are freely given to all believers and their children as the means of God's free grace.

It is very interesting to note that, like Rutherford, Hooker, at one point, also

¹²⁰ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 241.

¹²¹ Rutherford, *The Due Right of Presbyteries*, 297.

seems to feel that his desire to freely dispense the sacraments to his congregation is *constrained* by the principle of the church covenant. For example, in dealing with the issue of whether or not the children of “non-confederates” (non-members) of a particular church should have a right to infant baptism,¹²² Hooker confesses that it is his “secret desire and inclination” to allow them to get baptized:

I shall nakedly professe, that if I should have given way to my affection, or followed that which suits my secret desire and inclination, I could have willingly wished, that the scale might have been cast upon the affirmative part, and that such persons (many whereof we hope are godly) might enjoy all such priviledges, which might be usefull and helpfull to them and theirs.¹²³

The very “nature and truth of Church-covenant,” however, would constrain Hooker to do so. Accordingly, he cannot help but conclude, “Non-members of the Church have no right to the priviledges of the Church, and so can give none.”¹²⁴ Though Hooker finally expresses his firm conviction in the principle of church covenant, nevertheless, a close reading of Hooker’s thought about this problem seems to indicate that Hooker, at least sometimes, might feel difficulty in applying the doctrine of church covenant to his own pastoral context—particularly in the matter of the infant baptism of non-confederate parents.¹²⁵

¹²² Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, part III, 11-12. “The *pinch* then of the Question lyes here, Whether persons *non confederate*, and so (in our sense not *Members of the Church*) do entitle their children to the seal of Baptisme, being one of the Priviledges of the Church, their Parents (though godly) being yet unwilling to come into Church-fellowship.”

¹²³ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, part III, 12.

¹²⁴ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, part III, 24. Non-members, here, refer to “non-confederate Parents.” Hooker never denies the

¹²⁵ As for the issue of church membership of Hooker’s following generation, I will discuss in more detail in the concluding chapter.

IV. The Church Covenant and Church Discipline

1. A Disputed Point: The Fraternity's Power of Judgment

1) *Hooker's Principle of Church Discipline* – What is the theological ground of church discipline? As we have already discussed, Rutherford would answer that the Covenant of Grace, which is “solemnly entred in baptism,” is a sufficient ground for all Christian discipline, because it “ties us to all Church duties in all Congregations, without any special covenant-engagement.”¹²⁶ Unlike Rutherford, Hooker believes that the church covenant as well as the Covenant of Grace is necessary foundation for church discipline because of following principles:¹²⁷

1. “No man by nature hath Ecclesiasticall power over another.”
2. “No more have they any power Ecclesiastick over me, unless I freely submit and subject my selfe thereunto.”
3. “Therefore it [ecclesiastical power] must come by mutuall and free consent” or “by speciall ingagement.”¹²⁸

From these principles, Hooker attempts to describe the limit of church discipline:

From all which premises, the inference is undeniable, *So far, as by free consent their combination goes, so farre, and no further, the power they have one over*

¹²⁶ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 153.

¹²⁷ Or, Hooker may argue that the covenant of grace in a *broader sense*—because it includes church covenant as a part of it—should be the theological ground of church discipline: “If you take the covenant of the Gospel, in so full a breadth, as that it should include whatever *is warranted* by the Gospel, then this Church covenant, may be truly said to be *included in it*. But if it be taken in the *narrowest acceptance* (Believe and live) Then it [church covenant] is *not the Covenant of the Gospel*. For that is inward and *invisible* in its own nature, betwixt God and the soul only: But *this* [church covenant] is *visible* betwixt those who do professe the Faith.” Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 69-70. Rutherford disagrees with this distinction and argues, “(Believe and live) is not the narrowest, nor the invisible covenant, but the summe of all duties given to all the visible Church, *Joh.3.16,18. Joh.5.24,40. Joh.11.26,27. Rom.10.9. 2. If this be a Gospel-ordinance, give us Scripture for it.*” Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 140.

¹²⁸ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 66, 189-190.

*another reacheth.*¹²⁹

Hooker considers this as the foundational principle of his doctrine of church discipline and a point of reference to which both he and Rutherford must return in their dispute about church discipline. Accordingly, from his view of the church as “the church by voluntary subjection,” Hooker proceeds to discuss how the ecclesiastical power of discipline should be exercised and who the proper subject of church discipline is.¹³⁰

Given his belief that the power of the keys are given to the whole church according to Christ’s order, Hooker divides the subject of the church discipline according to the two sorts of power, the power of judgement and the power of election or office: The former consists in both the power of admission and of excommunication, and belongs to the whole congregation. To be more exact, in practice, it is “the Fraternity,” the *male* confederate members of a particular congregation, who should exercise this power of judgment. The power of election (office) refers to all other powers of officers—what the elders do *as elders* including power to preach and administer the seals—which are communicated to the gifted persons (officers) from their own congregation.¹³¹

Hooker teaches, on the one hand, that the elders are superior to the fraternity in regard of “office, rule, act and exercise, which is proper only to them.” On the other hand, the fraternity is superior to the elders in point of power of *censure or judgment*—particularly in the matter of excommunication. In short, Hooker argues that each subject of church discipline “have their full scope in their own sphere and compasse, without the

¹²⁹ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 190.

¹³⁰ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 190-191.

¹³¹ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 186-192; part III, 33-46.

prejudice of the other.”¹³² As for the biblical evidences for the people’s power of the judgment, Hooker points out “the church” in Matthew 18:17 where it seems to refer to the whole congregation rather than the elders only and 1 Corinthians 5:12: “*Yea judge them that are within; cast out therefore from among you,*” where Apostle Paul seems to regard the act of censure (excommunication) “as an act of *all*”—which could be exercised even without Paul himself (the officer).¹³³

2) *Rutherford’s Criticism* — Refuting Hooker’s interpretation of Matthew 18:17 and 1 Corinthians 5:12, however, Rutherford reads the same texts in a different way and argues that the meaning of the church in Matthew 18:17 should be understood as the “Officers and Stewards” or “all Churches and Courts of Christ, even to a catholick councill.” As for 1 Corinthians 5:12, Rutherford explains that both the Apostle Paul’s spirit and his rod of discipline were required for Corinthian church to exercise the censure of excommunication.¹³⁴ Moreover, criticizing Hooker’s concept of the congregation’s power of judgment, Rutherford attempts to identify it with “the very way of Anabaptists and rigid Separatists,” which would ultimately destroy the very root of the church ministry:

The Reader may observe all along, that Mr. *H.* and his way lays the Ax to the root of the Ministry; for he ascribeth the Church acts of office, of opening and shutting heaven, of the learned Tongue, of Excommunicating, & c. to unofficed

¹³² Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 186-187.

¹³³ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 109, 191-192, 197-198, 212; part III, 43-46. Quotes are from page 187 and 191.

¹³⁴ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 138-139, part III, 44; Rutherford, *The Due Right of Presbyteries*, 17-18, 36-38, 80, 309-24, 348-350, Book II, 200-201. Quotes are from page 17 and 309; idem, *A Survey of the Survey*, 308-311, 456-457.

men.. [like] the very way of Anabaptists and rigid Separatists.¹³⁵

Rutherford's above criticism, however, is based on exaggeration because Hooker did not ascribe all church power to the unofficed congregation. Instead, Hooker divides the power of church discipline into two, people's power of judgment (in the matter of censure) and the office-power, without denying each subject's power in their own sphere. Thus, the dispute point must be focused on the specific issue of whether or not the power of judgment should properly belong to the fraternity only—as Hooker believes. Rutherford's critical views of this problem may be summarized into three major points as follows:

First, Rutherford argues that Hooker breaks his own principle—that jurisdiction must come from office only—because the people of his congregation exercise the highest jurisdiction without any office:¹³⁶

Wisdom may forbid the Brethren to use this Argument... for the whole people, men and women, the onely Church instituted in the New Testament, or their unofficed Male Church, the Fraternity exercise the highest Jurisdiction, and excommunicate all their officers, and yet they are not officers by their own principles¹³⁷

Thus, Rutherford concludes, Hooker falls into the problem of self-contradiction.

As an answer to this problem, Hooker would argue that excommunication does not come from office-power but from the power of judgment—as the “causall power” of the former—which is to be exercised by the congregation rather than the rulers.¹³⁸ Since

¹³⁵ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 328.

¹³⁶ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 94. For a detailed discussion of this principle, see the section “Thomas Hooker and the Power of the Keys” in this chapter.

¹³⁷ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 192.

¹³⁸ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, part III, p.43. John Cotton compares the relationship

the congregation has a power to elect church officers, Hooker believes, she also needs to have a power to depose them. This power of election and deposition (for the officers) as well as the power of admission and excommunication (for church members), from Hooker's viewpoint, is *before* any office-power and, thus, belongs to the causal power of the congregation.¹³⁹ In short, at least from his own mind, Hooker seems to be convinced that the congregation's power of censure—since it is the *unofficed* power of judgment—is quite compatible with his principle that jurisdiction must come from office only.¹⁴⁰

Second, refuting Hooker's view of excommunication as the power of judgment, Rutherford insists that excommunication must come from the power of ruling (office) because of two reasons: On the one hand, the keys of church censure are committed by Christ to the "stewards of the mysteries of God"(1 Cor. 4:1) or the "servants of his house"(2 Cor. 4:5).¹⁴¹ On the other hand, the "rude and unlettered" members of a congregation, in reality, cannot properly exercise the power of judgment better than their rulers do—particularly in the matter of subtle heresy—because of their insufficient

between this causal power and office-power with the relationship between stalk and branch: "The stock of the Vine.. hath not immediate power to bring forth Grapes; but yet it hath power to produce branches, which do bring forth Grapes: So the Body of the Church of Believers, though they have not immediate power of rule authoritatively to dispense the Word, or to administer Sacraments at all: yet they have power to produce such Officers as may perform the same." Cotton, *The Way of Congregational Churches Cleared*, part II, 12.

¹³⁹ Hooker argues, "Office-power, is but a little part of the power of the Keys: ... and therefore that may well be in Officers, and yet the power of the Keyes not be firstly in them, but in such, who gave that power before, theirs did give what they have, and can take away what they have given." Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 200.

¹⁴⁰ Again, Hooker emphasizes that both admission and excommunication may be done without any office-power. Instead, they should be done by the church (Matt. 8:17): "And if by an act of discipline, *any act* of the power of the keys be meant, its then plaine, there may, an act of *that* power be put forth without any officer. For an officer, and so other members may be admitted, and in case rejected and excommunicated by the Church." Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 88.

¹⁴¹ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 331-332. Rutherford, here, emphasizes that the office power is derived *immediately* from Christ rather than indirectly from a congregation. *Ibid*, 304.

knowledge in the truth of God's Word.¹⁴² Thus, Rutherford asks,

Let the godly Reader consider, whether the Brethren, though believers, yet ignorant of the mystery of *Balaam's* doctrine, and of *Jezebel's* teaching... and of the deep and subtile Heresies for which pastors must be cast out, are by the Word of the Lord equal in judicial power, and trying of Doctors and pastors, with the Rulers, whose office it is to know more or the minde of God, than Brethren?¹⁴³

Answering this problem, Hooker would wish to remind his readers of the proper *order* of the censure, according to which two or three steps need to be taken as follows:

[1] "*Legally prepared*" or "*Dogmatically propounded* by the Elders, as leaders to the Congregation"

[2] *Judicially passed and executed.*

The first step, as this order shows, must be prepared by the rulers "by through search and examination, to ripen the cause, and to clear all mistakes, and settle the truth by sufficient and undeniable witness." Hooker, here, never excludes the significant role and place of church officers, who are "dogmatically to discover the mind of God and the rule of Christ." In this initial step of censure, Hooker emphasizes, the "Congregation should not be troubled with such things."¹⁴⁴ Of course, the next step of *judicially* passing and executing a final judgment, Hooker argues, must be carried out by the congregation. This judicial act of people, however, must be done in agreement with the previous work of the officers. Accordingly, Hooker even asserts,

¹⁴² Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 457.

¹⁴³ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 310. Accordingly, in case of the problem of heresy, Rutherford argues, a synod or general council should exercise the power of judgment. The Jerusalem council in Acts 15 is a good example. Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 456-473.

¹⁴⁴ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, part III, 40-41.

The fraternity have no more power to oppose the sentence of the censure, thus prepared and propounded by the Elders, then they have to oppose their doctrine which they shall publish.¹⁴⁵

In short, Hooker's defense of the congregational power of judgment must not be taken to mean the absence of the office power in the whole process of censure. In reality, the former should be established by the latter.

Finally, Rutherford argues that Hooker's concept of the *fraternity* as the subject of the power of judgment lacks biblical support. Rutherford's detailed reading of Hooker has demonstrated that, for Hooker, the subject of the power of judgment must be only a group of a few unofficed *male* members of a particular congregation, which is called "the fraternity," instead of the whole church which includes both women and children. Indeed, Hooker seems to believe that women, children and the disabled are not capable of exercising the keys in the power of judgment. Thus, he says, "This power is given to *such beleevers*, who are counted fit by Christ and capable, which women and Children, deafe, and dumbe, and distracted are not."¹⁴⁶

From Rutherford's viewpoint, such a view should not be compatible with Hooker's own interpretation of the subject of the keys in Matthew 16 as referring to the *whole* congregation. Rutherford even declares that Hooker, here, attempts to "Popishly confine all the Priviledges of Saints... to some few male-believers," which is a "turning of the Gospel upside down."¹⁴⁷ Rutherford proceeds to ask Hooker to "give us a

¹⁴⁵ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, part III, 41.

¹⁴⁶ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 204. As for the reasons of exclusion, Hooker points out "the women for their *Sex*, Children for *want of exercise* of their *understanding*." *Ibid.*, 132. Mather, *A Reply to Mr. Rutherford*, 75.

¹⁴⁷ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 327.

Scripture, where the male congregation excluding women is called the Spouse, Body of Christ built upon the Rock.”¹⁴⁸ In short, Rutherford concludes that “the fraternity onely”—excluding both officers and women—can neither be the “governing church,” nor the proper subject of the power of judgment.¹⁴⁹

2. Evaluation

To be sure, Rutherford seems to go too far when he defines Hooker’s congregational church as the “Male-Church of onely unofficed Brethren,” and declares that Hooker is turning the gospel upside down.¹⁵⁰ Rutherford needs to remember that the church covenant of Hooker’s so called “male-church” does include both women and children as the members of a visible church.¹⁵¹ Also, it should be noted that Hooker, at least, attempts to use 1Timothy 2:11-12 as a Scriptural proof-text for excluding women from the power of judgment:

No, the wife God provides that the votes and judgements of these should be included in the *male* and chief of them, and in them they should be satisfied, and therefore the *Wife is appointed to ask her Husband at home*.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ In the same paragraph, Rutherford asks, “What Word of God warrants every male-society to be a Spouse of Christ by a new devised Oath or Covenant?” Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 339.

¹⁴⁹ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 307, 326-340.

¹⁵⁰ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 326, 327.

¹⁵¹ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, part III, 6.

¹⁵² Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 133. In other places, Hooker also refers to 1Corinthians 14:3-4 and argues “It’s true, women are forbidden to *speak in the Church* (i.e.) by way of *Teaching*.” Of course, it does not prevent them from speaking the speeches of subjection, testimony of repentance, answering a question in the face of congregation. In matter of admission, however, Hooker suggests that, given their feeblenesses, women should express “the previous work of saving grace in their hearts” in private and then it should be reported to the Congregation. Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, part III, 6. Like Hooker, Mather also quotes both 1Corinthians 14:3 and 1Timothy2:12. Mather, *A Reply to Mr. Rutherford*, 76. As for the biblical support for the fraternity, Cotton may add one more place, Galatians 5:13 “Brethren, you have been called to liberty.” Based on this verse, Cotton argues that the key is given to the “brethren of the Church.” Cotton, *The Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven*, 12.

Nevertheless, Hooker may need to admit that there is no *explicit* Scriptural support for his concept of the fraternity as the only subject of the power of judgment. Also, Hooker seems to have failed, as Rutherford points out, to demonstrate that his distinction between the power of judgment and office-power is firmly rooted in the Bible. The only biblical verses Hooker uses in a significant way seem to be limited to 1 Corinthians 5:12 and Matthew 18:17. Accordingly, Rutherford says that Matthew 18 is the only place for Hooker to use as a proof-text, calling it “one *Magna Charta* of *Mat. 18.*”¹⁵³ Even these biblical texts, however, may be read in a very different way from Hooker’s interpretation—as we have already discussed.

As for another significant difference between Rutherford and Hooker, it should be remembered that the major part of their debate on church discipline revolved around the concept of the power of judgment. In order to better understand the disputed point, both Hooker’s defense of the fraternity’s power of judgment and Rutherford’s criticism of it, certainly, must be understood from their differing view of church government—Congregationalism for Hooker and Presbyterianism for Rutherford. Hooker’s doctrine of church discipline, for example, seems to always be tethered to a particular congregation. Consider Hooker’s following thought about why “the church” in Matthew 18:17 ought not to be understood as the elders—as Rutherford argues:

Suppose three Elders in the Church, and they all under offence have been convinced in private; one or two witnesses have been taken; and yet they will not heare; what can now be done? The Brethren, who are offended must tell the Church, i.e. the Elders, that the Elders have offended, which was done before,

¹⁵³ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 310.

and which to do is irrational, to make the guilty party a Judge in his own cause.¹⁵⁴

Hooker, here, seems to be sure that this imagined case is very useful in proving the weakness of Rutherford's interpretation of Matthew 18:17. Indeed, in Hooker's mind, it is surely problematic for the elders of a particular congregation who will become both offenders and judges to themselves.

However, Hooker misses the whole point of Rutherford, who *never* limits the meaning of the church in the text simply to the elders of a particular congregation. Instead, Rutherford tends to understand it as referring to the classical elders or the elders of a general council.¹⁵⁵ Accordingly, Rutherford points out Hooker's particularism as the very root of all problems in this imagined case: "This inconvenience follows clear from the hampering of all power of the Keyes within one single congregation."¹⁵⁶

The above example does indicate that their different interpretations of the major biblical texts have been influenced by their differing view of the church government. However, as in the case of the sacraments, the difference between them should not be exaggerated. In practice, both of them seem to be in good agreement that the church discipline must be exercised as a *joint work* of both church officers and people. For example, Hooker's doctrine of the power of judgment, as we have already discussed, would not lead to the exclusion of office-power. On the contrary, the people's power of judgement must be established by the elders' office-power.

¹⁵⁴ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 198. Hooker uses a similar case once again in the same book: "For in case the Elders offend, and are complained of, to whom must the complaint be carried? The text saith, To the Church: the Church (says this opinion) is the Elders, and therefore they must be complained unto as their own Judges." *Ibid.*, part III, 44.

¹⁵⁵ Rutherford, *The Due Right of Presbyteries*, 17-18, 309-24.

¹⁵⁶ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 309.

Likewise, Rutherford also would wish to defend the role and place of people in the Presbyterian way of church discipline. In excommunication, for example, Rutherford *never* excludes the people's role:

but we aske it the whole people of Israel were obliged by virtue of Divine Institution to be present in the gates of the City when the Judges did sit there, and the judge, as our brethren therein say; by a Divine Institution the people are to be present, and to consent.¹⁵⁷

Without people, Rutherford even asserts, Christ's order will be violated and the judgment of the elders will be meaningless:

if the people be not there to have their share of excommunication in their way, then is *Christ's* order violated, because the *Church* cannot be said to excommunicate *and bind and loose on Earth*; whereas the Elders onely, without the people, do only bind and loose, and excommunicate; and the Elders (say they) without the people are not the *Church*, nor can be called the *Church*, and so the acts of the Elders, judging, and separated from the people are null.

To be sure, both Hooker and Rutherford would not accept each man's view of the principal subject of the power of judgement—either the fraternity (Hooker) or officers (Rutherford). Still, however, the above examples may stimulate the readers to approach Rutherford-Hooker dispute from a more balanced viewpoint.

V. Conclusion

This chapter has examined the theological ground of both Hooker's and Rutherford's views of the sacrament and the church discipline focusing on the disputed points between them. The purpose of this examination is to show how the church

¹⁵⁷ Rutherford, *The Due Right of Presbyteries*, 321.

covenant plays a significant role in their debate about the church ordinances and discipline. Our detailed analysis shows that the major part of the controversy has revolved around the concept of the power of the keys. Particularly, two important questions were considered: To whom the keys are given and how the power is to be communicated within the visible church. In answering these questions, our discussion has focused on the relationship between the church covenant and the power of the keys. Hooker defends a clear and strong link between the two, while Rutherford denies it.

For Hooker, the principal subject of the keys is the “Church of Covenanting Beleevers,” or the church as *totum essentiale* united by a church covenant. The ministerial power of church officers is derived from the *causal* power of this first subject of the keys. In dispensing the sacraments, the church covenant functions as the foundation of “Church-power”—which would make the very act of dispensing the seals a “church action”—because all church powers come from “Church confederacy and combination.” Likewise, the church covenant provides a foundational principle for church discipline. Given that no man by nature can exercise the ecclesiastical power over other persons, people must freely submit themselves by mutual and free consent—particularly by making a “speciall ingagement” (church covenant).

For Rutherford, it is the “Catholick visible Church” who received the keys from Christ. Within this universal visible church, the first subject of the keys should be either the “Catholick representative Church” or the “Officers and Stewards” of the church as *totum organicum*. The power of the rulers is not derived from the congregation. Instead, it is directly committed to them by Christ—as indicated in Matthew 16 where Peter received the power of the keys as representing the “Church-rulers” rather than all

believers. Accordingly, the power of administrating the sacrament and church discipline should belong to the office-power, which has nothing to do with the church covenant. Moreover, given the sufficiency of the Covenant of Grace, all believers should have a right to attend the seals of covenant and have an obligation to perform all Christian duty—regardless they are the members of a particular congregation.¹⁵⁸

In short, the difference in the major disputed points of the Rutherford-Hooker controversy about the church ordinance and discipline are deeply rooted in their differing view of the church covenant—particularly its relationship with the power of the keys.

However, the difference between them must not be exaggerated. Many parts of criticism, as we have already discussed in this chapter, are based on the misinterpretation of what each side actually said. Sometimes, they go too far in rejecting the concepts of either the church covenant (Hooker) or the presbytery (Rutherford) simply as a human invention, which lacks any biblical support. However, this is not well-founded argument. The truth is that both men made a true effort to find the biblical ground in order to demonstrate that each man's view of the church-government is a *warranted* doctrine out of God's Word.

Also, it should be remembered that a sharp criticism about each man's view of the fraternity (Hooker) and the presbytery (Rutherford) as the subject of censure tends to

¹⁵⁸ Regarding the communication of the power of the keys within the visible church, Hooker seems to defend a bottom-up model (from congregation to officers) while Rutherford is speaking for a top-down model when he says, "The power of the Key, by order of nature, is onely in the *catholick representative Church* as in the first subject, but in order of time, this power is communicated from the head Christ to all the integrall parts of this great Body according to the capacity of ever part." It must be remembered, however, that "the power that is intrisecall in the presbytery is by derivation, or borrowed and at the second hand, from the Catholick presbytery of the whole World." Rather, Rutherford emphasizes, each congregation and presbytery receive the power from the head Christ according to the capacity of every part. Rutherford, *The Due Right of Presbyteries*, 305. See also Rutherford's argument at Westminster Assembly as recorded by John Lightfoot: "A particular congregation hath not entire power to excommunicate, but only as the instruments or deputies of the presbytery, from whence they have their power," Lightfoot, *Journal of the Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines*, 146.

be shaped by prejudice rather than sound judgment. In practice, both Hooker and Rutherford seem to agree that the public censure must be done as a *joint* agreement of both the elders and people. This is very much in line with the conclusion that both Goodwin and Nye made after they had read John Cotton's *The Keyes' of the Kingdom of Heaven* (1644). They do not hesitate to locate Cotton's view of the keys in the "very Middle way" between the Brownism and the Presbyterian government—rather than simply putting it on the opposite side of the latter.¹⁵⁹

Furthermore, in order to better understand both similarities and difference between the two, the ecclesiastical doctrines of both men should be viewed from the perspective of their own pastoral context. Our detailed reading of the dispute reveals that the application of the church ordinance and discipline seems to be more limited in Hooker's congregational church by the principle of the church covenant. Indeed, Hooker and his brethren would wish to hold fast to the principle of the limited power: "So far, as by free consent their combination goes, so farre, and no further, the power they have one over another reacheth."¹⁶⁰

In this sense, Rutherford's Presbyterian form of church government seems to be more flexible and easier to manage many practical issues of heresy, church ordinance and church discipline. Particularly, as Rutherford points out, his church may be more efficient than Hooker's in dealing with the "greater scandals" of heresy—such as "the Rise of Familists, Anabaptists, Antinomians, & c." and church discipline "between congregation and congregation, between Elder and Elder, and Rulers and Ruled of the same

¹⁵⁹ Goodwin and Nye, "To the Reader," in Cotton, *The Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven*, [1-3].

¹⁶⁰ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, 190.

congregation.”¹⁶¹ On the contrary, in the matter of the small scandals and of censure—both admission and excommunication—within a particular congregation, the power of people’s judgment in Hooker’s church may be helpful in making the whole process of getting a membership and administrating church discipline more meaningful and reliable.¹⁶²

Indeed, it is true that both Rutherford and Hooker, in their both theological and polemical works of ecclesiology, did not devote many pages to discussing the practical benefits of each man’s ecclesiastical doctrine. Still, however, our detailed study of the practical implications of the power of the keys and the church covenant may have stimulated the readers to evaluate the Rutherford-Hooker dispute from a broader perspective of each man’s ecclesiastical context—both pastoral and even national—which will be discussed in detail in the following concluding chapter.

¹⁶¹ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, 216, 238.

¹⁶² Goodwin and Nye, “To the Reader,” in Cotton, *The Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven*, [7-8]; Cotton, *The Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven*, 28-29; Mather, *A Reply to Mr. Rutherford*, 84-87.

CHAPTER 7.

THE LEGACY

What were the major issues of the Rutherford-Hooker dispute? Before addressing the major points of dispute, Thomas Hooker, in his Preface of *A Survey of the Summe of Church Discipline* (1648), enumerated the twelve points of agreements between him and Rutherford. These points, he believes, are what New England Congregationalism in its purity must hold in common with all true visible churches—including Rutherford’s Presbyterian Church. They may be summarized according to five topics as follows:

Hooker’s Summary: Twelve Points of Agreements¹

| Issues | Agreements between Rutherford and Hooker |
|--|--|
| The Nature of a Visible Church (Separation, Membership, Seals) | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The faithful congregations in England are true churches. Therefore, it is sinful to separate from them.2. Scandalous persons are not fit to be members of a visible church.3. Separation from a congregation “for want of some ordinances” is unlawful.4. Separation from a congregation because of the sin of some worshippers is unlawful.5. Infants of visible churches, born of wicked parents, being members of the churches ought to be baptized. |
| Church Officers | Number and nature of officers: Pastors, Teachers, Elders etc as appointed by Christ. |
| The Right of Congregation | People’s right to call their own officers: None must be imposed upon them by Patrons and Prelates. |
| Consociation or Synod | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The consociation of churches is not only lawful but in some cases necessary.2. Particular churches may receive assistance from such a consociation.3. Consociation has a right to give counsel and rebuke as the case requires.4. Consociation “may and should renounce the right hand of fellowship” with any particular churches which refuse its counsel. |
| Sister churches | Church communion among sister churches |

¹ Based on Hooker, *A Survey of the Summe of Church Discipline*, “Preface” (London: A. M. for John Bellamy, 1648), 11-12. I rearranged Hooker’s twelve points according to the five categories. The titles of the five categories are mine.

The purpose of Hooker, as the issue of “the nature of a visible church” strongly indicates, was to remind his readers that the Congregational church in New England was *not* a Separatist church. Thus, he emphasized that his church did not run counter to the traditional distinction of a visible and invisible church on the one hand; nor did it deny communion or fellowship with other churches on the other.

Indeed, Hooker devoted many chapters of his *Survey* to demonstrate that it was Rutherford’s *misunderstanding* that the New England Way was modeled after a Separatist ecclesiology. In reality, Hooker argued, there should not be any substantial difference between his and Rutherford’s church—particularly in the matter of the above issues:

In these and severall other particular, we fully accord with *Mr. R.* and therefore no man in reason can conceive, that I write in opposition to his book: for then I should oppose my self, and mine own judgement.²

The primary purpose of writing his *Survey*, however, was not simply to remove certain misunderstandings or prejudices about Congregationalism. Rather, he intended to explain what would constitute the biblical, theological, and logical ground of Congregational church practice: “In this inquiry, my aime only *was, and is, to lay down, and that briefly*, the grounds of our practice.”³ In doing so, he did not hesitate to debate both exegetical and ecclesiological issues with Rutherford. Hooker, again, enumerated about fifteen disputing points as follows:

² Hooker, *A Survey of the Summe of Church Discipline*, “Preface,” 12.

³ Hooker, *A Survey of the Summe of Church Discipline*, “Preface,” 13.

Hooker's Summary: Fifteen Points of Disagreements⁴

| Issues | Disagreements with Rutherford (Joint Judgment of New England Divines) |
|---|---|
| Nature of a Visible Church (Membership, Seals) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Visible Saints are the only true and meet matter, whereof a visible Church should be gathered, and confederation is the form. 2. Children of such, who are members of congregation, ought only to be baptized. |
| Church Officers (Ordination) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The church as <i>totum essenziale</i>, is, and may be, before officers. 2. Ordination is not before election. 3. Ordination is only a solemn installing of an officer into the office, unto which he was formerly called. |
| The Right of Congregation (The Keys, Election, Censure) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A "Church Congregationall" is the first subject of the keys. 2. Each congregation as <i>totum organicum</i> (completely constituted of all officers) has sufficient power to exercise the power of the keys. 3. No ordination of a minister without a people. 4. Election of the people is an 'instrumental causal vertue' to give an outward call unto an officer. 5. The consent of the people gives a causal virtue to the completing of the sentence of excommunication. 6. While the church remains a true church of Christ, it does not loose this power nor can it lawfully be taken away. |
| Consociation or Synod | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consociation of Churches should be used, as occasion does require. 2. Such consociations and synods have allowance to counsel and admonish other churches. 3. If they grow obstinate in error or sinful miscarriages, they should renounce the right hand of fellowship with them. But they have no power to excommunicate nor do their constitutions bind <i>formaliter & juridice</i>. |
| Church Government | There is no Presbyterian church in the New Testament. |

The above fifteen disputing points show that Hooker emphasized people's role in establishing a visible church and their power to exercise the keys in the matter of admission, calling of pastors, election, and excommunication. Detailed study of his debate with Rutherford has revealed that Hooker attempted to use his doctrine of church covenant as the theological ground of people's power in his Congregational church.

Did Hooker successfully carry out his proposed projects, defending the New England Way—as illustrated in the above fifteen points—against Rutherford's criticism? There has been an argument that the effect of the Rutherford-Hooker debate was insignificant because it did not change anything. Sargent Bush, for example, concludes,

⁴ Based on Hooker, *A Survey of the Summe of Church Discipline*, "Preface," 15-17.

“Most ended where they began”:

Both argued strenuously for the “truth” of their views and of their interpretation of the Scriptures on which they based their polity, and both were committed to standing firm. From the first, chances of accommodation on some middle ground were slim, since neither side, despite its protestations to the contrary, was prepared to compromise. Though there were a few defections on both sides, such as John Owen’s conversion from a Presbyterian to a Congregationalist bias and the intrepid Philip Nye’s apparent modification of his Independent position to something closer to the much-talked-of middle way, on the whole there was little of this sort of movement. Most ended where they began.⁵

Moreover, after Hooker’s death, the ideal form of Congregationalism began to decline and the early church covenant of the founding fathers was replaced by the Half-Way Covenant. It seems to be commonly agreed that the Half-Way Covenant of 1662, as a sign of declension, marked a significant shift away from Hooker’s Congregationalism.⁶

Indeed, Hooker seems to have failed, if he had really expected that the conversion of Rutherford would occur as a result of the debate. However, his primary purpose in this dispute might not be dependent on such a dramatic outcome. It should be remembered that Hooker’s “aime only was, and is, to lay down, and that briefly, the grounds of our practice.”⁷ From the viewpoint of this statement, no one could doubt that Hooker’s goal and intentions were thoroughly carried out. His *Survey* has been considered by the first systematic and definitive treatment of the whole range of Congregationalism. It made Hooker “the most important theorist of Congregationalism in its purest phase.”⁸

⁵ Sargent Bush, *The Writings of Thomas Hooker: Spiritual Adventure in Two Worlds* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980), 119.

⁶ See the following section of “Hooker’s Congregationalism after the Debate.”

⁷ Hooker, *A Survey of the Summe of Church Discipline*, “Preface,” 13.

⁸ Daniel Walker O’Brien, “Law versus Discipline: An Examination of Episcopal and Congregational Modes in Richard Hooker’s *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* and Thomas Hooker’s *A Survey of the Sum*

Also, Hooker's statement of purpose helps us assess how we should understand the legacy of his debate with Rutherford—particularly, regarding the issue of the Half-Way Covenant in New England. On the one hand, the Half-Way Covenant was really a compromise of the ideal form of Congregationalism as defined by Hooker. On the other hand, the Half-Way Covenant, as Frank C. Shuffelton rightly observes, “was in many ways in profound accordance with important characteristics of his [Hooker's] theology.”⁹ Shuffelton's interesting observation seems to indicate that we should carefully examine and define the relationship between Hooker's doctrine of church covenant and the Half-Way Covenant. Now, before we proceed to these details, I will briefly discuss the significance and the legacy of the Rutherford-Hooker dispute from the viewpoint of Rutherford's Presbyterianism.

1. Rutherford's Presbyterianism and the National Church

As for the difference between Rutherford and Hooker's brethren in the Westminster Assembly, John Marshall says,

Both sides were respectful of each other's piety and learning. Both were concerned to maintain the catholicity of the church; but they differed on the nature of that catholicity. For Independents, it was a catholicity of doctrine and influence only; for the Presbyterian Rutherford, it was a catholicity of government as well.¹⁰

For Rutherford, this “catholicity of government” must be established in the form of a

of Church Discipline,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 1981), 233-236, 304.

⁹ Frank C. Shuffelton, *Thomas Hooker 1586-1647* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 286.

¹⁰ John L. Marshall, “Natural Law and the Covenant: The Place of Natural Law in the Covenantal Framework of Samuel Rutherford's *Lex, Rex*,” (Ph.D. diss., Westminster Theological Seminary, 1995), 226.

Presbyterian *national* church. Indeed, his debate with Hooker was influenced by his genuine interest in a national church.¹¹ Leonard Bacon even identifies his concept of a national church with a fundamental issue in the dispute:

The question, at bottom, was between a national church, on the one hand, divided into territorial parishes, and administered in the parish way, and, on the other hand, local churches gathered out of the world by voluntary association, each church electing its own officers and by their ministry managing its own affairs.¹²

Rutherford's defense of "the Lawfulness of a National Covenant" and of a national church must be understood in the larger historical context of the Scottish struggle against the Roman Catholicism and Episcopacy. In dealing with Hooker's argument that it would not be lawful to take "a national oath" under the New Testament period, Rutherford attempted to justify the legitimacy of a national covenant in the context of religious persecution in Scotland:

It[']s my prayer to God that our Brethren in New England, be not compelled to quit Christian Religion, as we in Scotland were thrall'd to embrace popery by the domineering power of the Prelates. And shall it be Judaisme for Protestant Nations to swear the like ["to take a covenant"], if the man of sin should blow the trumpet, and raise all the Catholick Romans in Christendom, against the Lamb and his followers?¹³

¹¹ Particularly, Rutherford's criticism of Hooker's view of church membership seems to be rooted in his consistent and deep interest in the national church and national covenant. As for Hooker's differing view of a national church, see chapter 3, section of "Infant Baptism and National Church."

¹² Leonard Bacon, "Reaction of New England on English Puritanism, in the Seventeenth Century: Article I," *New Englander*, vol.37 (New Haven: W. L. Kingsley, Proprietor and Publisher, 1878), 452. Also, see his Article III, 802 for the discussion about the fundamental difference between the ecclesiastical Nationalism of Scotland and the Congregationalism of the New England Way.

¹³ Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey of that Summe of Church-Discipline* (London, 1658), 480. As for Rutherford's defense of the lawfulness of a national church see his *A Survey of the Survey*, 474-485. He discusses the scriptural, logical and contextual grounds of the national church: 1. Scriptural – Jewish national church model and God's covenant given to Abraham and his seeds ("His people"); 2. Logical – "Suppose," Rutherford asks, "all *England* were visible Saints, and all moulded in single Independent congregations, it were unlawful for all the members to swear their Church-covenant: Why? *all National Churches are abrogate*, saith Mr. H." In addition, the national profession or oath should be a good evidence for the lawful existence of a national church under the New Testament period; 3. Historical context – The

Given the importance of the issue of a national church for Rutherford, the significance of his debate with Hooker and the Independents also has been appreciated and recognized by its contribution to the establishment of Presbyterianism as a national church polity of both Scotland and England. William M. Campbell, for example, devotes a whole chapter in his *The Triumph of Presbyterianism* (1958) to “Samuel Rutherford,” who “succeeded in London in creating a favourable opinion to the Presbyterian cause.” As a result, Campbell continues, Rutherford contributed to formulating the Westminster standards as “a triumph of Scottish ecclesiastical propaganda.”¹⁴

The triumph of Rutherford’s Presbyterianism in the 1640s, however, proved to be short-lived. By the time when Rutherford wrote *A Survey of the Survey* (1658), he became aware of the failure of the ecclesiastical revolution that he had helped to launch. According to John Coffey and Kingsley G. Rendell, Rutherford, in his later years, showed at least three important signs of being frustrated with the powerlessness of his situation.¹⁵

First, Coffey detected “a double standard” in Rutherford’s dealing with the Resolutioner synods in Scotland on the one hand, and Hooker’s Congregationalism in New England on the other: While criticizing Hooker for denying the higher power of synods over the particular congregations, Rutherford, in his Preface of *A Survey of the Survey* (1658), declared that the inferior judicature should submit the superior counsels

Solemn League and Covenant supports the cause of a national church. Quote is from pages 479 and 480.

¹⁴ William M. Campbell, *The Triumph of Presbyterianism* (Edinburgh: St. Andrew Press, 1958), 73-93. Quote is from pages 92 and 93.

¹⁵ Particularly see the last two chapters and conclusion in Coffey, *Politics, Religion and British Revolutions*, 188-258; Kingsley G. Rendell, *Samuel Rutherford: A New Biography of the man & His Ministry* (Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus Publication, 2003), 105-140.

only insofar as the latter must “speak and command according to the Law and the Testimony, Isa.3.20. Otherwise, there is no light in them. And so it is popish.”¹⁶ It is interesting to note that Rutherford’s statement seems to be perfectly in line with Hooker argument that a particular church should obey the counsels of the synod, considering them as “authoritative Councell,” insofar as they have the “Divine Authority of the Scripture”—or they are “evidently expressed, or infallibly collected out of the Word.”¹⁷ This may account for the reason why Coffey sees a problem of inconsistency between the Preface and the body of Rutherford’s *A Survey of the Survey* (1658).¹⁸

Second, Rutherford, who once was a great apologist, a sharp debater, and a champion of Presbyterianism in the 1640s, admitted, at the very beginning of his *A Survey of the Survey*, another polemical work, that he had become disillusioned with the endless debates, disputes, and pamphlet war. Thus, he says,

For when the head is filled with topicks, and none of the flaming of Christs love in the heart, how dry are all disputes? For too often, fervor of dispute in the head weakens love in the heart. And what can our Paper-industry adde to the spotless truth of our *Lord Jesus*?¹⁹

Compare the Preface of *A Survey of the Survey* (1658) with that of *The Due Right of Presbyteries* (1644), where a reader could find the same author’s confidence in the power of the debate, which would result in a “new living truth”:

¹⁶ See the Preface of Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, A5. Because Rutherford, in his Preface of *A Survey of the Survey*, criticized the Resolutioners harshly and their synods, he was required to revise it by the members of a Presbytery met on May 25, 1658 in Edinburgh. Rendell, *Samuel Rutherford*, 123, 173 n64.

¹⁷ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, part IV, 3-5. For detailed discussion about this issue, see chapter 6, section “The Power of the Keys.”

¹⁸ Coffey, *Politics, Religion and British Revolutions*, 222-223; Rendell, *Samuel Rutherford*, 123.

¹⁹ See the Preface of Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, A2.

Yet I shall heartily desire that men herein observe the art of deep providence, for the Creator comandeth darknes[s] to bring forth her birth of light, and God doth so over-aw, with a wise super-dominion, mens errors, that contrary to natures way, from collision of opinions, resulteth truth; and disputes, as stricken flint, cast fire for light, God raising out of the dust and ashes of errors a new living truth.²⁰

By 1658, however, Rutherford seems to have lost such confidence in the truth-producing power of the debate. Moreover, Rutherford seemed to be disillusioned with the Protesters as well as the Resolutioners due to many divisions even among themselves.²¹

Finally, by the time of the Restoration in 1660, Rutherford showed a sign of regret. Quoting Rutherford's own last words on his deathbed, Coffey describes the final moment of his life as follows:

After trumpeting the imminent rule of King Jesus in the 1640s, Rutherford was sidelined in the 1650s, ignored by his former allies and incapable of preserving ideological purity even in his own theological college. Conscious of the defeat of many of his greatest ambitions, he began to show signs of regret. ... On his deathbed, as the acts of the Covenanters were being swept away by the Restoration parliament, Rutherford admitted that his party had mistakenly tried to set up "a state opposite a state," when "We might have driven gently, as our Master Christ, who loves not to overdrive; but carries the lambs in his Bosom."²²

Such regret, however, did not necessarily signal a sense of wrongdoing. On the contrary, as Rendell rightly observes, Rutherford, in his letter to James Guthrie written on February 15, 1661, revealed his heart ready for martyrdom for the cause of the Covenanters: "He would have welcomed such, and indeed would have died the death of a

²⁰ See the Preface of Rutherford, *The Due Right of Presbyteries or A Peaceable Plea for the Government of the Church of Scotland* (London, 1644), A3-A4.

²¹ Rendell, *Samuel Rutherford*, 123, 126.

²² Coffey, *Politics, Religion and British Revolutions*, 257. Coffey quotes from Rutherford's *A testimony left by Mr Rutherford to the Work of Reformation, in Britain and Ireland, before his death, with some of his last words* (Glasgow: James and William Duncans, 1719), 6-7.

martyr if ill health had not prevented his appearance in the winter of 1660.”²³ Rutherford also wrote another letter to Robert Campbell—shortly before Rutherford died on March 20, 1661—where he showed his steadfastness to protest against prelacy and popery:

For me, I am now near to eternity... I think it my last duty to enter a protestation in heaven, before the righteous Judge, against the practical and legal breach of Covenant, and all oaths imposed on the consciences of the Lord’s people, and all popish, superstitious, and idolatrous mandates of men. Know that the overthrow of the sworn Reformation, the introducing of Popery and the mystery of iniquity, is now set on foot in the three kingdoms; and whosoever would keep their garments clean are under that command, “Touch not, taste not, handle not.” The Lord calleth you, dear brother, to be still “stedfast, unmoveable, and abounding in the work of the Lord.”²⁴

In short, on the one hand, Rutherford himself would agree that the significance of the Rutherford-Hooker dispute lies in its impact beyond the confines of academia: It must have relevance to the real world where he and the Covenanters rose to fight for the cause of Reformed Presbyterianism. On the other hand, Rutherford may also wish to make sure that our sense of powerlessness in the face of a failure, divisions, and persecutions, must not lead to despair.²⁵ Rather, the sorrow and disappointment that the Covenanters might

²³ Rutherford, *Letters of Samuel Rutherford*, ed. A.A. Bonar (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant Anderson & Ferrier, 1891), 701-702; Rendell, *Samuel Rutherford*, 127. James Guthrie, a few months after this letter was written, was hanged at the cross of Edinburgh on June 1, 1661.

²⁴ Rutherford, *Letters of Samuel Rutherford*, 703.

²⁵ On his Restoration in 1660, Charles II renounced the Covenant and reintroduced Episcopacy. Many of the original signatories to the Covenant left the Church and began to worship in the fields and moors at meetings known as Conventicles. They were hunted down by government troopers and ruthlessly slaughtered. An estimated 18,000 were killed between 1661 and 1685 and the period between 1680-85 was known as the “Killing Time.” In 1688, William and Mary came to the throne and Presbyterianism was re-established. However, even after the triumph of 1688 and the restoration of Presbyterianism in 1690, the Church of Scotland continued to struggle with a number of issues such as toleration, Church-State relationship, natural theology, free grace and Christian legalism. Yohan Su argues that under the political oppression of Queen Anne and her Parliament, the Scottish Presbyterianism began to realize the fact that “their only remaining safeguard was the purity of doctrine.” Yohahn Su, “The Contribution of Scottish Covenant Thought to the Discussions of the Westminster Assembly (1643-1648) and Its Continuing Significance to the Marrow Controversy (1717-1723),” (Ph.D. diss., University of Glamorgan, 1993), 270-

have felt, Rutherford believes, must rouse themselves from their own powerlessness and look for Jesus as the ultimate source of hope and salvation. Accordingly, Rutherford, immediately after admitting his disillusionment with the endless cycle of disputes, concludes with a confession of his hope and faith in Christ and Jehovah:

O that Opinions were down, and the *Gospel* up; and Sides and Parties might fall, and *Christ* stand; and that all Names, Sects and Ways were low, and the *Lord alone exalted!* And that we could both dispute for *Jehovah*, and in the same worship *Jehovah!*²⁶

2. Hooker's Congregationalism after the Debate

In 1662, four years after Rutherford's *A Survey of the Survey* (1658) was published, the New England synod confirmed a principle, which was set forth by the Assembly of Elders met in Boston, June 4, 1657. This principle became known as the "Half-Way Covenant,"²⁷ which would continue to reshape the New England Way over the next several decades. The majority of the synod agreed with a proposition:

Church-members who were admitted in minority, understanding the doctrine of faith, and publicly professing their assent thereto: not scandalous in life, and solemnly owning the covenant before the church, wherein they give up themselves and children to the Lord, and subject themselves to the government of Christ in the church, *their children are to be baptized.*²⁸

95. Quote is from page 295.

²⁶ See the Preface of Rutherford, *A Survey of the Survey*, A2.

²⁷ According to Robert G. Pope, the term "half-way covenant" originated in the 1760s when the followers of Jonathan Edwards renewed the controversy over the extended baptism (to the children of the non-confederated members). The term did not appear after so-called Half-Way Synod of 1662 until Joseph Bellamy's *The Half-Way Covenant: A Dialogue* (New Haven: Thomas and Samuel Green, 1769). Robert G. Pope, *The Half-Way Covenant: Church Membership in Puritan New England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 8, n2.

²⁸ *Propositions Concerning the Subject of Baptism and Consociation of Churches* (Cambridge, Mass.: S.G. [i.e., Samuel Green] for Hezekiah Usher, 1662), "Proposition 5th" 19. [Emphasis added]

The purpose of this proposition was to solve the problem of infant baptism for the third generation by allowing the second generation non-communicants—who had received infant baptism “by means of his or her immediate Parent’s Covenant” but could not attend the Lord’s Supper because they did not “come to profess their Faith and Repentance, and to lay hold of the Covenant of their parents before the Church”—to have their own children baptized.²⁹ A minority of dissenting ministers such as Charles Chauncy, John Davenport and Increase Mather opposed the conclusion of the Synod and initiated a controversy over the legitimacy of the Half-Way Covenant, which remained unresolved until the Great Awakening.³⁰

Like those dissenting ministers, Perry Miller seemed to understand the Half-Way

²⁹ See “The Preface” in *Propositions Concerning the Subject of Baptism*; Richard Mather, *A Disputation Concerning Church-Members and Their Children in Answer to XXI Questions* (London: J. Hayes for Samuel Thomson, 1659), 20.

³⁰ The pamphlet war between the opponents and the defendants of the Half-Way Covenant is well documented by *Propositions Concerning the Subject of Baptism and Consociation of Churches* (1662); John Allin, *Animadversions upon the Antisynodalia Americana* (Cambridge, Mass.: S.G. and M.J. [i.e., Samuel Green and Marmaduke Johnson] for Hezekiah Usher of Boston, 1664), which is a reply to Charles Chauncy’s *Anti-Synodalia Scripta Americana* (London: n.p., 1662); Richard Mather and Jonathan Mitchell, *A Defence of the Answer and Arguments of the Synod met at Boston in the year 1662* (Cambridge, Mass.: S. Green and M. Johnson for Hezekiah Usher of Boston, 1664), which is a reply to both John Davenport, *Another Essay for Investigation of the Truth* (Cambridge, Mass.: Samuel Green and Marmaduke Johnson, 1663)—with Increase Mather’s Preface and Nicholas Street’s Appendix. In the midst of the dispute, Increase Mather changed his view and defended the legitimacy of the Half-Way Covenant according to the principles of the founding fathers of New England. See Increase Mather’s later works, *The First Principles of New-England, Concerning the Subject of Baptisme & Communion of Churches* (Cambridge, Mass.: Samuel Green, 1675); idem, *A Discourse Concerning the Subject of Baptisme* (Cambridge, Mass.: Samuel Green, 1675). As for the bibliographical information about the later development of the controversy in the eighteenth century, see Williston Walker, *The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1893), 240-244. Later, the controversy became the conflict between the “large Congregationalism” and the “strict Congregationalism.” Some radicals among the large Congregationalists—Joseph Haynes, for example—“went even beyond the Synodists in ‘large Congregationalism’ (as it was afterwards termed) by admitting not only the children of half-way covenanting parents, but grand-children in right of covenanting grandparents, adopted children, servants, and slaves, in right of their adoptants and masters.” Sometimes, they were called “Presbyterians” by their opponents. Thomas Lechford, *Plain Dealing; or News from New England* (Boston: J. K. Wiggin & W. M. Parsons Lunt, 1867), 48; Henry M. Dexter, *The Congregationalism of the Last Three Hundred Years* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1880), 474, 508; W. Walker, *History of the First Church in Hartford, 1633-1883*, 209; Pope, *The Half-Way Covenant*, 86.

Covenant as a sign of “declension” in the second and third generation of New England Congregationalism. Darrett B. Rutman also identifies it as a clear indication of “a steady disintegration of the ideal of the founders, a slow collapse of that bridge which the Winthrops and Cottons were attempting to build between this world and the next.”³¹

However, there is another group of scholars such as Edmund Morgan, Robert G. Pope, Stephen Foster, and James F. Cooper who have attempted to find an alternative explanation for the Half-Way Covenant: While Morgan sees it as a sign of “the rise of an extraordinary religious scrupulosity,” both Pope and Foster consider it as a “necessary adjustment” to changing circumstances—particularly a shifting demographic pattern; Cooper approaches the issue from a perspective of “lay-clerical *interchange*,” what he called “Congregationalism’s driving dynamic.” He describes the Half-Way Covenant as “a signal test for the lay right of dissent.”³²

Criticizing a generational hypothesis that the remaining conservative “fathers” opposed the Half-Way Covenant while “the rising generation” supported it, these scholars tend to emphasize the fact that most Puritan divines of the older generation—including John Cotton, Richard Mather, and “almost the entire Cambridge Synod”—actually

³¹ Perry Miller, in his *The New England Mind: From Colony to Province* (London & Cambridge: The Belknap Press, 1953), put chapter 7 “Half-Way Measures” under the title of “Book I: Declension.” Also, see his article, “The Half-Way Covenant,” *The New England Quarterly*, 6:4 (1933): 676-715; Darrett B. Rutman, “God’s Bridge Falling Down: ‘Another Approach’ to New England Puritanism Assayed,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 19:3 (1962): 410, 416, 418, 421.

³² Edmund Morgan, “New England Puritanism: Another Approach,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 18:2(1961): 236-242. Those who received the half-way membership, Morgan argues, “evidently had scruples against accepting the privileges which the more easygoing full members held out to them.” Quote is from page 241; Robert G. Pope, *The Half-Way Covenant*, 262. After the synod of 1662, Pope argues, there followed a time of religious revival and increase in church membership instead of a time of decline; Stephen Foster, *The Long Argument: English Puritanism and the Shaping of New England Culture, 1570-1700* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991); James F. Cooper Jr., *Tenacious of Their Liberties: The Congregationalists in Colonial Massachusetts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). Particularly see chapter 5, 88-114. Quote is from page 7 and 92.

favored the principles of this half-way measure.³³ Accordingly, many second generation ministers, as Cooper rightly observes, endeavored to persuade their congregation—using the very principles of the New England Way as articulated by its founding fathers—to accept the Half-Way Covenant, while the laity tended to be skeptical.³⁴

Cooper’s observation and argument can be supported by many primary sources—particularly, the works of John Allin, Jonathan Mitchell and Increase Mather who changed his view and became a defender of the Half-Way Covenant.³⁵ These writers seemed to be convinced that their defense of the Half-Way Covenant could be established by the principles of John Cotton, Richard Mather, Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye, Thomas Shepard and others. Indeed, Cotton, for example, attempted to separate the issue of infant baptism from the Lord’s Supper and argues, “Though they be not fit to make such profession of visible faith, as to admit them to the Lords Table, yet they may make profession full enough to receive them to Baptisme, or to the same estate *Ishmael* stood in after Circumcision.”³⁶ On December 16, 1634, Cotton wrote to the church of Dorchester:

The Case of Conscience which you propounded to our Consideration (to wit whether a Grand Father being a member of a Christian Church might claim Baptism to his Grandchild whose next parents be not received into Church-Covenant) has been deliberately treated of in our church Assembled together

³³ Such a “generational hypothesis,” Cooper argues, has been advanced by Perry Miller, Henry M. Dexter, Ross Beales and others. Cooper particularly criticizes Miller’s generalization and argues, “Miller... ignores the fact that Wilson, Norton, Richard Mather, and almost the entire Cambridge Synod favored the measure... [while] Increase Mather and Jonathan Russell, both second-generation ministers, were strong opponents of the innovation.” See Cooper, *Tenacious of Their Liberties*, 97, 242 note 44, 243 note 54. Dexter, *The Congregationalism of the Last Three Hundred Years*; Ross Beales, “The Half-Way Covenant and Religious Scrupulosity: The First Church of Dorchester, Massachusetts as a Test Case,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 31 (1974):465-480.

³⁴ Cooper, *Tenacious of Their Liberties*, 89-92.

³⁵ See footnote 30 in this chapter.

³⁶ Increase Mather, *The First Principles of New-England*, 6.

publicly in the name of Christ. And *upon due and serious discourse about the point it seemed good to us all with one accord*, and agreeable (as we believe) to the Word of the Lord, that the Grand Father may lawfully claim that privilege to his Grand Child in such a Case.³⁷

This formal letter does indicate that Cotton and *most* divines in Boston (“good to us all with one accord”) would support the principle of the half-way measure.

What, then, about Thomas Hooker? Would he agree with the Half-Way Covenant?

It is interesting to note that Hooker’s *Survey* tended to be an important source for both the defenders and the opponents of the Half-Way Covenant. For example, on February 22, 1670, Rev. Whiting and thirty one members, who opposed the Half-Way Covenant, separated themselves from the Hartford Church and formed their own church according to “the Congregational Way... as formerly settled, professed and practiced, under the guidance of the first leaders of this Church of Hartford.” They specified the main principles of their church. The first principle was taken from Hooker’s statement: “That visible saints are the only fit matter, and confederation the form, of a visible church.”³⁸ Likewise, John Davenport also believed that Hooker would take sides with him if he would alive.³⁹ Given Hooker’s another statement “children of Non-confederates have no right,”⁴⁰ Williston Walker argues, “Hooker is far from favoring what was afterwards to be known as the Half-Way Covenant position.”⁴¹

³⁷ Increase Mather, *The First Principles of New-England*, 2.

³⁸ George L. Walker, *History of the First Church in Hartford, 1633-1883* (Hartford: Brown & Gross, 1884), 205-206. The first principle is taken from Hooker’s *Survey*, “Preface,” 15.

³⁹ John Davenport to John Winthrop Jr. June 14, 1666, in Isabel MacBeath Calder, ed. *The Letters of John Davenport: Puritan Divine* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937), 264.

⁴⁰ Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, part III, 24. See chapter 2 of part III, 8-33.

⁴¹ Walker, *The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism*, 145, 169. George L. Walker also would agree with W. Walker, *History of the First Church in Hartford, 1633-1883*, 188, footnote 15.

Walker's argument, however, needs to be carefully qualified or accepted with some reservations because of two facts: First, Walker's conclusion is established upon Hooker's *Survey*, part 3, chapter 2: "Of the Dispensation of the Sacraments," where Hooker also confessed his "secret desire and inclination" to support the half-way measure.⁴² Only after a good deal of reflection and hesitation, he could come to such a conviction that the non-confederate members should not be allowed to entitle their children to the seal of Baptism.⁴³ Second, many advocates of the Half-Way Covenant actually used Hooker and some parts of his *Survey* in defending its legitimacy. Increase Mather, for example, argues:

Now that in Mr. *Hookers Judgement*, the Children concerning whom the Question is, have a continued standing, and membership in the visible Church (upon which hinge the Controversy about the *Enlargement* of the *Subject of Baptism* turns) is evident from a passage in his most Judicious and *accurate Survey of Church Discipline*, in which Book *pag. 48*. are these words, in some Cases (saith Mr. Hooker) "an Implicit Covenant, may be fully Sufficient, as Suppose a whole Congregation should consist of such, who were Children unto the Parents now deceased, who were Confederate, their children were true members, according to the Rules of the Gospel by professing of their Fathers Covenant, though they should not make any *personal* and *vocal Expression* of their *Engagement*, as the Fathers did."⁴⁴

⁴² Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, part III, 12. The conclusion of both Williston Walker and George Walker are based upon the same section of Hooker's *Survey*, part III, 12.

⁴³ It may be worth to read Hooker's thought on this problem: "But after all the stones I have turned, and the thoughts that I have spent in this kinde, there be some reasons which yet arrest my understanding, and causeth me yet to make a defence for this cause, and the main pillar principle which fortifies the judgement against all approaching assaults, is the nature and truth of *Church-covenant*, in which I must professe freely I am yet more confirmed, as I have been constained to take it into more serious consideration; and the best of all those Arguments that men (of such eminency, and worth, and learning, that my heart doth highly reverence, according to their righteous desert) have raised to make a breach upon that part of the Discipline, which like braces in the building, binds all the parts together, have rather strenghtned then stirred my judgement." Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, part III, 12.

⁴⁴ Increase Mather's later works, *The First Principles of New-England*, 8. Mather quotes Hooker's *Survey*, part I, p.48, where Hooker discusses the distinction between the implicit and the explicit covenant.

From Hooker's statement that if such children, in above case, may be called "true members" according to "an Implicit Covenant," Increase Mather proceeds to argue, "it must needs be that in his [Mr. Hooker] Judgement, the *Children* in Question [may also] have right to Baptisme."⁴⁵

While Increase Mather uses Hooker's distinction of the implicit and explicit covenant, both John Allin and Jonathan Mitchell attempts to use his distinction of the outward and inward covenant.⁴⁶ Given Hooker's principle that "the Interest in the Outward Covenant that giveth right to Outward Priviledges of the Church," and that this outward Covenant that God made with Parents and their seed, is one and "the same for the kind of it," both Allin and Mitchell believe that "the infant of visible Churches"—insofar as their parents, at least, are *externally* in the covenant of the Church through their own infant baptism—"ought to be baptized."⁴⁷

Indeed, most defenders of the Half-Way Covenant agreed that the church covenant should belong to the *external* or *outward* dispensation of the Covenant of Grace. Richard Mather, for example, argues, "It is one thing to be in the covenant and in the church in respect of external state, and another thing to enjoy all the spiritual and eternal

⁴⁵ Increase Mather, *The First Principles of New-England*, 8.

⁴⁶ Allin, *Animadversions upon the Antisynodalia Americana*, 3-4. Mitchell's Preface to *Propositions Concerning the Subject of Baptism and Consociation of Churches*, 8. Both Allin and Mitchell quote Hooker's statement in his *Survey*, part III, 11: "It is not the Question, Whether wicked Members, while they are tolerated sinfully in the Church, they and their children may partake of Priviledges? for this is beyond question: nor do I know, or ever heard it denied by any of ours."

⁴⁷ Here Allin is quoting from Hooker's *Survey*, "Preface," 12; also see part III, 8-33. Quote is from page 25; Allin, *Animadversions upon the Antisynodalia Americana*, 3-4, 18-19, 22; See Mitchell's Preface to *Propositions Concerning the Subject of Baptism and Consociation of Churches*; Richard Mather also makes a similar point: "The membership of the child is the same in kind with, and not inferior to the membership of the Parent... The child is baptized by virtue of his own membership, and not by virtue of his Parents membership." Richard Mather, *A Disputation Concerning Church-Members and Their Children in Answer to XXI Questions*, 24.

benefits of such a relation.”⁴⁸ Also, they agreed that infant baptism, as an outward seal of the covenant, should be extended to the children of all baptized *members* of a visible church regardless their status in the “Inward, Spiritual, and Saving” covenantal relationship with God.⁴⁹ From their viewpoints, the opponents of the Half-Way Covenant tended to identify the church covenant with the inward covenant and, accordingly, might fall into the error of the Anti-pedobaptists. Thus, John Allin argues,

We see evidently, that the Principles of our Dissenting Brethren give great Advantages to the Antipoedobaptists, which if we be silent, will tend much to their Encouragement and Encrease, to the Hazard of our Churches.⁵⁰

As for Hooker, on the one hand, they had to admit that Hooker, in practice, would not allow the children of non-confederate members to be baptized. On the other hand, however, they seemed to be convinced that many principles of Hooker’s church covenant—such as his concept of the visible and invisible church, distinction of the outward and inward covenant, the doctrine of church covenant as an outward covenant, and another distinction of the implicit and explicit covenant—could be quite compatible with the principles of the Half-Way Covenant.

Like those advocates of the Half-Way Covenant, Miller also identifies such a distinction between the inward and outward covenant as a foundational principle for the

⁴⁸ Richard Mather & Mitchell, *A Defence of the Answer and Arguments of the Synod*, 33.

⁴⁹ *Propositions Concerning the Subject of Baptism and Consociation of Churches*, 5-6, 10-11, 15, 23-24, 26; Allin, *Animadversions upon the Antisynodalia Americana*, 3-4, 18-19, 22. Given that Abram’s covenant is a church covenant, by which God made his visible church, the defenders of the Half-Way Covenant would argue, the seals of the external covenant (either circumcision or infant baptism) must be extended to the all visible members and their seed. See, *Propositions Concerning the Subject of Baptism and Consociation of Churches*, 10-11, 18-19. Quote is from page 19.

⁵⁰ See Allin’s Preface, Article #3, *Animadversions upon the Antisynodalia Americana*.

Half-Way Covenant:

A metaphysical distinction between the inward and outward covenant was fundamental to the advocates' argument; their solution demanded that the church covenant be no longer viewed as a direct manifestation of spiritual conversion, but that it be considered entirely on a par with the national covenant or the covenant of hypocrites.⁵¹

This passage is very significant in showing why Miller has to understand the Half-Way Covenant as a telling sign of declension.

First, Miller seems to believe that the identification of church covenant with the outward covenant should belong to a later development, which were introduced—or, at least, emphasized—by the advocates of the Half-Way Covenant. Miller, however, ignores the fact that most founding fathers of the New England Way not only made such an inward and outward distinction but also actually argued that the church covenant should belong to the outward dispensation of the Covenant of Grace. Detailed study of the Rutherford-Hooker dispute has revealed that the membership of a visible church, for Hooker, should be based upon the church covenant which is outward and requiring federal holiness only.

Second, Miller tends to describe the Half-Way Covenant as a sign of a *drastic* separation between the Covenant of Grace and the church covenant:

But in a more important sense, the decision [the Half-Way Covenant] meant not half a way but a double way: the external and internal covenant, the covenant of the church and the Covenant of Grace, being now so drastically separated, were separately hypostatized.⁵²

⁵¹ Miller, *The New England Mind: From Colony to Province*, 98.

⁵² Miller, *The New England Mind: From Colony to Province*, 96.

This statement indicates that the founding fathers of New England Congregationalism, Miller believes, attempted to identify the church covenant with the Covenant of Grace, which is not true. In the formation and shaping of the New England Way from the beginning, most founders seemed to have a clear view of the relationship between the church covenant and the Covenant of Grace—as distinct but not separated. For example, Hooker, on the one hand, attempted to use the biblical doctrine of the Covenant of Grace as the theological basis of his church covenant. On the other hand, in refuting Rutherford’s claim that Hooker associates the church covenant with the invisible Covenant of Grace, he carefully made a clear distinction between the two covenants: the former, like other outward seals of the covenant, should belong to a visible church or the outward covenant only, while the latter belongs to an invisible and inward covenant.⁵³

Finally, Miller seems to be convinced that the early form of New England Congregationalism must not be compatible with the principle of national church. On the contrary, Miller believes that the advocates of the Half-Way Covenant “had in fact come to regard each particular church, with its external administration, as a nation.”⁵⁴ Indeed, as our detailed examination of the Rutherford-Hooker dispute has shown, Hooker and other architects of the New England Way would strongly oppose Rutherford’s idea of a national church.

At this point, Miller’s above statement suggests that we may take another approach to both Rutherford’s and Hooker’s differing views of a national church: It should be remembered that the key argument of the defenders of the Half-Way Covenant

⁵³ For detailed discussion see chapter 3.

⁵⁴ Miller, *The New England Mind: From Colony to Province*, 104.

was that it was rooted in the principles of the old Congregationalism of Cotton, Hooker, Richard Mather and others. Now, if it is true that those fathers' doctrine of the church covenant did provide some fundamental principles for the Half-Way Covenant of the next generation, one may proceed to argue that there may exist, at least, some significant elements that both Hooker and Rutherford could have shared—such as the distinctions between visible and invisible church; outward and inward covenant; the sole headship of Christ, the legitimacy of infant baptism, etc—even in the issue of a national church. Again, the apparent gap between Hooker and Rutherford seems to be closer than it might first appear.

In sum, Hooker and his old friends in New England may agree with Miller that the Congregational church of the second and third generation had gradually declined from their fathers' early zeal for establishing a model church. Nevertheless, they would insist that this declension is not from what Miller described as the initial goal of the New England Way: “a system founded on the courageous but ill-considered conviction that the way-ward, subjective mysteries of regeneration could be institutionalized in an ecclesiastical system.”⁵⁵

3. Concluding Remarks

At the beginning of the Introduction (chapter I) of this dissertation, I argued that both Rutherford's and Hooker's differing views of the church covenant were deeply rooted in each man's covenant theology: While the former emphasized the unchanging substance of the Covenant of Grace, which is based on the *atemporal* Covenant of Redemption, the latter tended to stress the dispensational administration of the biblical

⁵⁵ Miller, “The Half-Way Covenant,” 714.

covenant, by which he attempted to justify his ecclesiastical doctrine of the church covenant. Throughout the long debate between Hooker and Rutherford, both men have also shown that their different use of the biblical covenant—either for a national covenant (Rutherford) or for a church covenant (Hooker)—was influenced by the religio-political context of Scotland, England and New England.

In this concluding chapter, a brief survey of the religio-political contexts in Scotland and New England during and after the debate has revealed that both Rutherford's Presbyterianism and Hooker's Congregationalism had to face great difficulties. In their effort to apply the biblical covenant to their real world, Rutherford, for example, found himself fighting against Erastians, Independents, Episcopalians, many sectarians, Resolutioners and the more dangerous threats—such as divisions, corruption, betrayal, and, finally, breaking the covenant with God. In doing so, as we already discussed, Rutherford inevitably faced frustration when he reached his limits. Again, it should be noted that Rutherford's frustration did not lead to despair. In the midst of humanity's "practical breach of covenant," Rutherford still chose to praise God focusing on the everlasting and graceful covenant of Christ: "For certain it is that Christ will reign, the Father's King in Mount Zion, and His sworn covenant will not be buried."⁵⁶

While Rutherford has sought refuge in God's eternal Covenant of Grace in the midst of human failure,⁵⁷ Hooker appears to have found a place of hope in the very process of finding out what their truth is. Hooker considers both hope and uncertainty or

⁵⁶ Rutherford, *Letters of Samuel Rutherford*, 701.

⁵⁷ In 1655 and 1659 Rutherford published two works on God's grace, *The Covenant of Life Opened* and *Influences of the Life of Grace* respectively. It is interesting to read Rendell's explanation about the motivation of Rutherford to write these works: "Both belong to his closing years and were consequently penned in the context of the Protestor controversy. Rutherford appears to have sought refuge from its rancor by turning his attention to a consideration of the grace of God." Rendell, *Samuel Rutherford*, 78.

errors as inherent in the process itself. Thus, Hooker, in his reply to Rutherford, could confess human weakness as well as his confidence in the New England Way as follows:

The Sum is, we doubt not what we practice, but its beyond all doubt, that all men are liars, and we are in the number of those poor feeble men, either we do, or may err, though we do not know it, what we have learned, we do profess, and yet professe still to live, that we may learn. . . . It's the perfection of a man, amidst these many weaknesses, we are surrounded withal, by many changes to come to perfection. It's the honour and conquest of a man truly wise to be conquered by the truth.⁵⁸

Hooker's statement is well in line with his view of the ever-changing reality of God's covenantal dispensation in his redemptive history. Before he wrote the above statement, Hooker briefly sketched the history of Christendom from Christ's Ascension up to his days. In doing so, he attempted to justify the introduction of the church covenant, arguing that congregational polity was a divinely appointed *duty* in the climax of Christian history.⁵⁹ For Hooker, the church covenant as both the theological and practical basis of the congregational polity must belong to the final stage in God's dispensation of the covenants.

However, as Hooker admitted, it did not necessarily follow that Hooker and his brethren finally established a perfect form of church government. After all, as Hooker himself agrees, all *outward* forms may change as he and all other "poor feeble men" in New England continue to work out the details through trial and error in the wilderness of the New World.

⁵⁸ Hooker, *A Survey of the Summe of Church Discipline*, "Preface," 11-12.

⁵⁹ See Hooker, *A Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline*, "Preface," 1-11.

THESES

A. Theses Related to Dissertation

1. *The Church Covenant* - The church covenant plays a significant role in the Rutherford-Hooker dispute over church government. For Thomas Hooker, it constitutes the theological and logical foundation of the visible church. It is also a key doctrine for his systematic defense of the New England Way—particularly in matters of the nature of a visible church, church membership, the power of the keys, sacraments, and church discipline. Samuel Rutherford denies the legitimacy of the church covenant.
2. *The Scripture* – In addition to differences in social and ecclesial context, the Rutherford-Hooker debate rested in large part on variant interpretations of the biblical text. Rutherford argues that Hooker’s church covenant is a human invention and his Congregational church is a *new* church, which is unknown to both Scripture and tradition. Hooker argues that the church covenant is warranted by God’s Word. Moreover, the benefits of the church covenant by themselves are the fulfillment of God’s promise as prophesied by Habakkuk, Ezekiel, Daniel, Isaiah, Zachariah, and Jeremiah.
3. *Covenant Theology* - Rutherford’s and Hooker’s different views of the church covenant are rooted in each man’s covenant theology. Hooker emphasizes the dispensational administration of the biblical covenant, by which he justifies his eschatological viewpoint of the church covenant. Rutherford focuses on the unchanging substance of the Covenant of Grace, which is based on the *atemporal* Covenant of Redemption. Hooker emphasizes continuity between the Covenant of Grace and church covenant while Rutherford saw a radical discontinuity between them.
4. *The Visible Church* – Rutherford’s critique of Hooker reflected his fears concerning the separatist tendencies of congregationalism. Rutherford tends to identify Hooker’s church covenant with an inward covenant which is in line with the Separatists’ ecclesiology. For Rutherford, it is an attempt to make the visible church as much as possible like invisible. Hooker insists that the church covenant is an outward covenant, which belongs to a visible church only. Rutherford’s fears, from Hooker’s viewpoint, were largely based on his misunderstanding of the New England Way—along with Hooker’s concepts of visible saints, the judgment of charity and church covenant.
5. *Presbyterianism* – Hooker’s counter-argument against Rutherford’s accusation of separatism contended that the Presbyterian church polity is neither biblical nor true to the principles of the Reformation. The power of the elders of the presbytery is a *new* power rather than a “office-power” as instituted by Christ. Rutherford denies it because “the classical elders,” he argues, are formally (*actu primo*) pastors in relation to all the visible churches on earth. Thus, it is not based upon a newly added office to elders.
6. *The Power of the Keys* – Hooker’s ecclesiology involved a significant reinterpretation of the power of the keys. Hooker emphasizes that the “Church of Covenanting Beleevers” is the subject of the keys *firstly* and *originally*. It does not follow that the power of the

elders may be ignored. On the contrary, the office-power of ministers must be established by their congregation. For Rutherford, the subject of the keys is the catholic visible church, in which the *officers and stewards* of an organic church tend to be emphasized as the principal subject of the keys. Thus, the power of the officers is not derived from the congregation. Instead, it is directly committed to them by Christ—as indicated in Matthew 16 where Peter represents the “Church-rulers” rather than all believers.

7. *The Sacraments* –All the seals of the covenant, Hooker argues, must be understood as a peculiar privilege to the members of a visible church *only*, because the seals should belong to “a Church as a Church.” The dispensation of the sacraments must be done “in virtue of Church-power,” which comes from the church covenant.

8. *Church Discipline* - For Rutherford, the Covenant of Grace, which is solemnly entered in baptism, is a sufficient ground for all Christian discipline, because it “ties us to all Church duties in all Congregations.” Hooker argues that the church covenant as well as the Covenant of Grace is necessary foundation for church discipline because church power must come from “mutuall and free consent by speciall ingagement.”

9. *National Church* – Hooker agrees that there existed a national church in the Old Testament. However, this belonged only to the Jew under the Old Covenant. In the New Testament church, God looks at his people as they are in covenant with particular churches. For Rutherford, a Presbyterian form of a *national* church is warranted from God’s Word. Also, his defense of a national church must be understood in the larger historical context of the Scottish struggle against the Roman Catholicism and Episcopacy.

10. *Distinctions* – In order to remove misunderstandings and prejudices about Congregationalism, Hooker attempts to use many important distinctions—such as the church as *totum essentiale/organicum*, explicit/implicit church covenant, outward/inward covenant, church privileges/power, ordinary hearers/confederate members, real/visible saints, judgment of truth/charity, power of judgment/office, etc. For Hooker, these distinctions are useful in dealing with the problem of the compatibility between Hooker’s Congregational church and other forms of church polity. Also, they show that the former must be compatible with the traditional distinction of the visible/invisible church on the one hand, and Rutherford’s distinction of external/internal Covenant of Grace on the other.

B. Theses Related to Ph.D. Course Work

11. Protestant Scholasticism should not be considered rationalism. Human reason did not replace the primacy of revelation. Reason was consistently given an instrumental function whereas revelation was given magisterial authority.

12. An attempt to set Puritan covenant theology in opposition to Calvin’s so-called decretal theology is bound to fail. On the one hand, Puritan covenant theology with its emphasis on the bilateral aspect of covenant would not compromise the sovereign grace of God. On the other hand, Calvin himself was well aware of the double aspect—a

unilateral and a bilateral dimension—of the biblical Covenant of Grace.

13. The distinction between the church as an institution (church work) and the church as an organism (kingdom work) is useful in understanding the mission and functions of a church in a society.

14. Robert Sherman's framework of a Trinitarian-Christ's threefold office is one of the most fruitful ways to understand God's reconciling work in Christ. Also, the practical implications of this model seem to emphasize that the richness of Christ's atonement should be proclaimed in a pastoral context through God's visible churches in the world.

15. In order to better understand the Donatist controversy, one may need to study both the socio-economic background and the theological underpinning of it. The significance of Augustine's contribution to achieve church unity in ecclesiology must not be ignored nor minimized by socio-economic reductionism (W.H.C. Frend) or the physical survival of the Donatist Church.

C. Miscellaneous Theses

16. The biblical concept of covenant has demonstrated great adaptability or flexibility to meet the diverse needs of the churches in the vastly different historical context of many countries.

17. In the modern ecclesiastical context, especially in South Korea where we need to make church membership more meaningful and engaging, the church covenant concept takes on a contemporary significance.

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