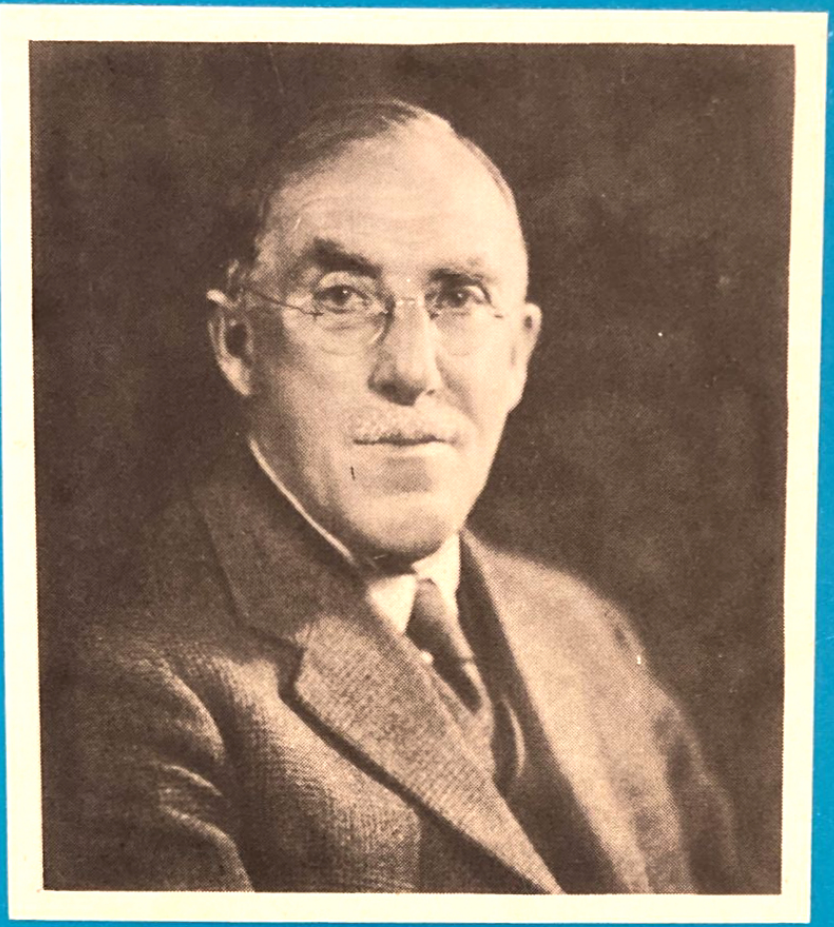

Nothing is here for tears

A Memoir of S. H. Hooke

E. C. Graham

NOTHING IS HERE FOR TEARS

A Memoir of Samuel Henry Hooke

By
E. C. GRAHAM

Foreword by the Very Reverend
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Part I, Life; Part II, Works;
Part III, Poems.

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Professor S. H. Hooke

from a water-colour portrait by Mary Short
(Mrs. Freeman) painted in 1965.

FOREWORD

Dr. Graham has done a difficult thing with wonderful success and many readers will be grateful to her. Sam Hooke was an eminent and dedicated scholar; he was a deeply religious man whose faith was tested and enriched by his experience of doubt; he was a most exceptional human being of all-round ability and of warm affections. The success of this memoir is that it helps all kinds of people to know Hooke better. To those who, like me, have only an amateur's acquaintance with the research on Myth, Ritual and Kingship, the summary account of Hooke's writings in that field is illuminating; to those who wondered where Hooke's seeking mind found rest, the survey of his later books is a welcome guide; and to those who knew Hooke only as a writer the poems and testimonies of friends and students will give some idea of the kind of man he was and why he was loved so much—why we feel that with him some cheer and some laughter has faded from the world.

As I bring him into focus, so to speak, I am impressed by something which is important in the picture. He was a very competent person. He knew so many things and he could do so many things. In all he aimed at excelling. The only thing in which he seemed to me to be less than efficient sometimes was in looking after his own interests. All his friends rejoice that, after his second marriage, he was able to enjoy such a long evening of peace and rich activity.

W. R. MATTHEWS

ACADEMIC HONOURS AND APPOINTMENTS

1907	Matriculated as Exhibitioner of Jesus College, Oxford
1908	Pusey and Ellerton Hebrew Prize
1910	Junior Kennicott Scholarship; Honorary Scholar Jesus College
1910	First Class in Honours School of Theology, Oxford
	Junior Hall-Houghton Prize (Greek New Testament)
1911	Junior Hall-Houghton Prize (Septuagint) Denyer and Johnson Scholar
1912	Senior Hall-Houghton Prize (Greek New Testament)
	Senior Denyer and Johnson Theological Scholar
	Honours School of Oriental Languages (Second Class) Oxford
1913	Senior Hall-Houghton Prize (Septuagint)
1913–26	Flavell Professor of Oriental Languages and Literature, Victoria College, Toronto University
1926–28	Rockefeller Research Fellow, University College, London
1930–42	Samuel Davidson Professor of Old Testament Studies, London
1935	British Academy Schweich Lecturer

1936	President of the Folklore Society
1937	Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries
1948	British Academy Burkitt Bronze Medal
1950	Honorary D.D., Glasgow
1951	President of the Society for Old Testament Study
1956–61	Speaker's Lecturer in the University of Oxford
1957	Honorary D.Th., Uppsala
1958	Visiting Professor of Divinity, University of Ghana
1964	Honorary Fellow of Jesus College, Oxford

I

LIFE

1. *The Beginning*

Samuel Henry Hooke was born in 1874, in Cirencester, to a young couple of strong character and deep religious faith. Both of prosperous middle-class families, they had both been moved in their early years to break away from their comfortable conventional backgrounds to seek a more meaningful life in service to God and their fellow-creatures. They had joined the Plymouth Brethren, a sect embodying, as Hooke says himself, 'a conscious and profoundly sincere attempt, based on an unshakable belief in the verbal inspiration of the Bible, to recreate in 19th-century England the simplicity of the Apostolic Church'. They met and married, and set out to live their faith together.

In a fragment of an autobiographical novel, which unfortunately never got beyond the first four chapters, Hooke has left us a vivid picture of his early childhood, and of the profound impression made upon him by the little family's devout, austere, and Bible-dominated life of service. His father could indeed be described as a 'God-intoxicated man'. The Plymouth Brethren have no salaried clergy, in fact they have no organization either of the servants or the services of their Church. There are,

however, those among them who give up all their life to missionary or pastoral work, acting as travelling evangelists or as ministers to local congregations. The only qualification required is to feel oneself 'called', but it is laid down that 'they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel', and unless they have private means the income of those who take up this work depends on the contributions of the faithful. Hooke describes movingly the opening of the post on Monday mornings, when the family's ability to pay its way for another week hung on what those envelopes contained. Anxious moments—for his mother and the observant child that is, for his father's trust in the providence of the Lord never faltered, and apparently was never disappointed.

Hooke's father was a man in no doubt of his vocation, and equipped for it with a passionate faith, a striking personality, a brilliant gift of fiery eloquence, and a complete unworldliness. His mother was a woman to match her husband in spirituality, but, though no more worldly than he, she seems to have been less visionary, more of a Martha than a Mary—as indeed she needed to be to provide her two boys with a stable family life and a sense of domestic warmth and security in spite of her husband's preoccupation with higher things and the financial vicissitudes of their early years together. I cannot do better than quote from Hooke's unfinished manuscript the story of how the family came to the small Derbyshire town in which he grew up. At breakfast one morning, John Vaughan, the character who represents Hooke's father[1] in the novel, remarked to his wife: 'My dear, I saw the Lord last night . . . . He stood beside my bed and said to me "John Vaughan, go to Worsdale"',—Anne

[1] Henry Mark Hooke. His wife's name was Elizabeth, née Loudoun.

Vaughan suppressed an inclination to ask what the Lord looked like, and only said, as she handed her husband his coffee, 'And where is Worsdale?' . . . 'I don't know, my dear, I have never heard of the place. We will get the map after breakfast and look it up. But the Lord makes no mistakes.' Whether or not this is literally true, that it is essentially true there can be no doubt. That is what Hooke's father was like, what his mother was like, what their life was like.

Worsdale[1]—sure enough they found it on the map—proved to be a typical North of England combination of the rural and the industrial. It was at once a market-town and a mill-town, set in beautiful country scattered with farms and scarred by quarries, so that the noise of blasting was rather more conspicuous than the sound of lowing herds. Its inhabitants were largely quarrymen and mill-hands, given to the spare time pursuits common to their kind in those days—drinking, poaching, and gambling, cock-fighting, and whippet-racing. In the eyes of Hooke Senior it was, of course, a sink of iniquity, 'the seat of Satan' as John Vaughan in the novel calls it, and certainly it offered plenty of scope for his salvationist energies. With little competition from the 'hunting parson', he soon made headway and established a flourishing 'assembly'—largely of brands plucked from the burning—which he continued to look after for many years.

Sam was four years old when the move to Derbyshire was made, and his brother, the only other child of the marriage, was two. Both children were regularly taken to 'the preaching' on Sunday evenings (in some unconsecrated hall), and to the 'breaking of bread' on Sunday mornings, when all those members 'in fellowship'

[1] In reality 'Wirksworth', Derbyshire.

sat round a long table covered with a snowy cloth, provided by Sam's mother. After a prayer of thanksgiving by his father, the loaf, again his mother's responsibility, was broken and passed round, and after it the cup. Young as he was, there can be no doubt that Hooke was deeply moved by these acts of devotion, and that in spite of the fury of his father's denunciations of the ungodly, and the descriptions of hell-fire and damnation which bulked so large in the sermons he listened to, he lived as a little boy happy in the love of God. The flames of hell seem to have been as unavailing to warp his young psyche as those of the fiery furnace to scorch the bodies of Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego. Religion was, it could scarcely fail to be, ingrained in him from his earliest years. But whether owing to the natural sweetness of his disposition (a salient characteristic, as we shall see), or to the counter-balancing effect of an affectionate and harmonious family life, he grew up quite unimpaired by the harshness and narrowness of the creed to which he gave unquestioning belief.

He grew up to be, perhaps, an 'unco' guid' young man. Religion was, as it was always to be, his daily bread. But he was never either fanatically obsessed or oppressed by his faith. It was many years before he came to question any of the teachings of the Plymouth Brethren, and he retained to the end strong traces of their influence, especially, as his wife says, 'in his devotion to the Bible, to Christ, and to the Eucharist.' Though of course he outlived most of the Brethren who were his friends in youth, there was still one couple to write when he died: 'Sixty-five years ago he was at our wedding. . . . We were very fond of him . . . my husband owed a lot to him as a young man.'[1]

[1] Mrs. J. S. Long on behalf of herself and her husband, in a latter to Mrs. Hooke. The Longs knew him when he was conducting his little meetings at Portishead, before the death of his mother.

Hooke's education began at a 17th-century school in Wirksworth. From there, at a suitable age, he went to St Mark's School, Windsor.[1] There is little record of his schooldays there, but they were, from his own casual references to them, happy ones, and it is unlikely that he went through them without giving some sign of the brilliance of intellect for which he was afterwards so conspicuously distinguished. Unfortunately, his father died while he and his brother were still at St Mark's, and his mother removed them from the school and sent them to an inferior one run by the Plymouth Brethren, where they were taken at reduced rates. We do not know under what pressure she took this ill-advised step, but it was not necessarily financial, since a fund had been instituted for the education of the two boys by some wealthy Brethren. The truth is that after her husband's death Mrs Hooke revealed herself not only as sadly inexperienced and ungifted in business matters, but as a poor manager of her own affairs. She seems to have drifted about south-west England, shifting the boys from school to school to keep up with her own peregrinations, and the family fortunes sank to a low ebb.

When Hooke finally left school, he was not able to go directly to university. His help was needed to support his mother—who had by this time become a semi-invalid —and sometimes his brother. He did this by teaching, and in the course of his career he came at last to a preparatory school at Clifton, Bristol. Here he settled down, finding both the position and the environment to his liking. Mother and son took a house at Portishead, then a village just outside the town, and soon became import-

[1] Later amalgamated with the Imperial Services College at Westward Ho and ultimately absorbed into Haileybury.

ant members of the community. A little Meeting House in their garden gave Sam his opportunity, and he instituted the Bible readings which were ever after such an inevitable and characteristic activity of his. A friend of those days, Fay Inchfawn, writes of her first visit to one of these as a young girl: 'What zeal! What knowledge! . . . This was the kind of intensity my sister and I knew we should like to possess . . . in our attempts to impart to others the glory of the revelation.'[1]

Not long after moving to Portishead, Hooke married his first wife, a young Yorkshire woman, a teacher, who was a devout member of the sect, and whose chief bond with her husband was their common faith. During this period, Hooke succeeded in getting a B.D. degree by correspondence from London University. He also became associated with Wolsey Hall, then called the Diploma Correspondence College, and for some years worked with them setting courses in, for example, Hebrew, and correcting examination papers. When after some years the College moved to Oxford, in 1906, Hooke, whose mother and brother had meantime died, moved with it, and at last, when he was thirty-three, he entered the University.

2 *Oxford*

At Oxford he was advised to read Greats, and was prepared to do so if he got a scholarship. But instead he obtained an exhibition at Jesus College, as a result of which he read Theology and Oriental Languages. This looks a little like the finger of God, but in fact it is quite

[1] *Those Remembered Days*, 1963, p. 78.

probable that his career was not greatly biased by it. His passionate interest in the Bible would in all likelihood have led him ultimately to devote himself to Theology and hence to Oriental languages. On the other hand, he took Greek and Latin in his stride without specializing in them. As languages he came to have them both at his finger-tips—as he needed to do for his Biblical studies—and he even achieved independently no mean degree of scholarship in the classical field.[1] While at Oxford he won prizes for the Septuagint and Greek New Testament. (Incidentally, the exquisite small writing which was one of his peculiar graces irresistibly suggests a hand long practised in the delicacy of Greek script.) Languages, indeed, never seemed to require any effort from him. In addition to those he studied, he absorbed French and German, apparently by a kind of osmosis.

Oxford did, however, provide a turning-point in his life, but not in the field of his interests. It was there that he came at last, on the strength chiefly of his studies in the Synoptic problem, and his reading of Dr. Sanday, Sir John Hawkins, and B. H. Streeter, to question seriously the narrower doctrines of the religious denomination in which he had been brought up, and eventually to break with it. He decided to join the Anglican Church, which seemed to him to be 'in the Providence of God the main stream of Christianity in England,' and was confirmed by Bishop Gore.

It was at Oxford, too, that his all-round brilliance, his zest for living, and his genius for friendship came at last into flower. Not only did he get a First in Theology and a Second in Oriental Languages, not to mention

[1] He never considered himself a classical scholar, and sometimes expressed regret on that score.

numerous prizes, but he played cricket, rugby, hockey and tennis for his College (he captained its tennis team) and golf for the University. 'He ought to have been given his Blue for his golf,[1] which was outstanding,' says Archdeacon E. F. Hall, a fellow-student of Hooke's at Jesus. It remained outstanding until well into his seventies. Games, like languages, came to him naturally. He seemed never to have to go through any arduous process of acquiring skill in them.

From his Oxford period many friends still remain—since he was older than his confrères. All speak of the zest with which he threw himself into work and play alike, and of his kindness to, and inspiring influence upon, his fellow-undergraduates. Says Goronwy Edwards:[2] 'We juniors had for him a sort of affectionate reverence . . . It was a great pleasure to Jesus men generally when the College made him an Honorary Fellow.' D. C. Simpson,[3] congratulating him upon his second marriage in 1947, pays tribute to his remarkable 'courage, physique, and industry,' and adds: 'I can offer your wife my congratulations without reserve, for she has a husband well-known to me, and of whose sterling qualities and unselfishness I know from long experience and at first hand.'

While at Oxford, he was very active in the Student Christian Movement, of which all his life long he was a generous supporter. It was in this connection that he met B. H. Streeter, Neville Talbot, and Bishop Cockin,

[1] At that time no 'Blues' were awarded for golf at Oxford.

[2] Sir John Goronwy Edwards, sometime Professor of History, University of London; Director of the Institute of Historical Research.

[3] The Rev. Professor David Capell Simpson, Oriel Professor of the Interpretation of Holy Scripture, Oxford, Canon of Rochester Cathedral, Fellow of Oriel College, d. May, 1955.

all of whom were to be numbered among his friends and admirers.

After graduation, he remained for a time living in Oxford, lecturing, writing, and teaching. A neighbour of that time, Mr. L. F. Powell, writes: 'We were such good neighbours, I wasn't really happy in the house after he left . . . His most brilliant pupil was Dr Alfred Guillaume[1] . . . and we always knew when he came for his tutorials by the roars, positively roars, of laughter which rang out from Mr. Hooke's study.' Dr. Guillaume's widow tells of the 'love and admiration' with which her husband used to talk of Hooke, and of how, as a young wife, she herself came to think of him as one of their household gods. Hooke's friendships were always for life.

3 *Canada*

His Oxford sojourn terminated just before the First World War, which was to disperse so many of his young friends and pupils. In 1913 he was appointed to the Flavelle Chair of Oriental Languages and Literature at Victoria College, University of Toronto. It was at the University that I first met him—far though I was from any association with Oriental Languages. The subject in which I sat at his feet (almost literally, as will emerge) was actually English Constitutional History. So depleted was the staff of the University, as a result of the war, that Hooke was asked to lend a hand in Departments, and in Colleges, other than his own, and with his encyclopaedic

[1] The late Rev. A. Guillaume, M.A., D.D., D.C.L., Emeritus Professor of Arabic, University of London; Samuel Davidson Professor of Old Testament Studies, University of London.

learning, his ready helpfulness, and his love of teaching, he found himself saddled with lectures and tutorial groups in both English literature and history, in various parts of the University, as well as with his official work.

Dean Matthews, in his contribution to the Festschrift for Hooke's 90th birthday, says: 'With regard to his University teaching, I cannot speak from direct personal knowledge. Undergraduates are notoriously critical of their teachers, and it is not surprising that some of his University students were not enthusiastic admirers . . . but most of those who were inclined to criticize did so on the familiar ground that his lectures did not have the examinations in view.' They 'were too interesting. Like nearly all great teachers, Hooke was happiest when he could forget syllabuses and pursue the subject wherever it led him.'[1] As one who *can* speak from direct personal knowledge, I think this hits the nail directly on the head. He disliked being limited to set themes, he disliked conducting a seminar along sedate formal lines—he smoked his pipe and talked of whatever came up; we sat scattered about the room, on the floor if we liked, munched apples, started hares, and listened fascinated.

But I happened to be one of a group to whom this casualness was a new and thrilling experience, common though I believe it was at Oxford and Cambridge. (My impression when I came to Cambridge myself, many years later, was that acrobatic agility, the ability to perch, crouch or straddle while following an argument, was an indispensable endowment for staff and students alike.) We reacted to Hooke's informality and discursiveness by being eager, attentive, alive, by *enjoying* our seminars to

[1] *Promise and Fulfilment*, Society for Old Testament Study, 1963, p. 5.

the full—the heady freedom to speak our minds, the fascination of chasing a theme, the tussle of argument, the gaiety of wit. (Hooke was himself high-spirited and the begetter of high spirits in others.) Above all we prized the thrill of new-glimpsed realms of gold in his casual allusions. I am not quite sure whether it was in connection with the Petition of Right or the Gospel according to St Luke (for he had Bible classes too) that he introduced us all to *The Way Of All Flesh*, John Masefield, Francis Thompson, the Russian 19th-century novelists, Thomas Hardy, Lord Dunsany, Paul Claudel, and all, but somehow through him our horizons widened to take in all these and much more. Like Guillaume, we laughed a lot, even in Bible classes. We were jocund Christians. Of course we had to mug up our constitutional history from the text-books, but in our group, at least, nobody minded that, and as far as I know nobody failed the examinations. So much for his ability as a teacher. There might, I suppose, be two opinions about it, but to me he was one of genius. And to many, many more. I cannot begin to quote all the tributes to him on this count I have gathered from books, articles, letters etc. I will give only one, from the biography of Dr Marion Hilliard of Toronto, whose brilliance in and selfless devotion to her profession made her a famous and beloved figure in her native city and beyond. As an undergraduate she was deeply interested in the Student Christian Movement, and each week she went to the Bible Class which met on Sunday evenings at the home of Professor Hooke. 'A brilliant, warm and inspiring teacher, Professor Hooke had won students' interest by his fresh and compelling presentation of the Gospels, and his interpretation of the meaning of Christianity. The impression he made on

her was to do much to direct the course of her life in the next ten years.'[1]

As a *lecturer*, however, he might with justice have been found less than excellent. For a very simple reason; he was deaf, and though he overcame this disability most remarkably, along with it went a speech defect of a sort similar to that from which Dean Inge suffered. His words came out in a sort of hollow boom which made his lectures—finely reasoned and elegantly composed though they were—seem to some monotonous and hard to follow. This was the one evidence of any bad fairy at his christening. In all else he was superlatively endowed. His curious delivery did not prevent him from being an indefatigable and on the whole very successful lecturer, any more than it prevented 'the gloomy Dean' from being a famous preacher, But there it is, the one wart which, to be faithful, our portrait must include. Needless to say, it was a trait which was so much a part of his lovable personality that no one who cared for him could have wished it away.

In Toronto, Hooke added a new sprig of laurel to his athletic crown—he became noted for his fancy skating. Where he learned to skate, how he ever had the opportunity for the amount of practice normally required to develop such a skill, I have no idea. He seems to have sprung full-fledged on to the Canadian ice as an accomplished waltzer and figure-skater, far outshining all his Canadian colleagues who might have been supposed to be born to it, but who, as a matter of fact, rarely attempted anything fancier than a figure eight, and that only occasionally. Canadian life made a great appeal to him.

[1] *Give My Heart—The Dr. Marion Hilliard Story* by Marion O. Robinson, 1964, p. 63.

It offered so much scope for his physical energy, so much opportunity for contact with wild nature, so much freedom and unconventionality in physical living, so much gay and simple sociability. One of the Canadian customs which particularly charmed him was that of owning a cottage on the shore of some remote lake, river, or bay (of which Ontario could boast so many) and spending the whole summer in it. That is, the family spent the summer there, the father, unless he were lucky enough to have a job with long holidays, came up at week-ends and for his summer vacation. The cottages were of the simplest (always of wood, generally weather-boarded), and the life in them was of the simplest too. Housework was at a minimum, food plain, clothes tough and practical. Swimming, sailing, canoeing, fishing, hiking picnicking absorbed the days. This custom was, of course, specially common in academic circles, and Hooke lost no time in embracing it. He bought for £5 an island on Lake Muskoka in Western Ontario, and there built his cottage with his own hands, becoming practically overnight an expert canoeist—the canoe being the only means of communication between the smaller islands. It goes without saying that he was already—somehow—an expert, and very powerful swimmer.

It is characteristic of Hooke that when a new magazine was started at University College bearing the provocative title of *The Rebel* he was the first member of the staff to hail it with cheers. The founder and editor-in-chief, Elsinore Haultain (then McPherson), became his lifelong friend, as did Barker Fairley, Professor of German at University College, another early supporter. Incredibly enough, this quite innocuous little magazine, aiming only to give an opportunity for student self-

expression, including the ventilation of a few grievances against the Establishment, was frowned on severely by many of the staff, so that it came to have an aura of daring and iconoclasm far from justified by its quite uninflammatory material. It was, however, a lively little venture, and did much to lift the spirits of a University deprived by war of almost all its male arts students. 'Would to God, as St. Paul says,' wrote Stephen Leacock to Hooke, 'that we had one like it at McGill!' Its complete respectability is established beyond all doubt by the fact that Vincent Massey and his wife very early became honorary members of its editorial staff.

Hooke wrote for *The Rebel*, contributing much of his delightful light verse, and running a most amusing section of publishers' advertisements over the nom-de-plume of 'The Literary Drummer.' He also campaigned for it, attracting to its support many outstanding people, not only in the University but in intellectual and artistic circles in general. It was due to his efforts that the magazine carried a series of cartoons of University celebrities contributed, gratis of course, by well-known Canadian artists.[1] Each cartoon was accompanied by a humorous pen-portrait of the subject in verse. The drawings were very good and the verses witty, and the set—now of course very rare—makes a most interesting memorial of the University at that period. Hooke was, inevitably, one of the subjects. He is represented in the cap and bells of a jester, beating a big drum and skipping lightly over a scattered mass of books. The verses which went with the picture (incidentally an excellent likeness of

[1] By the kind assistance of the distinguished Canadian painter, A. V. Casson, the majority have been identified as being by Ivor Lewis.

his face) so well sum up his impact on his Canadian colleagues that I feel justified in quoting them in full in Part III.

Hooke 'always looked back upon his Canadian years as a time of greatest happiness and of widening mental horizons,' and it may be true to say further with Dean Matthews that he was there 'at his best and happiest'[1]—but only with the reservation that this was not the only time that he reached his peak. His later years in England too, as we shall see, were supremely happy, and though I suppose in most cases the seventh and eighth decades of a man's life cannot claim to be included in his prime, in the case of Hooke they certainly cannot be excluded from it. He went on growing and developing all his life, and did some of his best work in what is technically 'old age'. Not only did his intellectual vigour remain unimpaired up to, I would venture to say, his death, but even any physical falling off came very late and very gradually. He was as fine a golfer at 70 as he had been at 40.

His life in Canada was, of course, far from being absorbed by his University teaching and social activities. The main thing in it was, as ever, his religion. As Dean Matthews has said, he was always 'a man of faith, but it was an adventurous faith, intellectually as well as morally, for it never evaded questions or was content with dogmatic answers.'[2] His Canadian period was a period of radical exploration into his Christian beliefs. 'Unflinching in the pursuit of truth,' to quote Mr. David Peck,[3] he shared with his students the questions and crises into which his ever-deepening consideration of the Scriptures led him. Not that he ever ceased to be a

[1] W. R. Matthews, *Promise and Fulfilment*, p. 2. [2] Ibid.
[3] *The Oxford Diocesan Magazine*, Jan. 1968, p. 19.

Christian, or for that matter an Anglican, but his mind was never closed, and from time to time his readiness to examine new interpretations entailed much soul-searching and wrestling with the temptation to despair. His was truly 'a life of faith diversified by doubt,' but the faith that to the end repeatedly triumphed rose ever stronger and more secure from each trial of strength.

Unhappily, the informality of Canadian life which so charmed Hooke was, so to speak, only skin-deep. Manners, dress, language, were free and easy, but under all this surface liberty lurked still, in many places (as some of the reactions to *The Rebel* may have suggested) an almost fanatical rigidity of thought and belief, narrowness of mind, fear of any disruptive influence. This is curiously characteristic of 'young' countries at a certain stage in their development, and no doubt both understandable and excusable, but the violent reactions aroused in certain Toronto circles at that time by 'higher criticism' or anything that smacked of it still take one by surprise. The Student Christian Movement, in which Hooke was very prominent, was itself viewed with suspicion, and even accused in an editorial in some religious journal of 'poisoning the student mind.' The phrase was seized upon with glee by the ardent young people who clustered round 'such enlightened scholars as Professor Hooke and Dr. Henry B. Sharman'[1] and became the title and refrain of a lusty ballad which was chanted for years at S.C.M. meetings and conferences. The original verses, (it was, of course, added to from time to time) were written, and the tune was composed, by Davidson Ketchum, a gifted musician and one of Hooke's most devoted friends, who afterwards occupied the Chair of Social Psychology at University College.

[1] *Give My Heart*, p. 70.

The S.C.M. was a focus for the religious ferment to which the 1914–18 war had given rise, and, though conventional enough in its inspiration and attitudes, it attracted to itself the most inquiring minds among both teachers and students. It represented, indeed, a spiritual renaissance of which, it seems now, no one could have failed to see the touching and reassuring significance. But as is natural with the young, the enthusiasm of this revival was fired by a sense of daring, of advancing adventurously along new paths, which to the dogmatists was highly suspect. And nowhere more so than at Victoria College, at that time a stronghold of old-fashioned Methodism. The authorities feared that the young men and women who came under Hooke's influence—and who of those who came into contact with him at all did not?—might have their faith shaken or destroyed. One cannot too severely blame them for this; even Dean Matthews at a later date was afraid that Hooke 'seemed to tremble on the verge of agnosticism' and confesses to the same anxiety as to his effects upon his students.[1] But the evidence was, in fact, all against such fears. Hooke certainly had an almost magnetic power over young people—they followed where he led as if he had been a Pied Piper. But where he led was *through* the Slough of Despond, safe to the other side. I know of none who lost his faith as the effect of Hooke's teaching. I know of many whose faith was deepened and strengthened and enriched by it. And oddly enough, it seems to have been the very thing that aroused the alarm of their elders which so grappled the young to him, his open questioning of traditional beliefs. Here was no dogmatism, here was 'honest doubt'. They were not asked to accept

[1] *Promise and Fulfilment*, pp. 2 and 5.

everything from authority, but stirred to use their minds and win for themselves convictions in which they could rest, and which had so much more meaning for them, so much more hold over them, than any passively received beliefs could have. When Bishop Cockin went to Toronto in the autumn of 1926, 'on loan to the Canadian S.C.M.' Sam was no longer at Victoria, 'but the legend of his explosive influence was very much a force to be reckoned with; it was clear that his radical re-presentation of some of the central themes of the Gospel had left its mark on student thinking; it was also clear that his personal approach had evoked a warm response.'[1]

Victoria College began to buzz with talk about Hooke and his dangerous influence over the young. No doubt there were some of Sam's colleagues to urge on his behalf Donne's exhortation: 'Doubt wisely; in strange way To stand inquiring right is not to stray,' but they were in a minority. His position became so uncomfortable that he felt himself forced to resign. By the manner of his going hangs a wryly amusing little tale. Summoned to the Chancellor's office, he was told that certain parents had been complaining that he was upsetting the faith of their young. 'Would you like me to resign?' said Sam obligingly. 'There!' responded the Chancellor, slapping his knee, 'I told them you would.'

Then began for him a period in the wilderness. He remained in Toronto, staunchly supported by his numerous friends but unable to find any position commensurate with his ability, tastes, and training. He had one slender source of income that we know of; he was still engaged, as he had been since 1912, in preparing chain references for Bibles published by the Oxford University

[1] In a letter to Mrs. Hooke.

Press. Just how slender this was may be judged from a remark by John Brown, head of the London publishing department of that organisation in a letter to Mr. Harry Carter, answering an inquiry about Hooke's work: 'I hesitate to imagine how little he must have been paid for all that he did.'[1] For the rest he took whatever came along, tackling one badly-paid and fundamentally unsatisfying job after another (amongst them the writing of blurbs for the O.U.P.) and suffering frequent disappointments over better prospects. To aggravate the situation, his wife, who had already in the early days in Canada shown signs of hypochondria, began to relapse into a more or less permanent invalidism.

Hooke faced all his troubles with characteristic courage and cheerfulness. He turned his hand uncomplainingly to whatever he could find to do, tended his wife devotedly, accepting without murmur the curtailment of his social life which her illness involved, and never ceased to hope for, and indeed to expect, a break in the clouds. Perhaps it should be mentioned that there was just one sphere in which he had no aptitude, that of business. In money matters he was neither lucky nor wise—as unworldly as his father before him—and he made much less of such financial resources as he had, such as his house, than another might have done. But if he had no knack of making, or even preserving, money, he had 'a changeless soul, With courage to endure.'

[1] He came to the end of this work in 1926, and it was published in 1930. To quote further from Mr. Brown: 'Hooke's chain references were intended primarily for the American market and have been included in the two Bibles, the Black and Red Letter editions of the Brevier B.P.S.P. and the New Long Primer Refs. . . . Hooke has 100,000 references, which compare with the 60,000 used by Collins and ourselves in our ordinary reference Bibles'. A monumental work evidently, but not a livelihood.

Helpless to increase his means, he had the inestimable gift of knowing how to live within them with patience and even gaiety. Only his closest friends[1] ever knew the pangs of discouragement that occasionally wrung from him an expression of suffering.

4. *England Again*

The break was not very long in coming. It was less than a year after his resignation in 1926 that he came back to London with a Rockefeller Fellowship at the Department of Anthropology of University College. This was a most important milestone in his career, the beginning of his interest in the relation between myth and ritual which was to lead to his international influence and renown. The Fellowship arose out of a scheme sponsored by McGill University and the Rockefeller Foundation 'to institute a new school of teaching and research for the development of psychology and anthropology as one closely integrated discipline, which the Rockefeller Foundation called Human Biology. It was intended that this scheme should be developed in connection with the work of the Canadian National Committee of Mental Hygiene, and . . . should include not merely such teaching and research in biology, anthropology,

[1] Perhaps his closest friendship was with Margaret Wrong, daughter of Professor Wrong and herself a lecturer in the University and Dean of Women at University College. She was a woman of brilliant gifts, wide interests and unflagging energy. She became renowned for her work in Africa, where she travelled extensively as secretary of the International Committee on Christian Literature for Africa. But her numerous friends will always remember her for her all-embracing sympathy, the warmth of her affection, her utter selflessness and the shining quality of her faith. She died in Uganda in 1949; a memorial tablet, designed by an African artist, has been placed in the Cathedral in Kampala.

psychology, and psychiatry as conforms to traditional methods, but also the wider study of human beliefs, aspirations, and conflicts. It was for this purpose that Hooke was chosen to participate in this great scheme. His ripe scholarship and intimate knowledge of ancient Semitic beliefs was considered to be a valuable asset, and the purpose of his studies in the Department of Anthropology was to make him familiar with the field, so that his special knowledge might be integrated with the rest of the work.'

This account is from a testimonial by G. Elliot Smith, then Professor of Anatomy at University College, under whom, together with W. R. Perry, Professor of Anthropology, Hooke was to work. Perry and Smith were the leaders in England of the 'diffusionist' school of anthropologists, which held that all civilization originated in a single source and spread out from there. Hooke arrived in the middle of a heated controversy between them and the anti-diffusionists, who had much the greater following among English anthropologists. They maintained what was called the 'evolutionary' theory, namely that civilization arose independently at various points, and progressed independently through characteristic stages. Though by no means completely in agreement with Elliot Smith and Perry, Hooke had more sympathy with the diffusionist than with the evolutionary position. However, with his usual disinclination to dogmatism, he ranged himself on neither one side nor the other, and worked most harmoniously with his colleagues in the Department.

His knowledge of Semitic languages and culture made it natural for his researches to be guided by the civilizations of Babylon and Assyria, with which no

other student at University College was at the moment equipped to deal. For this purpose he had to add to his already large repertoire of languages (amongst which must now be mentioned Akkadian), Hittite and Ancient Egyptian, which he did, to quote Elliot Smith again, 'with surprising rapidity.' His teacher of Egyptian was the redoubtable Dr. Margaret Murray, with whom he kept up an intermittent correspondence up to the time of her death. She more than once consulted him about points in her books.

One outcome of Hooke's examination of Babylonian and Assyrian texts was to cast considerable doubt on the cherished theory of Elliot Smith and Perry that Egypt had been the starting-point of civilization. But even more important and exciting from his own point of view was his observation of a repeated parallel between certain things in the various religious epics and certain features of the pictured religious ceremonies, which formed a pattern traceable in both myth and ritual and forming a link between them.

This promising start, however, was not at once followed up. The Rockefeller Foundation seems to have lost interest in the subject of 'Human Biology', and in 1927 it abruptly abandoned the scheme, and Hooke's Fellowship, which was supposed to run for two years, was at an end. He next found himself in Zurich, committed to the study of psychoanalysis under Jung himself. This curious development was brought about by a rich American who had known Hooke in Canada and been deeply impressed by his erudition and personality. This wealthy friend was greatly interested in the therapeutic possibilities of psychoanalysis, at that time becoming the rage in the United States, and conceived the idea of

establishing Hooke as a practitioner of the new profession, to the mutual benefit of the two. With no prospects at the moment opening for him in London, and this plan offering not quite so much of a break with 'Human Biology', that all-embracing bundle of studies, as might at first appear, Hooke agreed to go to Zurich for training. Though, with his usual versatility, he was already well-informed on the subject of psychoanalysis, and had been one of the first to realize the importance of Freud's theories, he was much more cautious about its widespread clinical application than his American friend. But he thought it worth investigation. His experiences in Zurich were, however, disappointing. He found much in the system that seemed to him 'phony', and had already given up all idea of a career in that field, when, in 1929, an opportunity arose for him to return to London and continue his researches at University College in preparation for his appointment to a Chair at McGill. The Rockefeller Foundation had again taken up their scheme, and reorganized their Department at University College under the new title of 'Division of Social Studies,' and again Hooke was offered a Fellowship. For some reason, however, which had nothing whatever to do with Hooke himself, the scheme was very slow to get off the ground, and when, after a year's abortive effort to get a programme formulated, the Samuel Davidson Chair of Old Testament Studies in the University of London became vacant, Hooke decided to apply for it.

It was probably in this connection that Elliot Smith provided the testimonial from which I have quoted, and am unable to resist the temptation to quote a little more. Professor Smith pays tribute not only to Hooke's academic attainments, 'his wide and exact learning and sober

judgement, and his rare power of brilliant exposition,' but also to his qualities as a man: 'Of Mr. Hooke's charming personality and wide culture,' he states, 'it is difficult to write without seeming to be extravagant.' As one who has over and over again in this essay been faced by that difficulty, I am grateful to Elliot Smith for those words.

Hooke has written his own account of his appearance before the Selection Committee for the Samuel Davidson Chair.[1] 'The Chairman . . . was the late Bishop Gore' (who had confirmed him at Oxford so many years before). 'Looking benign and apostolic, he gently asked me what I intended to do with the professorship, if I should be appointed. I replied, somewhat optimistically, that I wished to try to build a bridge between the three disciplines of Anthropology, Archaeology, and Biblical Studies.'[2] And 'in spite of such presumption' he got the job, and from 1930 to 1942 pursued the career which was most congenial to him, teaching, writing, and prosecuting his researches.

The Chair was located at King's College, of which W. R. Matthews was at that time Dean. The two men formed a close friendship, and Dean Matthews became not only a dear friend but a most helpful colleague. In 1931 Hooke became the collaborator with Dean Matthews in the annual short courses in religious knowledge under the Ministry of Education ,which, with an interrup-

[1] Established in 1925 in memory of Dr. Samuel Davidson, a notable scholar and writer mainly, though not entirely, in the field of the Old Testament. He was a leading exponent of German scholarship, and was made a D.D. of Halle in 1848. Because of his critical approach to the Bible, he was ejected from the chair of Hebrew and Biblical Criticism at the Lancashire Independent College in 1857, and subsequently became Scripture Examiner in London University.

[2] *The Siege Perilous*, 1956, p. 5.

tion of about three years during the war, went on till 1952. These were held at various places—Durham, Ripon, Oxford—and attracted a faithful following of, in Dean Matthews' words, 'lively and intelligent men and women' who went year after year. A wonderful spirit grew up to unite the body of teachers who constituted the attendance and the two lecturers, who proved themselves perfect collaborators; and many are the witnesses to the affection and esteem in which they were held, and to the participators' sense of the value and uniqueness of the experience they provided.

Hooke's time at King's was a very fruitful period in every respect. We shall be dealing with his works in the second part of the book, but we may note briefly here that it was at the beginning of this period that he conceived and edited the two symposia, *Myth and Ritual* and *The Labyrinth*,[1] which were to have such a revolutionary influence on Biblical scholarship both at home and abroad. Following this break-through, he was invited by the British Academy to give the Schweich Lectures for 1935, which he devoted to the same subject. And in 1936-7 he was President of the Folk Lore Society, of the Council of which he remained a member for the rest of his life. It was during these years, also, that with the help of the lady who was much later to become his second wife, he produced the monummental *Bible in Basic English*, of which too, we shall be saying more later. Apart from the courses with Dean Matthews, he did much more lecturing, of which I

[1] Both of these books were based on lectures which Hooke organized. The first consisted of eight papers, seven of them previously delivered in the University of London and six of these also at Oxford; of the eight papers of which the second was composed, six had been read at King's College, London.

cannot attempt to give an exhaustive account, but which included some university extension courses for London University, a number of lectures for the Vacation Term for Biblical Studies at Oxford and Cambridge, and a course at Scarborough organized by Hull University.

In connection with the Chair itself, he did a great deal of teaching. He lectured on Babylonian and Assyrian religion to students from the Archaeological Institute, and on the Old Testament to students of theology. One of the members of the former group recalls:-

> 'As the Institute of Archaeology existed only on paper, and we were the first registered students, our headquarters were the Box Library in King's College [accommodation for the classes being the responsibility of the holder of the Chair], where the small collection of Oriental Archaeological books owned by the Institute was housed on three shelves. I can remember Sam Hooke pacifying his three slightly irate professorial colleagues who had to share the library as their private demesne when they learnt that three female students had been given permission to work there.'[1]

After enumerating his great qualities as a teacher—his kindness, humour, and dislike of pomposity, as well as his wide and exact learning, his lucidity, and his endless care—she ends her reminiscences: 'It was a rare privilege to be taught by Sam Hooke.' And so say one after another of his old students at King's, paying special tribute always to his great kindness, and the trouble he took in helping them with their work. Another of them,[2] this time a theological student, sums up the feeling of many of his

[1] K. R. Maxwell-Hyslop.

[2] The Rev. Canon Clifford Chapman, Ph.D., F.K.C., present Director of Religious Education in the Diocese of Guildford.

fellows when he speaks of 'the infection of Hooke's own deep interest in the Old Testament, which combined the meticulous 'study methods' of the professional scholar and teacher (he was absolutely first-rate as a teacher) with a profound conviction and faith which made the exercise a memorable and moving experience.'

Professor Sidney Smith, who saw a good deal of Sam during his tenure of the Davidson Chair, recalls how he taught Sam Cuneiform, read Babylonian, Assyrian and Ugaritic religious texts with him, and at his suggestion conducted a seminar for a group of the younger dons at King's on pagan Semitic religions. Professor Smith adds: 'His determination to use original sources and the energy he put into mastering languages for his specific purpose, of which I am in the best position to judge, always amazed me; half what he did would have been a considerable achievement for a man of his age'. All this, he adds, gives 'some measure of his physical toughness, and an enduring, youthful, intellectual ability'. When Sidney Smith could no longer continue, Professor Oliver Gurney was asked by Hooke to instruct him and a few friends in Hittite, and did so most successfully. He remembers the episode with pleasure and remarks: 'I have always thought what a delightful example of academic modesty it was for those five or six senior people to invite a young man who was hardly more than a student to be their teacher.' I quote this not merely because it is complimentary but because it is so impressively complementary. Looked at from any point of view, as a student no less than as a teacher, he was a modest man, and an endearing man, a man remembered by all who came into contact with him with affection and respect.

In 1930 he became a member of the Society for Old Testament Study and was elected President in 1951. His association with this notable international group of scholars was particularly dear to him; he attended its meetings regularly, read several papers and reviewed books for its periodical book-list. He rejoiced to find that, in the study of the Scriptures, members of all denominations and even of different faiths, could collaborate in free and amicable discussion and study. Professor Henton Davies[1] writes: 'We all remember his presidential year, and particularly the summer meeting at Norwich, with the greatest pleasure, for it was one of the happiest and most enjoyable meetings that the Society ever had. This was largely due to the genial nature of his presidency and his warm and sympathetic understanding of all those taking part. He made notable contributions from time to time, both learned and amusing.' On his 90th birthday the Society paid him special honour (see below, p. 38).

In 1942, unfortunately, by University regulations his age made it necessary for him to resign his Chair to a younger man. He was, however, appointed to a part-time lectureship, and it was not until 1945 that the title of Professor Emeritus of Old Testament Studies was conferred upon him. For the first three years of the war he stayed in London, studying, writing, lecturing, and doing the only war work available to him, censorship. He was employed at the Censorship Office in Holborn, appropriately in the 'Uncommon Languages Department.' For this purpose he had to add Yiddish to his stock, which he did, of course with his accustomed ease.

[1] The Rev. Professor G. Henton Davies, Principal of Regent's Park College, Oxford; formerly Secretary of the Society for Old Testament Study.

At the end of 1942, however, his house at Richmond was seriously damaged in an air raid, and he and his wife were made homeless. Not only that, Mrs. Hooke's nerves were badly affected by the shock. So, shortly afterwards, he accepted a position as a master at Blundell's School, Tiverton, where his friend Neville Gorton was Headmaster. With his usual versatility he taught a wide range of subjects to the Classical Sixth, organized a discussion group for the boys, and was the moving spirit of a small orchestra, in which he played the violin. (There seems to have been no opportunity to get this accomplishment in earlier. How *he* got it in remains a mystery, but music was a passion with him, and he had begun studying the violin years before.)

John Southam gives a delightful account of Hooke at Blundells. At first there was not much communication between him and the boys. His wide knowledge bewildered them, and they didn't know quite what to make of him, with his 'rather loud plus fours' and his pipe which he was for ever relighting. But at last, one happy day, his request for questions at the end of the class was answered with a howler of the first water: 'Please sir, who was this chap 'Ibid'?' The effect was catalytic. Sam laughed till the tears stood in his eyes, and . . . declared the instant formation of the Ibid Club (being named from the question as asked, the initial vowel was long). Its aim was to be the free expression of thought, untrammeled by any external standard or restraint, and it would meet at his bungalow . . . on an evening a few days hence.

'The Ibid Club became a secret society; it had no official existence and membership was confined to the Classical Sixth. Sam as President of the Ibids (or Pribid)

took as chief (or Chibid) the head of the form, and appointed his own secretary (or Scribid). It met as the spirit moved it two or three times a term, presented its offerings in verse or prose, and was regaled with beer and sandwiches by the Pribid.'[1] Needless to say, the ice was broken for ever, and Sam became most popular with the boys.

He also soon established himself among the masters. Inevitably, he started a weekly group amongst the staff to study the New Testament. As Dean Matthews remarks, 'wherever he was, he always became the centre of a knot of students of the New Testament, and the result at Blundell's seems to have been very much what it had been elsewhere. Many were fascinated, and testified that the Gospels and Epistles had come alive for them as never before. All were interested; and some trembled for their orthodoxy, thinking him a lovable heretic.'

One who seems to have thought him a heretic without the 'lovable' was the new Headmaster of Blundells, who succeeded Neville Gorton when he was made Bishop of Coventry in 1943. Hooke was not happy under the new and much more conventional regime and would probably soon have resigned, but the Head took action first and he was dismissed—not however, with open disapproval, but under cover of some vague regulation about 'temporary staff'. Whatever the formula, that it was face-saving on both sides is pleasingly demonstrated by the fact that some twenty-five years later, on the appearance of Hooke's book on the Resurrection, his former Headmaster wrote to congratulate him on the book, and incidentally reminded him that 'he once had the honour of having him on his staff'.

[1] 'It even survived Sam's time at Blundell's under the Pribidship of Gilbert Phelps.'

Hooke left Blundells to become Bishop Gorton's 'examining chaplain', a title which very imperfectly indicates his duties, though he did have some connection with CACTM, the body which then examined and selected applicants for ordination, and he also gave some addresses to ordinands. But his main function was to travel about the diocese lecturing to the clergy on the Bible, with the object of stimulating them to read the Scriptures with deeper understanding, or, in fact, ginger-ing them up. Bishop Gorton's faith in Hooke's effective-ness as a stimulant was not misplaced. A very interesting sidelight on his activities in this capacity, and incidentally a warm tribute to him is to be found in a letter to him from the Rev. F. E. Stalling, who held a living in Coven-try Diocese when Hooke was there:-

> 'When I left Coventry Diocese my clerical brethren gave me a handsome present of books, one of which . . . was your *Siege Perilous*. I feel that I must write to thank you. I found the book more satisfying than any other theological work that I have read for some time . . . I imagine that you must have found your sojourn in Coventry a bit frustrating. The clergy there were not quite so obscurantist as we must have seemed to you . . . They were a bit puzzled because they did not know where to fit you in, and frightened because you used to delight in appearing to be more unorthodox than in fact you were. Anyway, the last essay in your book seems to me the finest brief exposition of the Christian faith that I have ever come across. It is what I should like to put into the hands of an intelligent and interested agnostic.'[1]

[1]A further tribute to Hooke's work in Coventry is given in a letter from Canon Verney, dated November 1964: 'Your name lives on in this diocese as one who contributed a good deal to the movement of the Holy Spirit here. . . .'

5. *The Years of Fulfilment*

In 1945 Hooke's wife died suddenly at Leamington Spa, where they were then living. As so often happens, the loss of one who had been completely dependent on him left him for a time rudderless. He felt that the only way in which he could find himself again was to make a complete change in his way of life. So he gave up his position with Bishop Gorton, left Leamington Spa, and came back to London, where he settled down to a quiet life of writing, studying, and giving Extension Lectures, with golf as his chief recreation. His many friends rallied round, and soon again he was the centre of a group for Bible study, and was adding new friends. Among the old ones of whom he saw much was Beatrice Wyatt, who has been mentioned as assisting him with the translation of the Bible into Basic English in the years before the war. Mrs. Wyatt was at this time Secretary of the International African Institute, which was devoted to the study of African anthropology and languages, so they had many common interests in addition to their religious and temperamental compatibility and the ties of long friendship. In 1946 they were married and so began for Hooke what I venture to think *was* the time of his deepest happiness. He was 72, she 19 years younger, yet against all the odds they were to have together nearly a quarter of a century of devoted married life. How united they became, how fully they entered into each other's lives, is shown in many ways and witnessed to by many people. Perhaps Professor Bruce puts it most simply and effectively when he says, in the dedication to *Promise and Fulfilment*: 'We join in assuring you and Mrs. Hooke

(for we always think of you both together) of our affectionate greetings.'

Their life together was not only a very happy period, but a very fruitful one. Some of Hooke's best work was done during these years, and it was now, too, that he began to reap the harvest of his earlier labours, in an ever-expanding reputation and new opportunities for travel and experience of foreign fields. For the first years of their marriage, the Hookes lived in Chelsea. There they discovered in the Vicar of the church they attended an old student of Sam's from King's College days. The Vicar, the Rev. Clifford Chapman,[1] with Hooke's help organized a series of lectures on the Christian faith. The lectures took place in Chapman's church on Sunday evenings after the service, and were followed by questions and discussion. Among the team of lecturers were Dean Matthews, Dr. Wand (then Bishop of London), Eric Abbott (Dean of King's College), Father Lionel Thornton, C.R., and Bishop Gorton. Out of this course grew a Bible Study group under Hooke's leadership, which went on even after the Hookes left Chelsea.

In 1948, they bought a house at Strawberry Hill, Twickenham, and went to live there, where, as usual, Hooke organized a Bible Class and they made lasting friends. Here honours began to crowd 'thick upon him' —happily unsucceeded by any 'killing frost', in fact, never again to cease. In 1948 he was awarded by the British Academy the Burkitt Bronze Medal for Biblical Studies. In 1950 he was given an honorary D.D. from Glasgow University, again for his work in the field of Biblical scholarship. In 1957 he travelled with his wife to Uppsala to receive an honorary Doctorate in Theology,

[1] Later to become a Canon of Guildford Cathedral, see footnote p. 26.

conferred no doubt largely in recognition of his important contributions to the study of myth and its relation to ritual in the Near East, which had been very influential in Scandinavia. In 1958, when he was 84, he was invited to go to Ghana as visiting Professor of Divinity in the University there, and fulfilled a strenuous term, including giving twelve lectures in nine days as part of a refresher course for clergy. From Ghana he visited Nigeria, and gave a lecture in the University of Ibadan on the Dead Sea Scrolls. (The trip to Ghana, incidentally, was his first experience of air travel, but far from his last.)[1] In the same year, the Palestine Exploration Fund dedicated to him the January-June volume of their Quarterly, on his resignation after twenty-three years as Editor.

In the same eventful year, Mrs. Hooke having retired the year before, they moved to a delightful cottage in the village of Buckland, not far from Oxford. It was an inspired choice. Buckland was near enough to Oxford to enable the Hookes to keep in touch with their many friends there, both inside and outside the University. They were quickly adopted into the community and found themselves provided with a large group of congenial friends. They were not too far, either, from Mrs. Hooke's married daughter, Mary, with her husband and two children. For by his second marriage Hooke had acquired something he had not enjoyed since his boyhood, and even then not to the same extent, a family circle. Mrs. Hooke had a son, John, as well as a daughter, a mother and father, two sisters, and a brother, all of

[1] There were several air journeys in Africa—to Lagos, to Kumasi and on the way back to England, to Rome. This was his first visit, and he found the impact of the city overwhelming. Later he flew to Venice and to Salisbury, Rhodesia. His last excursion was to Dubrovnik, by air and boat.

whom he took to his heart, and by all of whom he was greatly beloved. He was always fond of young people, and his wife's lively progeny made a precious addition to his life. There was a special rapport between him and Mary's son, Michael, whose infant son he had the pleasure of holding on his knee not long before he died; Mary's daughter Erica was equally devoted to him. John and his wife, Joan, too, made much of him, and his charming and affectionate letters to them show how much he prized the relationship. They corresponded not only on family occasions, but sometimes on points of Scripture, for both John and Joan conducted Bible study groups, and Hooke was always ready to lend his help on any doubtful interpretation. Joan gives a happy glimpse of his personality when she speaks of 'his endearing habit of referring to St. Paul as a kind of personal friend.' But it was not only his young family he rejoiced in. He was at ease with all generations, and took no less pleasure in the company of his father-in-law, an urbane, cultivated and witty man, whose relationship to his daughter was writ large.

The cottage had a big garden, and Hooke now showed himself—though not for the first time—as competent and assiduous at gardening as he was at all physical skills. They had a constant stream of visitors, many of them very interesting and distinguished people, including many Canadian and American friends. Mrs. Hooke was a gifted and indefatigable hostess—warm-hearted, vivacious, and untiring—and cordially welcomed not only all their family and friends but everyone who came to see her husband, from old students and colleagues of his Canadian days to the notable ecclesiastics with whom his work brought him more and more in touch. Bishops were com-

mon, and on one occasion the Hookes found themselves entertaining—if briefly—two at once.

The Hookes were, of course, faithful attendants at the local church, and friends of the incumbent, and Hooke very early gathered round him a group for Bible study. Apart from their local friends and activities, Hooke was in 1961 President of the Society for Old Testament Study, and from 1956–61 Speaker's Lecturer in Biblical Studies in Oxford University. He still did considerable lecturing—to the Vacation Term in Biblical Studies in Oxford, to the students at Buckland University Hall, to the International New Testament Congress in Oxford, and so on—besides speaking to the Women's Institute, preaching occasionally in the Parish Church, and giving two courses of Lenten addresses there, to name only a sample of his numerous speaking engagements.

Between all these interests and his writing (apart from his books, he contributed articles and reviews to numerous journals, as we shall see in Part II), Hooke's days were full. But he still found time for listening to music, for copious correspondence with his distant friends, and even for the exercise of his poetic gift. We have spoken of his aptitude for light verse, but his poetic leanings went deeper than that. All his life he had been writing poetry off and on, showing unquestionable poetic power. 'Had he devoted himself to literature, he might have been a considerable poet,' writes Dean Matthews. He never did 'devote himself to literature', but in this last period, all things combining to inspire him—his love for his wife, her appreciation of his gift, his spiritual struggles, never ceasing but ever pushing through to a greater and more radiant serenity—he had a period of late flowering in which he produced a generous handful of fine poems.

For some years he wrote one every Christmas to go on Christmas cards to close friends. But chiefly he wrote poems to his wife, to which she replied, so that they produced a poetic duet eloquent of their joy in each other and their shared ideals. As a present for his 90th birthday, Mrs. Hooke had some of these poems transcribed by a professional caligrapher and bound in a small volume. A selection of them is given in Part III.

Never an ambitious man, never a restless man, Hooke was supremely content in the life at Buckland, with its procession of tranquil, hardworking days enriched by love and friendship, and illuminated constantly by the gaiety which was an inseparable part of both his own and his wife's character. But satisfied though he might have been to bask in a long sunset, his declining years were never that. He was still to be called upon to labour in the vineyard, still to be offered new experiences, and to embrace them with the adventurous eagerness of a young man. In 1962, he went with his wife to visit a friend of hers who was headmaster of Bernard Mizeki College, a Secondary boarding school for African boys in Rhodesia. Hooke was much interested in the boys and very popular with them, and of course gave them a lecture—a history lesson on ancient Babylon—and preached in the school chapel.

Meantime his reputation had been making steady headway, as a result both of his profoundly valuable Biblical studies in general and of his extremely influential pioneering work in the field of 'myth and ritual'. Already on his 80th birthday it had been abundantly clear, from the innumerable telegrams and letters of congratulation, that he had quietly become an international figure. On his 90th he was honoured as well in his

own country, the honours ranging from an Honorary Fellowship of Jesus College to a window display of his books by Blackwell's in Oxford; the celebrations spreading in widening circles from his family to his village, to his University, and to all his learned colleagues. The first event was a family lunch at The Mitre, Oxford, on the preceding day. The birthday itself opened with a deputation of Buckland school-children—among whom he was a familiar and much-loved figure, never without sweets in his pocket on his walks through the village—to sing 'Happy Birthday to You', and present him with a letter of congratulation from them all. Then came the Buckland Cricket Club (of which he was a Vice-President), bearing a cake with the proud inscription '90 not out'. The day was crowned by a dinner at the local organised for his Buckland friends by the Vicar and the Schoolmaster. The next night he was entertained by the Society for Old Testament Study at a dinner held at Regent's Park College, Oxford; speeches were made, a Hebrew poem, composed in Hooke's honour, was read, and he was presented with a Festchrift (to which we have referred), a collection of essays by members of the Society and others, entitled *Promise and Fulfilment*. The editor, Professor F. F. Bruce, in the dedication of the volume, had written: 'The Society for Old Testament Study has sponsored this publication, because of the pride and joy that it takes in one who is not only a former President but one of its most esteemed and best loved members . . . You have stimulated our thinking, you have stretched our minds, you have kindled or fostered our love for sacred learning . . . But above all, you have enriched our lives by your friendship, and for this we can never be sufficiently grateful.'

All the time messages were coming in from all over the world, and contributions to the fund which had been opened by some of his old students for a commemorative present. This took the form of a fine old Jacobean chair for use at his desk. The surplus went to replenish his cellar, for good wine had always been a delight to him and a feature of his hospitality. Among the poems in Part III will be found the one which he wrote in grateful acknowledgement to the donors of 'the Chair', and also one written on the same occasion by a friend in Buckland, to accompany an offering of 'winter sweet'.

The chair was to be used to the last. Day after day he sat at his desk as usual, thinking and writing, as active mentally as ever. It was at the beginning of his 93rd year that he published his last book, *The Resurrection of Christ as History and Experience*, the fruit of lifelong meditation and spiritual struggle—a moving book, distinguished no less for its humility and courage than for its insight and wisdom. There was no sign as the year wore on that he was not to reach his 94th birthday. Physically, though still remarkable for his endurance, and giving the impression, apart from a certain slowness in his movements, of a man twenty years younger, he had, of course, failed a little. He had stopped—though only just!—sawing wood, an occupation in which, prior to the last year, he had often been surprised. He had begun to use an electric chair for his tours round the village. He went to bed a little earlier, and rose a little later. But his forget-me-not blue eyes—his one claim to beauty—were still vivid, his colour still fresh, his voice still firm, his massive frame unwasted. However, 93 is a great age. He had confessed to Professor Bruce, the year before, that, active though he still was, he was 'longing for the

rest that remains for the people of God.' A bout of 'flu in January 1968 gave him his opportunity, and three days before his 94th birthday he slipped quietly away. Among the innumerable letters of condolence that came to his widow was one from the late Bishop Cockin, which said so exactly what I should like to say here that I must quote it: 'How much consoled we have been to think of the blessed and merciful way in which Sam was allowed to make his going—so entirely appropriate in one whose outstanding characteristic was that completely *unfussy* faith which seemed more marked every time we saw him . . . We never came away without the sense of having been given a kind of assurance of eternal life.'—Nothing is here for tears.

II

WORKS

1. *Miscellaneous*

Hooke was always writing. A room lined from floor to ceiling with books was his natural habitat, and there is no more characteristic picture of him than seated at a massive writing table in such a room. In addition to the books he wrote or edited, he made, of course, many contributions to Biblical scholarship in Journals, Commentaries, Encyclopaedias, and so on.[1] He contributed, for instance, to the original *Peake's Commentary* of 1919, and had the distinction of being the only writer represented in both that and the second edition of 1962. I have already mentioned the 100,000 chain references he produced for the two Bibles put out by the Oxford University Press. For twenty-three years he was Editor of the *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*. On his retirement from this

[1] *The Times Literary Supplement*, *The Oxford Diocesan Magazine*, *Folklore*, *The Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, *Vetus Testamentum*, *The Journal of Theological Studies*, and *New Testament Studies* were among the journals. For the other publications, see the book-list at the end of this book. Special mention should perhaps be made of his contribution to *The Growth of Ideas*, the final Volume of 'Macdonald's Illustrated Library', a serial encyclopaedia in 10 volumes. The title of the chapter for which he was responsible was 'Early Moral and Social Thought', a subject on which by this time he had long been an acknowledged authority. It is a distinguished piece of work, the product of ripe scholarship and exact thinking.

post, in 1958, he was honoured by or, according to the Council of the Palestine Exploration Fund, conferred on it the honour of accepting, the dedication to him of the next volume of the *Quarterly*. In the letter announcing this gesture, the members of the Council pay grateful tribute to his 'many services to scholarship',[1] as well as to his editorship of their journal, which 'maintained its quality at a level which has won worldwide recognition.' It is a great temptation to quote the whole of this letter, for no testimonial could carry more conviction of the 'homage and affection' it professes, but I will limit myself to just one more sentence: 'Your prestige is international, and all who have been in any way associated with your activities feel honoured and enriched by the association.'

He did much reviewing, in connection with which a letter[2] from Arthur Crook, Editor of the *Times Literary Supplement* will bear witness to his success: 'I am so glad that at Cheltenham I had the opportunity of telling your husband—the most modest of men—how much his work was appreciated by *The Times Literary Supplement* . . . I want to say again to you, there are few people today who combine his breadth of knowledge with his witty mode of expression. He was a great stylist; he knew his subject; and we (in the general as well as the editoral sense of the word) are now so much the poorer.'

Another department in which he did distinguished and valuable work was that of translation. With one exception, I shall not comment on his translations here; the titles of them, included in the list of his works at the end of the book, speak for themselves. But his transla-

[1] Among which was cited specifically *The Bible in Basic English*.
[2] Received by Mrs. Hooke after his death.

tion of the Bible into Basic English must have special mention. It is, as has been widely recognized, a monumental and most valuable achievement—no mere simplification of the Revised Version (though even that, within the limits of the Basic vocabulary, would have been a formidable feat), but a translation checked at every step of the way by the original tongues, which not infrequently succeeds in throwing light on passages which in the standard English versions are ambiguous or obscure.[1] Hooke's scholarship, his great knowledge, not only of the Biblical languages and of the background of Christianity, but of the resources of English, combined with his spiritual sensitivity and deep religious insight to make him the ideal person for such a task. But some of the credit for the skilful use of Basic to make a version at once accessible to those with a limited knowledge of English and acceptable to English-speaking people must spill over on to his assistant, who, some years later became his wife. Though at that time there was no thought of actual marriage between them, their collaboration in this peculiarly exacting undertaking was in some sense 'a marriage of true minds'. Mrs Hooke herself was no less gifted and adept in the use of English than her husband, and hardly less endowed with poetic sensitivity.

[1] F. F. Bruce in his book *The English Bible* gives several examples of 'the telling simplicity of the Basic version', and has a delightful anecdote to illustrate it. 'A newly-married couple in the North of England decided to put above their mantlepiece . . . the words which appear in the A.V. as 'where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty'. They regarded the A.V. rendering as too ambiguous, and consulted a number of other versions in order to find what they believed to be the true sense of the words. At last they were successful, when they turned up the Basic English version and found the rendering: 'Where the spirit of the Lord is, there the heart is free'. These are the words which hang in their living-room as the motto of their home.'

2. *The Personal Quest*

We now come to the books of which he was author or editor, the chief subject-matter of this section. These fall broadly into two groups—those concerned with his faith and based mainly on the New Testament, and those springing from the combination of his Old Testament and archaeological researches, and issuing in the series of publications which brought into prominence the connection between myth and ritual and threw a flood of light on the religions of the ancient Near East, including, most importantly, the early religion of the Hebrews. It is perhaps to the second group that he owed his widest fame and his influence on scholarship; it was certainly the first that made him a vital force in the lives of so many of his fellow-countrymen. Though of course they are intertwined to some extent, I propose to discuss these two strands of his work separately, in the order indicated.

Books of the first group did, in fact, come first, both chronologically and in their importance to him. (They also come last, spanning and crowning his life's work.) Apart from his annotated edition in 1910 of St. Augustine's *De Catechizandis Rudibus*, the first thing he published was a little book called *Christ and the Kingdom of God*, which came out in London in 1919. The fact that this man, whose whole life was devoted to speaking and writing, was 44 years old before he started publishing should prepare us to find that his very first book was already distinguished by a mature richness of scholarship and firmness of approach. Long before he began to write books, he had given years of searching thought and patient study to the bases of his religion, and already in *Christ and the Kingdom of God* he was proclaiming the

beliefs which sustained him at the end. I do not say '*to* the end', because the career of his faith was chequered, and there were times when he seemed to some, including Dean Matthews, 'to tremble on the verge of agnosticism.' But it was essentially a circular, or better, as someone has suggested, a spiral tour. For, although he perpetually returned to his earliest beliefs, it was never to exactly the same point, but rather to an enhanced realization of them. He never ceased from mental fight, from sifting, probing, fearlessly questioning what all his being longed passionately to rest in, but in his beginning was his end. His last book, *The Resurrection of Christ as History and Experience*, is a humble reaffirmation of the faith that imbued his first; but, as his wife says, a reaffirmation exhibiting 'a richness of spiritual insight and experience that far transcended his starting-point.'

T. S. Eliot speaks of Pascal in his *Apology for Christianity* as 'facing unflinchingly the demon of doubt which is inseparable from the spirit of belief.' Nothing could better express Hooke's religious attitude, or sum up his lifelong struggle. He is at home in that company of religious thinkers—a very noble and distinguished company, including not only Pascal and Eliot himself but, significantly (for Donne was perhaps the poet most after his own heart), the metaphysical poets of the seventeenth century—in whom belief and doubt waged an endless struggle. This was not for Hooke, any more than for any of the others, a war between intellect and intuition. He never made the mistake of trying to establish, or even buttress, his faith by reason. From the beginning he realized and proclaimed that belief in God is a matter of a deep, instinctive, inner response to the spirituality of the universe. No arguments, no 'evidence',

can produce this if it is not there, and none can eradicate it from the heart of a man in whom it once stirs. Hooke was possessed by it from his earliest years, and, with all respect to Dean Matthews, I do not myself think that he was ever in danger of *agnosticism*. The question with which he struggled all his life was not that of the existence of God, but that of the divinity of Christ. He could not have been other than religious; to be so was an integral part of his nature. But he did sometimes seem to some to come perilously near, in his unshrinking questioning, to losing that 'anchor of the soul', the knowledge and love not of God but of His Son, Jesus Christ. However that may be, he never did lose it.

Christ and the Kingdom of God was a very modest little book, intended for use as a 'circle text-book', that is, as a basis for the periodical discussions of a Bible-study group. But slender and unpretentious though it is, no one can read it through without feeling that it is from the hand of a master. Apart from the elegance and clarity of its style, one is at once struck by the lightly-worn authority of its learning. Clearly Hooke's impressive insight into the religious, social, and national background of Jesus, his power to make us see Jesus's life and development in its natural setting, is based on direct access to and long familiarity with the ancient Hebrew writings, to a degree which constitutes originality. He is not really telling us anything other scholars have not known. But he is presenting the facts with such an intimate knowledge, such a confident understanding, that all shines in a new and much more vivid light. This quiet little book is startling in its evocative power.

I have paid so much attention to what might seem a minor work because, small as it is, it is completely

characteristic of the writer. It shows forth not only the love of God with which he was always imbued, not only the brilliance of mind and scholarship he brought to the preaching of this truth, but also the doubt which was to assail him all his life. There is no evidence of this in the talks themselves, but in his statement in the Introduction, 'We cannot define the method or the manner of God's becoming man,' reinforced as it was by the quotation from T. R. Glover:[1] 'Was he God, or was he man? You'd give anything to know!', the tormenting question of the status of Christ is planted squarely before us. True, Hooke cites Glover's question as applying to his students, not to himself. For himself it is enough that, as St. Paul tells us, 'God was in Christ.' And yet, over and over again he is to return to that question—and over and over again to that answer, which becomes for him ever more deeply significant and satisfying.

In 1926 appeared *Christianity in the Making*,[2] in which, in the course of tracing the developments of the first three centuries, he exposes, with a frankness and a thoroughness which to some people seemed incompatible with his faith, the slenderness of the historical evidence for the origin of Christianity, the Synoptic Problem, and the suspect nature of much of the tradition. It is very much a scrupulous excercise in demolition. He dismisses the virgin birth as 'having no evidence of the slightest historical value,' and after examining all the accounts of the Resurrection he finds it 'difficult to avoid the conclusion that the evidence has been created by the belief, not the belief by the evidence.' He finds himself, as a result of the historical difficulties, unable to accept the usual

[1] From an address given at an S.C.M. conference held in Liverpool in 1915, on 'The Death of Christ'.

[2] Much later he referred to this as 'a bad book.'

'supernatural interpretation of the events of the life of Jesus and the early Church.' But how much he wants to! And though he cannot range himself with the Divine Intervention school, he cannot, either, abandon his faith in the existence of God, His 'ceaseless activity of love towards man,' man's groping and stumbling response to spiritual reality, and the life and death of Christ as the triumphant culmination of this relationship. He faces the alternatives with determined courage. On the one hand, we have Christianity 'as a divine intervention in the course of human affairs. It is the irruption of the supernatural into the world of men, the supreme event of history. Hence Christianity as a religion is the last word, the absolute religion.' On the other hand, we have 'the broad scientific view of the universe which recognizes the enormous value of Christianity in history but does not acknowledge its finality or its supernatural authority.' On the one hand, Jesus as the 'divine, pre-existent person fore-knowing all, wielding omnipotence never so benevolently, and passing on to a foregone triumph;' on the other, as 'one who cut his adventurous way through the barriers of ancestral prejudice and rooted religious customs, who loved greatly, who saw a vision of a new age and died in loneliness and defeat to bring it about.' He feels that the second picture 'has given to many a deeper meaning to life and a keener edge to the never-ending fight for advance than they could receive' from the first.

This seems to me certainly his most extreme position, the nearest he came to that 'trembling on the brink of agnosticism' of which Dean Matthews speaks. Not that his struggle ended with this book. For many years his quest for certainty continued, and with it an ever-present

preoccupation with the Scriptures, an ever-deepening understanding of their message. In spite of his uncertainty about Christianity, he had none about his vocation to spread the knowledge of it. He was always the centre of a Bible-study group, teaching as he learnt, sharing with his students his wisdom and his doubts. Speaking of the courses in which they collaborated, Dean Matthews notes with wonder that, far from shaking the faith of those who clustered round him—and were sometimes at first inclined to think him 'a lovable heretic'—Hooke had precisely the opposite effect. 'Students wrote to me, testifying to the profound religious influence which the course had had upon them . . . Hooke, instead of being a disturbing factor, had a major influence in this experience.'[1] The Dean does not conceal the fact that he finds this puzzling, and is driven to ask: 'May it not be that the attempt to find the truth, and to do that as a group, is, at least for educated persons, the best and most lasting evangelism?' I think this question comes near to the heart of the matter. But I think too that the simple fact was that Hooke's faith never really wavered. He put it to every test, but fundamentally it always possessed him and radiated from him. 'God was in Christ.'

By the time of the third milestone in this personal progress, *The Kingdom of God in the Experience of Jesus*, published more than twenty years later, in 1949, Hooke's views had become, if still doubtfully orthodox on certain points, far removed from the suspicion of agnosticism.[2]

[1] 'Samuel Henry Hooke: A personal appreciation', the Dean's contribution to *Promise and Fulfilment*.

[2] This reversion was already marked in a little book published for the S.C.M. in the previous year, *What is the Bible?* which, though it stands a little aside from the personal progress we are tracing, must be mentioned on its own merits. It is a brilliantly lucid account of the origin and content

The book is original in relating, much more closely and more understandingly than had usually been done, the ministry of Jesus to his historical forerunners, the Prophets of the Old Testament, and to the various sects and manifestations of the Hebrew religion, especially the mission of John the Baptist. Again, the brilliant insight into Hebrew religious convictions and ways of thinking is notable, and though some of the reviewers disagree with him on points of interpretation, or find him here and there obscure, they are at one in considering the work 'a deeply significant book, enlightening and moving, a real advancement both of our studies and of our faith.'[1] The most important thing for us is the intense faith and love of God which shines through the scholarship and the sober and conscientious exposition. It is no work of ecstasy; it is a solid and painstaking investigation. But it is founded on deep religious conviction.

Nevertheless, as one reviewer, otherwise admiring, points out: 'It is never quite clear whether Mr. Hooke looks on Jesus as the last and greatest of the goodly fellowship of the prophets, or whether he accepts the doctrine of the Incarnation as the Church understands it. Nor is it easy to see what he thinks happened at the Resurrection.' I agree with him that Hooke never commits himself to 'the doctrine of the Incarnation as the Church understands it.' But there can be no doubt of his belief that Jesus was the mediator between God and man, or of his conviction that 'at the moment when the physical act of dying brought time to an end for

of the Bible, with special emphasis on 'the massive spiritual experience of which it is the record', and it leaves no doubt that to Hooke 'the experience of the Hebrew prophets, culminating in the experience of Jesus, represents a contact with ultimate reality'.

[1] *The Times Literary Supplement*, 7 April, 1951.

him, he rose to the new life of the spirit'. What happened at the Resurrection was 'the total act of God in Christ, the triumphant experience of Jesus as he passed from the darkness of . . . abandonment into the full light of God's delight in him, into the new Creation, where forgiveness was to be known and of which he, as the Firstborn from the dead, had become the head'. Clearly Hooke did not believe in the resurrection of a material body—which was, of course, the expectation of the disciples, following the Pharisees in their adherence to this tradition of Hebrew eschatology. His faith, like St. Paul's was in the resurrection of a 'spiritual body', a 'body of glory' as opposed to the 'body of humiliation' that hung upon the cross. So much is clear at this point. But for a fuller exposition of the meaning the Resurrection has for him, we must await his last book, *The Resurrection of Christ as History and Experience*.

That this is an interpretation which at least some thoughtful Christians do not find obscure or unacceptable will be seen from a letter written to Hooke by D. Westermann:[1]

> 'The book on the Kingdom of God which you sent me . . . has given me much. It shows me the person and the work of Jesus in a light in which I have never before seen it. It is a truer and more realistic, yet at the same time a more divine, life. For me, it is the most helpful book I have read on this subject.'

Before proceeding to Hooke's next great work, I must mention an essay which, though not published in

[1] Professor in the Faculty of Philosophy in the University of Berlin, 1921, Professor Emeritus, 1959, joint Editor of the *Mitteilungen des Orientalischen Seminars*.

book form until 1956,[1] was actually written and first printed[2] some years before *The Kingdom of God in the Experience of Jesus*. It is called *What is Christianity?* and its point of view with regard to the Resurrection is the same as that of the book. But it perhaps expresses a little more uncompromisingly the attitude of Hooke to the Incarnation. Borrowing from Baron von Hugel[3] the sentence 'Certainly Christianity is irreducibly *incarnational*', Hooke comments: 'The implication of that epithet is that Christianity presents itself as being something that no other religion has claimed to be, the living expression of God's complete entry into human life. It does not merely mean that God entered into human flesh at the birth of Jesus, but that the whole story of God's relations with man from the beginning is one unresting movement of divine love towards a union in which both God and man might find complete satisfaction . . . Christianity offers as the divine end and purpose, not the absorption of the human into the divine, not the extinction of human personality, not an eternity of bliss after death as the reward of a virtuous life on earth, but a living union with God here and now, a life already belonging to the timeless realm in which the human spirit, freed from the bondage of sin, enriched by the knowledge of God, will develop to the utmost, in communion with all the other spirits moving towards the same goal, the full potentialities with which grace has endowed it.'

This essay, too, made its conquest. It is the one described by the Rev. F. E. Stallings in his letter on p. 31

[1] As part of the collection of essays *The Siege Perilous*.

[2] By the Modern Churchmen's Union in *Modren Statements of Christian Belief*, 1945.

[3] *Thoughts on the Essentials of Catholicism*, 1913.

of this book as 'the finest brief exposition of the Christian faith I have ever come across.'

It was thirteen years before Hooke published another book significant of his religious progress. In 1961 appeared *Alpha and Omega*, embodying the material of his lectures as Speaker's Lecturer at Oxford from 1956 to 1961. Its object was, as one of his reviewers puts it, 'to examine the pattern of revelation within the compass of the Bible,'[1] or, as he himself puts it, 'to enquire into the conditions under which images arise and acquire significance for the purpose of revelation,' images being 'a mode of divine speech . . . which emerge in a particular context of history and a particular relation between God and man.' It is beyond my competence to assess the validity of his interpretations—the book was controversial, and the reviewer quoted above objects that Hooke's attribution of symbolic significance to certain passages 'is eisegesis rather than exegesis.' But he also says, and in doing so speaks for both sides in the controversy, that 'throughout the book there are profound and penetrating insights, and scholarship and faith are alike evident on every page.' In fact, in none of his writings have both been more evident. 'It starts,' he writes, 'from the assumption, based on history and religious experience, that God exists and has willed to reveal Himself, and that man is capable of receiving the revelation.' Beginning with the groping but significant attempts of Babylon and Egypt, in their mythology and ceremonial, to figure forth the pattern of reality and respond to God's eternal outpouring of love, he moves from them to the Chosen People—the people who at some time in their early history 'gave the response for which God was searching,'

[1] *The Times Literary Supplement*, 18 August, 1961.

and to whom, generation after generation, he thereafter revealed his pupose. He follows the history of Israel from the Patriarchs, through Moses and the great line of the Prophets, to the 'rebirth of prophecy' in John the Baptist, recording the symbols and images in which God makes vivid His purpose and prefigures the course of history towards that 'far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves.' The rest of the book, almost two-thirds, deals with the ministry of Jesus, and with the 'exposition of the glory' in the preaching and the writings of Peter, Paul, and John, and in the Epistle to the Hebrews. 'So this study ends with an all too brief outline of the fourfold exposition of the glory of the Son, with the special object of illustrating how the manifold images which had emerged in the course of revelation are gathered up and transformed in the Person of the Word Incarnate.'

It was an original and very interesting idea, and led to a book which itself has the force of a revelation to many who read it. Even to those who disagree with its thesis, it is acknowledged to shed valuable new light on a great number of points. It was perhaps the book which in his own eyes was his best, and it was everywhere received with the respect and admiration due to a major work. Nobody could—nobody did—fail to marvel at the completely unimpaired mental vigour it demonstrated on the part of a man of eighty-seven. But what seems to me even more worthy of note is his not merely unimpaired but heightened spiritual vigour. All those years of testing and questioning can now be seen as a steady advance to firmer and firmer ground. His faith is stronger than ever.

So we move on to the last of his testaments, *The Resurrection of Christ as History and Experience*. Published

at the beginning of his ninety-third year, it was hailed by critic after critic not merely as—inevitably, considering his age—'a remarkable achievement', but as a work of great interest and importance, original and illuminating. It was stated by one reviewer to be 'as comprehensive and masterly as anything that he has written,' by another to be 'a resounding affirmation of faith.' Hooke himself says that the book was undertaken 'to discover if possible, in the light of a lifetime's experience, how much of the traditional Christian hope holds good for me as I confront the time of my departure,' and that it is therefore to be regarded 'not as a scholastic exercise in Christian eschatology, but as a testament of faith.' But it is a scholar's testament, and the investigation on which it is based proceeds in scholarly fashion from the history of the idea of resurrection in Hebrew beliefs to a minute examination of the teaching of Jesus on the point, and of the New Testament accounts, and finally the interpretation, of Christ's own Resurrection. His emphasis is, of course, on religious experience, on revelation, and he naturally applies here the 'pattern of revelation' which he developed in *Alpha and Omega*. One very interesting feature of the book is the development of Hooke's idea of the Transfiguration as not only prefiguring the Resurrection, but as deliberately exhibited to Peter, James and John to prepare them for the revelation of the glory of the risen Christ.

After examining in detail the New Testament accounts of the Resurrection, Hooke finds that the evidence for the resurrection of Christ in the flesh is too inconsistent and contradictory to be accepted, but the evidence that Christ 'was seen' is convincing. But the resurrection of Christ is not simply his return to this world as a living

presence. It is the redemption of the world, 'the Resurrection of the Church.' For Jesus has promised the disciples that his going to the Father means that they too will go to the Father, 'that where I am ye may be also.' The supreme conclusion is that:

> 'Beyond the end, beyond the "last day", lies the shining vision of redeeming love satisfied. Here is the believer's hope, the Church's hope, and the hope for a creation that, as Paul said, still groans in bondage. Here we may recall that . . . he had also said, "Hope maketh not ashamed because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts." That love is the ultimate and unshakable ground of hope; we are surrounded and encircled by a love from which neither death nor life can separate us. Rooted and grounded in love, sustained by the life of the risen Christ, the possibility lies before us of understanding, not alone, but in the mystic union of all those who share the same life, in all its dimensions, the love of Christ which passes knowledge.'[1]

In this Hooke is content to rest, and to invite the Christian of the present day to rest with him, and there is no doubt that to many his explanation of the inconsistencies of the Gospel accounts of the Resurrection, and his acceptance of the Pauline concept of the 'resurrection body'—'neither ghost nor flesh'—will offer a solution to be eagerly embraced. The Reviewer in *The Times Literary Supplement* comments: 'The restrained faith to which he is led and the robust integrity with which he expresses it give high value to this testament.' But once more it is left to Dean Matthews to pronounce the verdict to which

[1] *The Resurrection of Christ*, p. 194. This fine passage was quoted by Dean Matthews in his address at Hooke's funeral.

my account of his books has, perhaps obviously, been leading:-

> 'This book may be the crown of a long lifetime of scholarly research in the history of religion, and also of his quest for faith. . . . All his many friends will rejoice that his massive learning and lucidity of mind have never been more evident. . . . Perhaps, too, it may be permitted to note with thankfulness that his thought has been led to an even more definite and positive acceptance of the Christian faith. Some Ph.D. candidates of the future will no doubt find the development of Hooke's theology a fascinating and instructive subject for a thesis.'[1]

It did, in fact, prove to be his last work—he died less than a year later—and, I believe with Dean Matthews, his crowning one. And in addition to endorsing the Dean's reasons for rejoicing, I can now give one more—that he died completely at peace, anchored at last, serene in his faith. As to the suitability of Hooke's long voyage to that haven as the theme for a dissertation, my agreement goes without saying. It is obviously worthy of a much more detailed consideration than I have been able to give it here.

3. *Myth and Ritual*

In 1933, Hooke's writings of the second group were ushered in by the publication of *Myth and Ritual*, with which his name was ever after to be associated. This was a symposium, by a number of distinguished Old Testament and other scholars, on the subject of the intertwined rituals and ritual myths of the ancient Near East, and

[1] The first sentence of this quotation is taken from a review in *The Daily Telegraph*, the rest of it from one in *The Church Quarterly Review*.

their possible influence on the religion of the Hebrews. Each paper had previously been delivered as a lecture, either at London University or at Oxford (see footnote p. 25). Hooke edited the collection and contributed two essays, including the first and key one, 'The myth and ritual pattern of the ancient East'.

The book made an immediate stir, both at home and abroad, being hailed by the critic of the Oxford Magazine as 'the most important volume on Old Testament interpretation published in England since Fraser's *Folk-Lore*.' 'For theologians,' he declared further, 'the book is not only interesting but indispensable.' The most enthusiastic of the foreign scholars were the Scandinavians, especially a group centred on Uppsala, whose own researches, which had been tending in the same direction as Hooke's, had made them peculiarly responsive to this lead.

Hooke became internationally noted as the pioneer of the exploration of the myth-and-ritual patterns of the ancient religions of the Near East with a view to the investigation of their relation to that of the Hebrews. There were three outstanding elements in his position. First, his emphasis on the interdependence of myth and ritual in religious ceremonies. Second, his detection of a common pattern running through all the religions of the area under consideration. Third, the belief that traces, at least, of this pattern are to be found in the Old Testament. Only in the last-named particular was he actually the first (at any rate, the first Englishman) in the field. The idea that myths were originally magical invocations had already been raised by anthropologists, if not elaborately investigated; and some adumbration of what came to be called 'patternism' was present in the work of Fraser and

the anthropologists, Elliot Smith and W. J. Perry, under whom Hooke had studied. But it was Hooke who correlated Fraser's 'brilliant guesswork' with subsequent discoveries and not only gave the investigation shape, but put it on a scientific footing. As Professor E. O. James said, in a letter to Hooke on his ninetieth birthday, 'It was not until you entered the field that the way was clarified and opened, with a clearly defined course to pursue. Whatever has been attained in the subsequent investigation is unquestionably due to your initial definition and leadership.'

As a pioneer, then, his title cannot be disputed. Less justifiably, he is looked upon by many as the founder of the 'myth-and-ritual school', a description which he was always at pains to repudiate. Hooke deplored the idea that he had started a schism, and had no wish to be labelled as a member of any 'school'. He regarded the inquiries which he had set on foot as completely unfettered, not seeking to bend the facts to any new theory, but only to examine the evidence for one which had been suggested by many significant indications.

The 'myth-and-ritual school' was in any case misnamed—unless we are careful to spell 'myth' and 'ritual' with capitals, indicating that the school was based on the contentions of the book, not on the sense of its title. For what distinguished the group of scholars who formed the 'school' was not their adherence to the idea of the interdependence of myth and ritual as set forth by Hooke, but their belief in 'patternism', that is, that a similar pattern of myth and ritual is to be found throughout the cultures of the ancient Near East, and that its influence can be detected in the Old Testament.

For Hooke, *ritual* is a prescribed set of ceremonial

actions the performance of which is necessary for the preservation and well-being of the community (generally personified by the king), and *myth* (for the purpose of the book) is 'the spoken part of a ritual', both 'the story which the ritual enacts' and the pronouncement of those 'words of power' which are themselves aimed at bringing about the desired result.[1] In primitive religion, myths, like religion itself, are not occupied with general questions concerning the world, but with certain practical and pressing problems of daily life. Their object is to secure the means of subsistence, 'to keep the sun and the moon doing their duty, to ensure the regular flooding of the Nile, to maintain the bodily vigour of the king, . . . the embodiment of the prosperity of the community,' or, on the individual level, 'to ward off disaster or ill fortune'[2] and so on. The public ceremonials are repeated seasonally —at the Spring Festival, the New Year Festival, the Midsummer Feast, etc.—reflecting the preoccupation of primitive man with the 'vegetation drama', the mystery of the annual death of vegetation in the autumn and its revival in the spring. Long before there are any traces, much less records, for us to read, urban elements had been incorporated with the agricultural and even earlier ones, and certain ceremonies had been instituted to meet special needs; but the general object of the myth-and-ritual complex remained the same, 'the attempt to deal with or control the unpredictable element in human experience', which 'in the early stages of man's knowledge of the universe was almost coextensive with human life.'[3]

The common ritual pattern of which Hooke finds

[1] *Myth and Ritual*, pp. 2–3.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Myth and Ritual*, p. 4.

traces throughout the ancient East, exhibited most fully and typically in Babylon, Assyria, and Egypt, but traceable in Canaan and Israel, consists of five elements: (1) the dramatic enactment of the death and resurrection of the god (generally in the person of the king), behind which may be glimpsed the primitive custom of killing the king when there is any diminution in his physical strength; (2) the recital or miming of the myth of creation (which, as Hooke points out, was not for early man the act of bringing the world into existence out of the void, but of imposing order upon an already existing chaos), the object of this being to confirm the event by repetition; (3) the performance of the ritual combat, in which the god triumphs over his enemies—the god always had enemies, forces working against him which had to be overcome, a recognition of the obvious antitheses present in the universe, as good and evil, man and nature; (4) the representation or symbolization of the 'sacred marriage', the union of the divine powers of fertility for the purpose of ensuring the fertility of the earth and all its living creatures; (5) the triumphal procession of minor deities led by the god, showing himself to the people as restored to life, victorious and supreme.

At the beginning reactions to the book were almost wholly favourable, but in time critical opposition began to make itself heard. Some of this was based on misunderstanding, especially terminological (the senses given to the terms 'myth' and 'pattern', in particular, though expressly defined by Hooke and perfectly reasonable, were sometimes not clearly apprehended, and his arguments were proclaimed fallacious because they did not fit in with the senses appropriated to these words by earlier writers); some was based on prejudice—it was not

easy for Biblical scholars of the fundamentalist type to accept the idea that the Hebrew religion could have taken over any part of its cult from the surrounding heathen; some was sound honest criticism of unproven or speculative details, about which not all the contributors were as cautious as Hooke himself.

But the main rock on which the critics split was the controversy between the 'diffusionist' and the 'evolutionary' theories of the spread of civilization (already referred to, see p. 21). The former, ardently sponsored by Perry and Elliot Smith, maintained against the latter that civilization had not sprung up independently all over the world as the product of similar conditions, but had first developed in some peculiarly favoured spot and thence spread, through contacts of all sorts, to all other areas. This idea aroused violent opposition amongst English and American archaeologists, and Hooke's adoption of it assured him of their bitter hostility as soon as they realized what he was up to.

But though Hooke took up the diffusionist position, indeed proclaimed it to have been his inspiration, he differed importantly from its sponsors. They were completely dogmatic, insisting that all culture had arisen from some sole source, and, moreover that this source was indubitably ancient Egypt. Hooke was quite undogmatic, except in his contention that culture travels—if that can be called a dogma which is based on 'abundant evidence for the interchange of many culture elements throughout the ancient East.' He never maintained that diffusionism proved a complete explanation for any culture, asserting that 'the theory of culture-borrowing in no way conflicts with the fact that borrowing may exist side by side with the development of independent

ideas and institutions.' Nor did he favour Egypt as the 'cradle-land', leaning, with his fellow-anthropologist, Professor E. O. James, to a Mesopotamian source, but keeping an open mind even in this. This completely scientific, inquiring tone, this readiness to abide the verdict of further research into the details of the pattern, manifested not only by Hooke himself but by most of his collaborators, was largely overlooked by those who attacked the book.

It was believed and asserted by some, for example, that the contributors to the symposium had 'recklessly' imposed on Hebrew religion the pattern which they claimed to have discovered in the cults of Babylon, Assyria, Egypt and other countries of the Mediterranean area. This was simply untrue. The purpose of the book was completely investigatory; all it set out to do was to compare the evidence of the Old Testament with what was known of the religions of surrounding civilizations, to see what light could be shed upon the former by the hypothesis that some elements in it had been transmitted from the latter. The result of the very fine series of inquiries of which the symposium was composed—into ancient Egyptian, Babylonian, Canaanite, and Hebrew myths and rituals, into sun-worship, and into rituals of initiation in the various cultures—was a very strong confirmation of the hypothesis. But there was never any claim that Israel had adopted the myth-and-ritual pattern of any other culture *in toto*, or indeed any suggestion that such a pattern ever presented itself as a whole to any observers. What percolated through from one country to another was fragmentary, diluted, 'degraded', adapted to local needs, and, in the case of the Hebrews, mainly vouched for by negative evidence—the prohibi-

tions of its codes and the denunciations of its prophets. Also, it was largely confined to the early history of Israel, to the period of settlement in Canaan when the formerly nomadic and pastoral Hebrews were gradually being transformed into an agricultural and urban community. That they tended from time to time to be attracted by strange gods and to lapse into heathen practices is patent from their own records. To recognize this is in no way to deny the unparalleled spirituality of Hebrew religion from the time even of Abraham. But in Hooke's words 'such a level of religious experience, such a conception of the character of Yahweh, was not to be found in *the nation as a whole* at any period of Old Testament history.'[1] As the late Canon Simpson, in his Foreword to the book, could say even then: 'Today no scientific historian of Old Testament history studies the political history of the Hebrews except in the light of the history of their neighbours;' to Hooke and his associates, cultural, including religious, history must be viewed in the same way.

I have already indicated, but it may be advisable to state explicity, that neither Hooke nor, as far as is ascertainable from the book, any of his collaborators supported the extreme view of complete diffusionism, according to which every culture owed its customs and institutions ultimately to some birthplace of civilization in the ancient East. They were far from rejecting the possibility of civilization's having evolved spontaneously in different places, but they recognized, and felt the need to stress, the undeniability and importance of the spread and interchange, by commercial and other contacts, of social and religious ideas and practices from one area to another.

[1] *Myth, Ritual and Kingship*, p. 19.

In the next twenty-five years Hooke deepened and expanded his researches into the myth-and-ritual pattern of Mesopotamia, with a view to setting the pattern in the wider context of the history, not of the Hebrews but of civilization generally. *Myth and Ritual* was followed in 1935 by *The Labyrinth*, another symposium edited by Hooke on the same general theme, but covering a wider geographical area and taking in a wider sense of 'myth'. All the contributors except Hooke, W. O. E. Oesterly, and Professor James were new. Perhaps the most noteworthy of the new essays was the one by Aubrey R. Johnson, entitled 'The rôle of the king in the Jerusalem cultus'—not because, excellent as it is, it eclipsed the others in interest or scholarship, but because the importance of the king in the myth-and-ritual pattern was to prove the crux of the controversy aroused by the earlier book. In the same year the Schweich lectures were delivered by Hooke at the British Academy under the title 'The Origins of Early Semitic Ritual', and three years later they appeared in print under the same title. Only a year after that he published *Archaeology and the Old Testament*, a slight but characteristically thorough and well-balanced book. But now eight years were to elapse before he brought out another book on this subject, though he continued constantly to contribute to the discussion in addresses and periodicals, specially *Folklore*. The book published in 1947 was *In the Beginning*, Volume VI of the series 'The Clarendon Bible,'[1] which dealt with the book of Genesis, its origins, myths and sagas, in the light of the mass of archaeological data which by that time had come to hand. It again shows, as each successive

[1] Published at the Clarendon Press, Oxford, and covering the books of the Old and New Testaments.

book in this stream does, Hooke's ever-widening scholarship and increasing mastery of his material—he was always abreast of his time in every part of the field.

In 1953 appeared *Babylonian and Assyrian Religion*, of which one reviewer, R. D. Barnett, wrote: 'It would be hard to recommend a better and more up-to-date account in English . . . It is possible in this book to get some understanding, based upon a century's work upon cuneiform texts, of that vast and complicated religious organization' of which 'the impression made on the Hebrew mind can be seen running through the Bible, from Genesis to the Apocrypha.' Though not all the critics accepted Hooke's old thesis in so explicit and matter-of-fact a manner, this review may fairly be taken as typical in its enthusiasm; all hailed the book as a valuable and much-needed account by an acknowledged master in the field. *The Siege Perilous: Essays in Biblical Anthropology*, a mixed bag of Hooke's own essays, including much interesting material, came next, in 1956; and then, at last, in 1958, twenty-five years after the appearance of *Myth and Ritual*, a new symposium on the old topic, *Myth, Ritual and Kingship*, consisting, as the original book had done, of lectures previously delivered—this time at the University of Manchester.

In the years between much had been done, and much had been discovered, to throw more light on Hooke's original thesis. These further researches and discoveries —notably the full evaluation of the Ras Shamra texts— had justified and amplified many of the suggestions of Hooke and his followers, and made necessary the adaptation or abandonment of others. Already, in one of the essays in *The Siege Perilous*, Hooke had written: 'I have no hesitation in admitting that some of the things said in the

first essay in *Myth and Ritual* about divine kingship in Mesopotamia need to be restated', though he adds 'I have so far found no reason to change my views about the central position of the king in relation to the cult, whether in Egypt, Mesopotamia, or Canaan.' It was chiefly the growing appreciation of the importance of the king, together with the enormous amount of new knowledge which had been gathered in all parts of the field, which transformed what might have been a second edition of *Myth and Ritual* into the entirely new book *Myth, Ritual and Kingship*.[1] Surveying the effects of the years, Hooke writes: 'Although further knowledge has brought about modification in details . . . I still find no cause to abandon the main outlines of the position laid down in *Myth and Ritual*.' The book as a whole, however, is far from being a triumphant vindication of the myth-and-ritual thesis. It is, greatly to Hooke's credit, no work of propaganda, but an assembly of further impartial investigations in the field. None of the contributors to *Myth and Ritual* is represented in it, except Hooke himself, and only one of those who appeared in *The Labyrinth*, Professor Aubrey R. Johnson, of whose valuable essay on kingship in the earlier book I have spoken. Among the new writers are two scholars from abroad, one French, R. de Langhe, and one Swedish, G. Widengren. Of them all, only the last-named can be said to be an enthusiastic upholder of the original position. Of the rest, the majority are soberly open-minded, some cautious, some inclined to be favourable, some openly critical. More than one reviewer commented on the fair-mindedness of the Editor in

[1] In the same year as this was published, Hooke went to Ghana as visiting professor (see p. 34). While there he gave a lecture on Kingship, which was of peculiar interest to his Ghanaian audience in view of the existence of a divine king in Ashanti.

admitting to the symposium lukewarm or even adverse opinions, and praised the moderation and balance of his own views.

But though Hooke neither sought nor received from his team undissenting acceptance of the myth-and-ritual thesis, even the severest of its critics was whole-hearted in his appreciation of the importance of the original initiative. 'He [the writer] sees the *Myth and Ritual* thesis as one of the major developments in the comparative study of religion, and he believes that, despite all the opposition which it has encountered, when the final adjustments are made it will be found that its contribution has been of the highest importance, and that its value is abiding.'[1]

This was the summing up. Hooke wrote only one more book to this purpose, *Middle Eastern Mythology*, which studies myth in a wider sense than that defined in the first book, and once more takes into account the great amount of new material that has come to light. 'For Professor Hooke,' says one of his reviewers, 'has kept himself abreast of all the new knowledge, and his learning is not just a fossil from earlier years'—a tribute repeated in varying forms, by critic after critic, whenever he published a new book.

We may say, then, on the basis of Hooke's own modest verdict, that his thesis has stood the test of time. Going beyond his quiet reaffirmation of his own belief, I think it is safe to assert that there are not many now who still dispute the existence of *some* ritual pattern in the ancient East, or its influence on the early religion of the Hebrews, though there may still be many who disagree

[1] 'The Myth and Ritual Position Critically Considered,' by S. G. F. Brandon, *Myth, Ritual and Kingship*, p. 290.

about the details and ubiquity of the former, and there definitely *are* many who hotly contest the extreme applications of the latter developed by certain, especially Swedish, scholars. Hooke himself stopped far short of these extremes, being, most importantly, firmly against any association between the ritual death and resurrection of the king-god and the death and resurrection of Christ. Apart from his refusal to push his theory too far in essentials, he displayed, as one critic put it, 'a healthy distrust of speculation' even on small points. The enthusiasts of the 'myth-and-ritual school' were not all possessed of his sober caution, and criticisms called forth by them are often quite undeserved by Hooke himself.

The importance of Hooke's initiative in *Myth and Ritual* is far from lying wholly in the book's thesis, landmark though that was in the history of the subject. Perhaps its supreme value was in the impetus it gave to Old Testament studies. Hooke's own writings constitute only a fraction of the fruitful work to which it gave rise. To quote again S. G. F. Brandon, whose critical attitude towards the thesis, which I have already noted, will acquit him of any bias: 'The mark of a truly seminal thinker is surely to be found in the influence that his ideas have had upon the subsequent development of the subject to which he has devoted himself . . . S. H. Hooke must justly be acclaimed one who has not so much contributed to his chosen field of study as given to it "a new look". The present writer can vividly recall the new interest which was stimulated within him for Old Testament study by his original reading of the symposium *Myth and Ritual*. Myth suddenly took on a fresh signification, affording new insights into familiar material and

suggesting further lines of exploration.'[1] Many more tributes on the same lines could be quoted. I am greatly tempted to enumerate them, both by the desire to heap up the evidence and by the reluctance to single out one from so many. But, with apologies to all the other scholars who have acknowledged their indebtedness in equally forceful and graceful terms, I must let the above stand for all.

One thing remains to be said, one thing which links up both strands of Hooke's teaching. Contrary to what is often superficially supposed, his readiness to admit the presence of borrowed elements in the cult of the Old Testament rests not upon lack of faith but on the most profound faith, not only in God but in the Hebrews as His chosen people. He affirms this in many places, but nowhere more explicitly than in his first essay in *Myth, Ritual and Kingship*: 'I firmly believe that God chose Israel to be the vehicle of revelation, and that in the experience of Abraham and Moses there was established a relationship of faith and obedience which was the vital seed that ultimately flowered in . . . a depth of religious experience without parallel in the religious literature of any other people.'[2] But God's choice was not preordained; it was a genuine choice 'according to His word.' Man, not Israel, was God's concern. Not only among the Hebrews but among all primitive peoples were there 'gropings after the divine,' and that fact is reflected, if distortedly, in the myth-and-ritual pattern. 'We find the traces of God's search for a way of reconciliation with man in all the broken lights, the dim gropings, the nostalgia for a lost Eden, the myths of a dying god, the rituals of human

[1] *Promise and Fulfilment*, p. 20.
[2] *Myth, Ritual and Kingship*, p. 19.

sacrifice. All such things bear witness not merely to man's search for the country from which he is self-exiled, but far more to God's ceaseless activity of love, seeking for a response which may serve as the starting-point for the work of recovery.'[1]

Israel was chosen because it was from Israel that the response eventually came—from Abraham, and Moses, and finally from the prophets. The Hebrews were not a nation of saints; they were as a whole an ordinary sample of early man. But they somehow threw up in the course of their development a line of men of supreme spiritual insight, whose mission it was to transform these ordinary sinful children of Israel into true children of God. Their mission was never achieved in any literal fashon, but it was never abandoned, and it issued at last in the supreme union with God through Christ. Tainted with the same tendency to idolatry and superstition as their neighbours, blinded similarly by ignorance and stupidity, ever stumbling, falling and rising again to stagger on under the exhortations of their leaders, the Hebrews gradually transformed themselves into a people which could produce Jesus. To Hooke the struggle was not something to be denied, as derogating from their divinely conferred status; it was something to be accepted—as the geological findings concerning the age of the earth are accepted—as the natural working of God's will, something moreover, to be gloried in as a triumph of the human spirit.

[1] *Alpha and Omega*, p. 6.

III

POEMS

Hooke's serious poems not only exhibit his poetic sensitivity and considerable gift for poetic expression, but are so full of his shining spirituality and goodness that to all who knew him there can be no more eloquent memorial of the man. To those who did not know him, they will illuminate his personality, and the reason why he was so much loved, as no words of mine can. Since none of them were ever published, and even to his friends not all were known, it seems very meet and right to include them as part of this book. Many of them were to his wife; with them go inevitably some of the poems she wrote in return, moved as he was by feelings which only poetry could express.

But Hooke not only wrote poetry, he inspired it; and for a well-rounded picture I feel I must also put in some of that which was written to or about him by others. I have accordingly divided this section of the book into two parts, the first consisting of poems written by Hooke and his wife, the second of verses in his honour, grave or gay. For it was characteristic of any circle in which he moved that memorable incidents, especially shared laughter, should be celebrated in numbers, and I think that not only the ceremonial poems dedicated to him, but the light verse aimed at him deserve a place, as evocative

of the atmosphere of blithe high spirits which so naturally tended to surround him. The humour is of course academic, sometimes esoteric, but the gaiety is unmistakable and irresistible.

I *Early Poems*

WINTER SLEEP

CHANGING seasons wax and wane,
Spring is born of winter's pain;
Lusty summer's burning hour,
Prodigal in fruit and flower
Soon its golden store has spent:
Autumn then the virtue lent
By the sun, repays in red,
Flaming challenge to the dead,
Ere the circle is complete
Closed in winter's winding-sheet.

What remembrance shall I bear
Of my passion's circling year?
When I lie beneath the ground,
Sealed within the burial mound,
Will the seed of life lie hid
Folded by the coffin-lid?
Will the pulses start again,
Flow the currents of the brain?
Will the love that I have known
Once again resume its throne?

Yes, sufficient unto me
Is love's immortality.
Never can it wholly die,
Never unreturning lie
Closed in cloudy caverns deep
Of an unawaking sleep.
This our love will spring again,
Blossom out of winter's pain;
Live again its burning hour,
Prodigal in fruit and flower.

SECRET SPEECH

Birds, beasts and flowers,
And most of all, great trees
Are ours;
For all of these
Do use a speech
So far out-vying in its reach
Our narrow range,
That by it we may learn the secrets strange
Told by the leaves to the deep-questing roots,
By them retold to the slow-ripening fruits—
What gay fantastic songs were sung
In beechwoods green when Time was young:
The sap's perennial meditation as it runs
Through revolutions of ten thousand suns:
The steadfast purpose of the sacrificial ear
Bending its heavy head
Towards the harvest-consummation of the year,
When Tammuz comes triumphant from the dead.
But most of all
In this strange speech resounds
A reverberant call
From the remotest bounds
Of ancient Time—
A wild insistent rhyme,
The measure of a dance which once we trod
Together in the primeval grove,
As god with god—
Brother and sister, in Saturnian love.

DREAM

HERE do we meet, and hence go hand in hand
Into the secret land,
East of the sun, west of the moon, unknown
Save to the few who own,
By birthright, entrance to its silent ways.

Here we lay down the burden of our days;
Here we do off the painted veils of speech,
Finding more delicate and subtle ways to reach
The heart's meaning. Like the leaves of the beech
Lying in brown piles about our feet,
Beautiful and dead, are words, discreet
Whispers of faint remembered things:
What need we of their broken wings?

Here every heightened sense receives
The potent sentences that no words spell;
The immemorial breast of earth heaves
With meanings that the tree-trunks tell
To one another, older far than thought.

Here in the magic circle caught,
We, dreaming, know more real the dream
Than aught of earth that doth substantial seem.

1

At length the age-long strife
Waged between death and life
  Must now have ending;
See, rushing from above,
Fired by redeeming love,
  The Lord of Life descending.

Viewing his lowly state,
The patient oxen wait
  Around the manger,
Where, veiled from mortal eyes
In swaddling-bands there lies
  A heavenly Stranger.

The song by shepherds heard
Hailed the Incarnate Word
  Among us dwelling;
We, too, this Christmas Day,
Uplift out humble lay,
  Heaven's anthem swelling.

2

'Without controversy, great is the Mystery of Godliness:
God manifest in flesh.'

TODAY we hymn the Holy Birth
The mighty Mystery,
How Very God came down to earth
In great humility.

The Eternal Word takes human clay
And treads the dolorous road,
Making himself the Living Way
That leads us back to God.

Victorious he ascends the throne,
And, reigning from the tree,
He gives himself to all his own,
Their Christmas gift to be.

3

TODAY the Eternal enters into time,
The Uncreated, by the way of birth,
Veiling in flesh the Majesty sublime,
Enters his dolorous journey upon earth.

That birth had in itself the seed of death,
And awful presage of abysmal loss,
And agonized surrender of the breath,
So Bethlehem's manger bears Golgotha's Cross.

But death is birth, and in that rock-sealed womb
The slain o'ercomes the slayer, and behold,
New-born, life bursts triumphant from the tomb,
Makes a new world, and casts away the old.

4

What though the sky grows darker still
And the sea rises higher,
A child is born to ease our ill,
A Son for our desire.
The keys of power in his hand
Have opened wide the door
Of Heaven's mercy that shall stand
Unclosed for evermore.
Lo Very God come down to man!
Hark to his names of might:
The Counsellor, profound in plan,
Hero in final fight,
The Father of Eternity,
Whose love shall never cease;
But sweetest of all names that be,
Behold the Prince of Peace.

THE BIRTH OF LOVE

SWEET Love, long loved, and still as ever dear,
Accept my offering at the closing year.
This is the time when Love came down to earth,
And entered by the lowly door of birth
This shadowed realm, this place where darkness reigns,
Willing to take upon him all the pains,
The bitterness and all the evil fruit
Of that forbidden tree whose hidden root
Drew from Hell's depths the poisoned sap of death.
Love took the cup and, yielding up his breath,
Made all things new, and set us free to love
Himself, love's source and giver from above
Of all the immortal fruits that now sustain
Our hearts—faith, hope, and love's eternal gain.
Each loving each, we thus with honour due
The timeless birth of Love again renew.

The two poems which follow were written to his wife's parents; the first in honour of their wedding anniversary, the second on the occasion of his mother-in-law's birthday.

TRIUMPHAL ARCH

In Time's long vanishing perspective lie
  Behind you all the arches of the years;
Now once again your children with a cry
  Of heartfelt greeting hail you, as Time rears
One more triumphal arch commemorating
  The day that bound you each to each in love
Long tried, and long enduring, consecrating
  A life's devotion, sealed and blessed above.
May the great Author of all good bestow
  His richest gifts upon you both this day;
And if the shadow on the dial slow
  Not even love's omnipotence can stay,
Yet shall your hearts abide in peace, and know
  You move together into perfect day.

June 9, 1948.

BIRTHDAY FLOWERS

WHEN the long panorama of the years
Dwindling recedes and slowly disappears;
When you forget the sorrow and the pain,
And all the clouds that darkened into rain
Lie like a golden glory in the west:
In that calm hour before the evening's rest,
When other lamps burn dim, a light shines clear,
Gentler than noon-light, than the dawn more dear,
Flooding the secret chambers of the mind
With memory of all things fair and kind,
Of all the flowers of love that marked the way
And, still unfading, light your path today;
So, on this birthday, let these flowers shine
With light of love that springs from Love Divine.

November 3, 1948.

THOUGH I SPEAK WITH THE TONGUES OF MEN AND OF ANGELS

In what speech did the morning stars
  Each to the other sing,
When the triumphant Sons of God
  Made heaven's high arches ring?

What is the language that we lisp,
  This pentecostal tongue,
As we the interstellar news
  Have each to other sung?

Of angels this is not the speech,
  For only God and man
Love's all-unuttered depth and height
  With uttered words can span.

No lips have angels, no, nor hands
  Though gloriously they shine;
For none but God and man may bear
  The human form divine.

But men have eyes and lips and hands,
  Which eloquently spell
Love's secret and creative word
  Lovers to lovers tell.

AMOR VICTRIX

SOME have writ sonnets to their lady's eyebrow, some
Have sung in verses like a passing bell
The slow decay of love which had become
From burning ecstacy a dreary hell.
One sonnet was a trumpet whence there fell
Soul-animating strains, and one had power
To comfort such as loved not wisely but too well,
Trailing the perfume of a dying hour.

This is no trumpet of defiance, nor no spell,
Tumbling my battlements in ruin down;
These faltering verses do but serve to tell
Of the surrender of an ancient town,
Of open doors and yielded citadel,
And love's assumption of the victor's crown.

AEDES AMORIS

LOVE built the house, and bravely its walls stand
Against the storms and tempests of the world,
And every blow by man's unthinking hand
Or by malicious fortune rudely hurled.
Through its wide windows, opening to the spring,
The Spirit breathes its life renewing air;
While swept and dressed with Beauty's garnishing
Within its chambers all is sweet and fair.

There you and I, beloved, dwell alone
And break Love's bread and drink his festal wine,
And kneel in praise before his golden throne
Where bright archangels in their glory shine.
Our lamp of love burns clear and sends its light
Far through the sombre world's encircling night.

B.E.H.

BREAD OF HEAVEN

THE treasure shared is doubled; we have known
The loaves and fishes multiplied again;
The flesh and blood and all the mortal pain
Of Life's Lord yielded up and sown
In our harsh soil: whence springing it has grown
And, fertilised by love's celestial rain,
Brings forth a harvest of immortal grain:
The seed unseeded else abides alone.

The bread of heaven, the food of angels, see,
Come down to earth that dying men may feed.
'Eat, O beloved, drink abundantly,
'My flesh is meat, my blood is drink indeed;
'Yea, eat and drink and live eternally,'
Saith Love, who gave himself for our sore need.

THE TREE OF LIFE

THROUGH the garden of the Lord
Among his fruitful trees,
My love and I did walk
And sweetly took our ease.

All in the pleasant shade
Beneath the leaves so fair,
And heard the angels' song
Fall blithely on the air.

Upon the Tree of Life
The golden fruit was hung,
Like burning lamps of light
The shining leaves among.

My love reached up his hand
And plucked the fruit so sweet,
And on a grassy bank
We two did sit and eat.

Then in the evening cool,
When the first stars shone clear
And every sound was hushed
The Lord himself drew near.

With blessing in his hands
And peace upon his brow;
And we, in joy and praise,
Our humble heads did bow.

B.E.H.

JANUARY TWENTY-FIRST

By many feasts man's calendar is starred:
  New Year and Harvest, springing of the grain,
  The sun's diurnal race, moon's wax and wane;
Martyrs and saints, by Love's sharp arrows scarred.
But here's a feast not sung by any bard,
  That yet all laud and honour has deserved,
  And with due pomp and rites to be observed
By all who seek Love's sacred flame to guard.

For on this day was born a human soul
  That feared not life nor death nor joy nor pain;
    That from life's buffets still learned how to live;
And ever, as Time's wheel did onward roll,
  In Love's sweet service was renewed again,
    With open heart all joy to take and give.

B.E.H.

THE TIMELESS MOMENT

WHO knows the timeless moment of your birth?
  Not that by calendarial time made bright,
  That natal day, when, leaping into light,
Your lovely mortal body came to earth:

Nay, rather, that clear point of timeless life,
  When first your spirit knew and loved its source,
  Its fount immortal; entered on its course
Of faith and hope and love, to endure the strife

That shapes and fashions it, until the sweet
  Fruit of experience, knowledge won through pain,
  To its blest origin unite it once again.
This is the unknown day, for homage meet,

Which now he brings who loves you with a love
Begun in time, to be fulfilled above.

THE HILL TOP

It was a day plucked from the common run
Of days and made immortal: if we dreamed
Or waked I know not; for a Presence seemed
To brood benign about us; even the sun
Stood still as if Time's tedious course were done.
Tranced on the hill top, through our being streamed
The life of every sentient thing; we deemed
That a new heaven and earth had now begun.

Methought I heard you, standing unafraid,
Your eyes burning with light of things to be,
Star-diademmed and with the moon arrayed,
Beatified, all glorious to see,
Crying: Behold, Love all things new hath made,
Arise, and walk the fields of heaven with me!

UNWORTHY

I am not worthy, Love, that you should lie
Under my lowly roof, for here is naught
Of grace or comeliness; yet all unsought
You bless me with your presence. 'Hold,' I cry,
Mazed with excess of sweetness, 'Lest I die
Of this divine invasion; senses caught,
Reason snared in the dear meshes wrought
For my undoing by Love's subtle tie.'

Yet doth my soul the strong compulsion own,
Captive I yield, not seeking to be free;
To most unworthy you give utmost worth
Choosing so low to dwell, and for your throne
Making the basest metal gold to be;
Yea, bringing heaven down to common earth.

ABSENCE

WHEN my love leaves me I am not alone;
I feel his fingers on my hair,
I hold his hand between my own,
I need but turn my head to see him in his
accustomed chair.

Streets where we used to walk together
Still echo with his tread,
In fair days and in stormy weather
And when the west wind drives the clouds
scattering overhead.

Willows beside the river bending
Whisper his name;
Doves in the elm-trees tell the unending
Story for ever new and evermore the same.

His voice speaks to me in the scent of flowers
And from the poet's page;
The memory of the short, bright hours
Of our delight will not grow old or dim with age.

The thought of him enfolds me like a cloak
Warm from his presence still;
I lean upon his strength as on an oak
Which stands unbowed to meet the winds of
heaven on the hill.

B.E.H.

AD AMICAM MEAM CARISSIMAM

SWEET child of Spring! You came with daffodils,
And at your coming vanished all my ills.
No more did I a solitary fate
Endure, companioned by so dear a mate.
All joys were doubled; e'en the road to heaven
Seemed more desirable since you were given
To share it; you did steel my will
To hold the upward course, and thus fulfil
The common task. Now the first lustrum passed,
And though I see Time's lengthening shadow cast,
No change I mark, save that you sweeter grow,
And ever more of heaven's graces show.
Now will I swear, nor fear to be forsworn,
Good for this man it was when you were born.

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

WHAT shall I give my dearest dear
In honour of his eightieth year?
He needs no winter coat I guess
For he is clothed in righteousness;

The 'oil of gladness' on him shines
Brighter than gold from earthly mines;
The peace of God his heart so fills
That evermore it overspills
To bless and comfort without end
Each favoured soul that he calls 'friend'.

To one with holy gifts so dowered,
On whom the grace of heaven is showered,
What can I give—who have no art
To show the secrets of my heart?

These limping verses slowly move
To bring my greetings to my love.

B.E.H.

CARMEN NATALE

What charm, what heavenly witchery,
Sweet Mistress, hast thou wrought on me,
That every object I behold
Its hidden meaning doth unfold,
And bird and stone and flower and tree
Wear the similitude of thee?
Thy glance has made a useless thorn,
In barren unsown desert born,
Fired by that mild and ardent gaze,
With love all-unconsumed to blaze.
Thy touch has made a sapless rod,
Laid up before the Ark of God,
His shrine thy body, by its power
Burst into sudden leaf and flower.
Thy voice has caused from out the heart
Of hard unyielding flint to start
A spring whose lapsing waters bless
The pastures of thy tenderness.
Who taught thee such compelling skill
To make us one harmonious will?
This witchcraft comes but from above;
Its secret sacred name is Love.

A LITTLE ODE

As I waited for the bus in Banbury Road,
I was feeling cold and lonely,
And obviously the only
Thing to do was to compose a little ode.

As I waited for the bus in Banbury Road,
My heart was in a whirl
And my hair was out of curl
As I started to compose a little ode.

As I waited for the bus in Banbury Road
The commas turned to kisses,
And my monitor said, 'This is
Not the way to undertake a little ode.'

As I waited for the bus in Banbury Road
I checked each wandering thought,
And said, 'This is how one ought
To set about the writing of an ode.'

As I waited for the bus in Banbury Road,
My true love came along,
And my heart broke into song;
And he said, 'Clearly this is
The way in which one misses
The bus which goes along the Banbury Road.'

So we left the bus in dreary Banbury Road,
And as we walked together
In shining autumn weather,
We each of us composed a little ode.

CANTICELS. ii, 14

FAIR is thy face, my dove, sweet is thy voice;
Seeing, I have no will; hearing, no choice,
Save to renew that motion of the heart
Once yielded up; to choose the better part,
Affirming thus the gift, latest and best,
Of Love, Giver and Maker of the feast.

Fair is thy face, my dove, thy voice is sweet,
Even in spirit converse, but when meet
These frames corporeal, then sweeter still
Are touch and sight whose dear delights o'erfill
This narrow vessel, straining sense to bear
The rich outpouring of Love's treasure there.

Fair is thy face, my dove, sweet is thy voice;
Seeing and hearing make my heart rejoice
With joy such as the storm-borne patriarch
Knew when he saw returning to the ark
His home-bent dove, bearing on labouring wing
Pledge of a world revisited by spring.

Fair is thy face, my dove, thy voice is sweet;
The pulses of my heart again repeat
The dear refrain; once more, entranced, I view
Heaven opened, wings of the dove shine through,
And, gently hovering, in glad release,
Find in my heart home and enfolding peace.

SWEET ARE THE ROSES

SWEET are the roses, that at dawn of day
Unloose their velvet petals one by one
To yield their glowing hearts to the mid-day sun;
Yet is my dearest love more sweet than they.

Sweet is the sound of music on the air—
The silver flute, the tender, throbbing string,
The ecstacy of larks on upward wing—
Yet is the music of Love's voice more fair.

Sweet is it, when the day's toil has an end,
And the world's clamours sink and slowly die,
To watch the first stars prick the evening sky,
And walk the fields of heaven with my friend.

B.E.H.

'MY TRUE LOVE HATH MY HEART'

'MY true love hath my heart'—a pauper gift,
Of little worth, till that my noble love
Took the poor fluttering bird in his strong hands,
Calming its foolish fears, and smoothing out
Its draggled wings, until the rain-drenched plumes
Shone bright as jewels in the sunshine of his smile.

Then from his pipe he drew soft music forth,
So heavenly sweet that the poor foolish dove
Essayed to answer, faltering at first,
But drawing strength and sweetness from his lips,
Until at last, faint with excess of joy,
It drooped upon his bosom and was still.

B.E.H.

LOVE NEVER FAILETH

All things are symbols: not the smallest stone
But tells a story of deep things unknown
Save to the mind illumined; gifts of gold
And spices in the humble stable told,
Not of their virtues, but of his who lay
Compact of glory in the manger's hay.
So this small gift has in itself no worth
Save as a symbol dimly shadowing forth
My Lady's grace. The glove's a dainty gage
Flung by her gallant spirit to the age
Whose lowering storm-clouds have no power to quell
Her gaiety, nor break her magic spell
Which holds me captive, and six years has given
My labouring spirit a foretaste of heaven.
Her spell is Love, divine creative power,
Defying Time, renewing every hour.

A WONDER

We that were two are now but one,
Yet diminution is there none;
Each of the twain in wisdom more
And strength is than he was before.

Whence hath this wonder come to birth,
Rare flower from our common earth?
'Tis Love doth straightway make reply:
'Who wrought the miracle but I?'

THE MIRACLE

WHY must we ever meet to part,
And find to lose again?
Such bitter outcry makes the heart
In separated pain.

But to its own complaint the heart
Quickly makes answer, 'Lo,
We, parting do but seem to part;
We see the body go,

But our twin souls, united, stay,
Nor can they parted be;
Mine goes with you upon your way,
And yours remains with me.'

See thus a double miracle
Creative Love hath done;
Two souls made indivisible,
Two twins made out of one!

A VALENTINE

THE licence of Valentine's Day
Incites me, my darling, to say
That, though we exist in a crisis
When liquid of every kind ice is,
When electric fires are *verboten*,
And I sit at my desk with a coat on;
When I'm grimy for lack of a bath,
And the coal-ships are stuck at Penarth;
When my belly is full of east wind,
And they say it's because I have sinned;
Then, then is the time when I turn
To the glow of your glances that burn;
My inwards are centrally heated
By the warmth of your love undefeated,
A fire of unwearied affection
Extending its radiant direction
To me so unworthy, who still
Finds your love sufficient to fill
This poor vessel full to o'erflowing,
With joy that passes all knowing.
Permit me, then, darling to say
I adore you on Valentine's Day.

ANTIPHONY

SWEET, I love the gay fantastic
Vein in which your Muse elastic
Skips and dances
Leaps and prances;
By the lapse of years unaltered
Never has your spirit faltered;
Now again you bring me gifts,
Pour me love whose richness lifts
Common living into brightness,
Turns the heavy hour to lightness.
Over-filled with such delight
Fails my feeble pen to write
Fit response in noble words;
Only choirs of singing birds,
Only tongues celestial may
Sing you all my love to-day.

OSCULATIONES OXONIENSES

THROUGH each academic grove
Gaily did our footsteps rove;
Past the bright herbaceous borders,
Flouting all our college orders;
Ghosts of long-dead proctors glaring
As we slowly sauntered, daring
Hujus Universitatis
Iras, heedless what our fate is;
In the Broad once, thrice in New,
Thrice in Worcester gardens too,
You were kissed and kissed again
In the shining summer rain.

A VALENTINE

TOMORROW is the voting day
When boys and girls in amorous play,
Inditing sentimental lines,
Will send each other valentines.
But I decided long ago
The way in which my vote would go,
And on the morrow I shall take
A pencil in my hand and make
A cross against the chosen name,
Enshrined for ever in the flame
Of Dante's vision, Beatrice;
No name so dear to me as this.
She is the true Conservative
Who keeps what's best in me alive;
Within her hospitable hall
Who shall you find more Liberal?
And by her daily labours note
Who better merits Labour's vote?
So, sweetest mistress, this election's over,
And I remain your constituted lover!

JUNE 28, 1946–1960

WHEN Jacob for his Rachel wrought, his love
Made years of servitude delightful prove.
Love's not Time's slave, and fourteen years may be
In happiness a whole eternity.
So have you made, dear heart, my married days
Seem like a foretaste of heaven's endless praise.

CARMEN NATALE

To Beatrice, looking in her mirror, on her 74th birthday.

You may not hate the face
On which remembered grace
Has left its saving trace.

Each line is but a scar
From the unceasing war
Waged by the watchful Star,

Your angel guardian, sent
To hover and prevent
Each impulse to relent

And falter in the strife,
Choosing the easier life,
The path with pleasures rife.

Not by the outward show,
But that which lies below,
Do those who love you know

Of secret victories won,
Of the race bravely run,
Eternal Life begun.

Here is true beauty seen,
Here is love's sword-blade keen,
Here is your reign, my Queen.

REMEMBRANCE

I REMEMBER for thee a thousand things,
When the wind wakes along the corded strings:
Echoes of laughter, gaiety and wit,
And shared delights; as we were wont to sit
Under a holy hay-stack, penetrating
Mazes of Pauline thought, or saturating
Eager desires in deep Johannine wells
Of living water. Oft we heard the bells
Ring softly over Oxford's cloistered calm,
While Christ Church choir intoned the evening psalm.
As the pearl-diver plunges deep to find
The stores of ocean, so my questing mind,
Under the daily custom's even flow,
Sounds for the deep-sunk memories below:
A tender smile, a glory in the face,
A touch enchanting, some new-minted grace—
All these, at call, like swiftly homing doves,
Come hovering round the image of our love.

Characteristically, on receiving the chair presented to him by former students on his ninetieth birthday, Hooke responded with a poem, no less feeling than delightful. I think it will be of interest to give with it the body of the letter which accompanied it to all the donors, and which most tellingly and amusingly endorses my remarks about the propensity of Hooke and all his associates to 'drop into verse'.

'I find it hard to say how deeply I have been touched by the many expressions of loving remembrance which I have received from all parts of the world on the occasion of my 90th birthday. As I write this I am sitting in a magnificent Jacobean chair which is a material expression of all the affectionate thoughts which have contributed to its purchase and presentation.

. . . The appended verses may amuse you, and remind you of some light-hearted exercises of this kind in the past.'

THE CHAIR

SOMEWHERE in Plato's realm of air
Stands the archetypal chair,
Cold, immemorial, comfortless,
Whose seat no mortal bottoms press.
But in my study now there stands
A chair once made by human hands,
Complete with arms, legs, seat, and back,
Nothing of comfort doth it lack.
As I sit its arms enfold me,
Solid walnut legs uphold me,
Cushioned back's proportions wide
For my aged limbs provide
Sensuous comfort. Could it speak,
It would say in choicest Greek,
'Here I stand, a monument
Of love's giving, richly spent,
Unforgetting, unalloyed
By Time's passing undestroyed.'

4. *Poems and Tributes from Friends*

The following verses were those printed in *The Rebel* with the cartoon of Hooke described on p. 14. Who the author was cannot be discovered, but he was clearly one who held the subject in affectionate admiration.

'MOTLEY'S THE ONLY WEAR'

His habits are by no means like the bear's,
He hibernates up north the livelong summer,
And southward at September's close repairs
To fill the post of literary drummer.

His labours practical with drum and quill
Leave little space for hobbies sentimental,
Yet in spare time, they say, he dabbles still
In history and lingoes oriental.

With feet on desk, with pipe in mouth, he dreams
Aloud to rows of votaries ecstatic,
And from his lips pour forth commingled streams
Of fragrant smoke and language Asiatic.

Claudel and Francis Thompson, golf and tea,
Gossip, tobacco, book reviews, divinity—
A motley throng of interests has he,
His single brain can compass all infinity.

The hilarious ballad written and composed by Dave Ketchum as the S.C.M.'s response to the accusation of 'poisoning the student mind' cannot be quoted in full, as it grew to innumerable verses. But a few of the original ones will suffice to give a good idea of its nose-thumbing zest and spirit. Unfortunately, we cannot give the tune, but it is easy to imagine that it went with a swing.

POISONING THE STUDENT MIND

THE S.C.M. has found its true vocation,
It is poisoning the student mind;
Its leaders, by astute manipulation,
Are all poisoning the student mind.
And you, young friends, I'm certain that you'll go
To toast your toes at furnaces below
If you give ear to leaders who, I know,
Are bent on poisoning the student mind.

Refrain:
Poisoning the student mind, poisoning the student mind,
Bad men, bold men, villains double-dyed,
'Neath their smiling countenances hide
Spiritual arsenic, moral cyanide,
For poisoning the student, poisoning the student,
Poisoning the student mind.

Now old Prof. Hooke may seem a harmless crittur,
But he's poisoning the student mind,
Within that pipe he brews a potion bitter
Just for poisoning the student mind.
With views extreme his victims he'll beguile,
And tell them with a supercilious smile,
That Noah marched his stock in single file.
Oh, yes, he's poisoning the student mind.

Doc. Sherman's much the worst of all the beggars
Who are poisoning the student mind;
He heads the gang of biblical bootleggers
Who are poisoning the student mind.
By subtlest questions doubts he can instil
Of Job's interpretation of the will,
And whether Jonah's fish possessed a gill.
Oh, yes, he's poisoning the student mind.

P.S. There's just one thing that I forgot to mention:
The student hasn't got a mind,
And so it's safe to hold this big convention,
Because the student hasn't got a mind.
But if our leaders heard the awful news,
There is no doubt their senses they would lose,
So let them all imagine, if they choose
That they're poisoning the student mind.[1]

[1] Quoted from *Twenty-one Years A-building, a short account of the Student Christian Movement of Canada*, 1920–41, with the kind permission of Mrs. Davidson Ketchum. The poem first appeared in print in *The Canadian Student*, Elgin House, 1922.

The summer courses for teachers in which Hooke for so many years collaborated with Dean Matthews provided many excuses for the concoction of light verse, of which Hooke was often either the author or the target. Two of the most delightful examples are the poem and the limerick addressed to him when he hurt his knee playing golf at Ripon and had to go into hospital during the course.

TO A FAR FROM DISCREDITED PROPHET

R.V. Margin

Dear Professor Hooke,
We have got your little book
But it hasn't got the humorous asides,
So it doesn't take the place
Of our own prophetic ace[1]
And the myth and ritual pattern he provides.

[1] From an earlier myth attributed to a dignitary of the Early Church.

With the central figure gone,
From which the radiance shone,
A horrid gloom[2] has fallen on us all.
When the oracle is dumb,
Whence can inspiration come?
We are driven back to Adam and[3] the Fall.

[2] No brightness in it

[3] from?

Oral tradition[4]

[4] Saga stuff?

The limerick was the work of Dean Matthews himself:

It's a shame the Professor at Ripon
Found some saga material to trip on,
  The old mustard tree
  Is safer, you see.
Than the hills that the Psalmist bade skip on.

From a bundle of light-hearted verses commemorating one of those courses, I choose an evidently heartfelt, if slightly frivolous, tribute to Mrs. Hooke.

We've written of Hooke but not of his Mrs.,
To fill the lacuna I now declare this is.
  She maketh his trouble
  Depart at the double,
And shameless, at lectures, receives his blown kisses.

Hooke had addressed some verses, expressing thanks for their hospitality, to two very dear friends with whom he and his wife had been staying. The author of the following delightful poem, a retired Inspector of Schools, had been greatly impressed by Hooke's lectures given at a course for teachers organised by the Surrey Education Committee.

PORTRAIT OF A HAPPY PAIR

Sing, Muse, and strike thy loud resounding lyre,
Infuse my verse with true poetic fire.
Evoke the pregnant phrase, the airy trope,
In the chaste style of Alexander Pope.

Where soft the streams of cool Tamesis glide
And punts and oarsmen breast the flowing tide,
Far from the noisome roar of London's Strand,
Bedecked with Flora's charms on every hand,
In calm suburban bliss, secure, serene,
Sweet Twittenham blandly dominates the scene.
Here Pope adorned his grotto and his verse,
Dispensing now a blessing, now a curse:
Here Walpole wrote his letters, stored his books,
Here dwell the subjécts of this verse, the Hookes.

Observe them both, alert at dawn of day;
First Beatrice takes her brisk industrious way,
With rapid skill performs her household chores,
Next to the shops for plenishment of stores,
So to the office by electric train,
Where countless tasks await her active brain.
Afric her sphere, that dark mysterious land
Which foreign statesmen cannot understand,
Its myriad languages, its rites obscene,
So darkly chronicled by Gr-h-m Gr--ne.
At once a suppliant crew bespeaks her aid,
The pop-eyed crank, th'explorer unafraid,
The anthropologist with theories wild,
The earnest missionary, meek and mild,

The thesis writer, urgently in want,
Of information and a public grant.
All these and more prolong their useless stay,
Consume her time, her patience and her day.
She meets them all with wise impartial skill,
Allays their rage and bends them to her will.
The crank is soothed, the thesis writer quelled,
The anthropologist at last expelled,
The explorer listens, rapt, while she describes
The customs of the M'Bongo-Bongo tribes.
At last the tale's complete, the letters signed,
Sweet thoughts of home refresh her wearied mind.
So back to Twittenham, her books, her friends,
And thus dispatched her daily business ends.

But what of Sam? He too, though not abroad,
Pursues with equal zeal the learned road.
Close in his study, used to bearing with
The interruptions caused by Mrs. Smith,
Benign, profound, he masterly displays,
(Fruit of laborious nights and pensive days,
The while he, thoughtful, scans each learned page,)
Th'encyclopaedic knowledge of the sage.
English he writes, but cumbers not his pen
With all the verbiage of common men.
Johnson he finds, and Webster, too diffuse,
Too lush, too sprawling, for his current use.
His Basick skill a shorter way affords,
He concentrates them in eight hundred words.
The Sacred Books in chief command his care,
With reverent hands he lays their secrets bare,
Pursues the annals of the Jewish nation
From Genesis, through Acts, to Revelation.

But most of all his critick eye is bent
On exegesis of th' Old Testament.
Full many a learned priest to him repairs
For light on theological affairs,
And many more with questions pertinent
On what the Minor Prophets really meant.
Behold him too at lecture or at Course,
His eloquence, his intellectual force.
Not only for the erudite and wise,
He even condescends to H.M.I's.
Ezekiel, the Deutero-Isaiah,
The sombre gloom of prophet Jeremiah,
Yahweh's pronouncements and the Dead Sea Scrolls,
O'er all of these his flood of learning rolls.
For recreation to the links he goes,
Sought by his friends, a terror to his foes.
Straight down the fairway, deadly on the green,
His iron shots propel the ball between
The beckoning bunker and the clinging rough,
With subtle touch and mastery enough.
The round completed and the long day done,
His enemy defeated, two and one,
Refreshed and brisk he takes his homeward way,
Where peace and happiness complete the day.

R.H.

August, 1955.

To this Hooke wrote the following reply:

AFTERMATH

As an unwary traveller in a land
Beneath whose peaceful surface hidden lie
Depths unsuspected, with a heedless hand
Might case a pebble in a pool near by,
And backward starting with amazement, stand
At gaze, the while his dazzled eyes descry
In swift ascent, as by divine command,
A giant geyser soaring to the sky.
So I, in my simplicity, an ode,
Trivial in tone, in execution rude,
Addressed to Singleborough's calm abode,
Whence in tremendous majesty ensued
An epic whose harmonious numbers flowed
With more than Popean elegance imbued.

We come now to the poems presented to Hooke for his ninetieth birthday. The following charming tribute came with a spray of flowers from a friend in Buckland.

CHIMONANTHUS FRAGRANS

If in high summer, dear Professor Hooke,
Your birthday you did choose to celebrate
Profusion great of flowers would we bring
And you'd be lost behind their myriad blooms.
But you, whom Winter's hand has lightly touched,
Your spirit strong, your kindly nature shown
By countless deeds and thoughts for fellow man,
You chose the sleeping buds, th' unopened flowers
To decorate your cradle. Yet I've found
Among the barren twigs of Winter's cold
A shrub to give delight called 'Winter Sweet'
Whose fragrance fills the air with heady scent,
Whose name, I swear, was chosen with you in mind,
Your ninety years' sweet service to Mankind.

M. Leeds Harrison, Jan. 21, '64.

The post that day brought a Latin Ode by the late Bishop Cockin. Those who have no Latin will at least be able to admire its evident metrical proficiency and the demure mischief of its footnotes, and to appreciate its content in the English translation considerately supplied by the author.

Doctum et urbanum, pietate clarum
Te salutamus, juvenile corde
Nonaginta annos sociis amicis
Concelebrantem.

x Occidentalem, studiis solutus,
Expetens terram teneras veneno
Subdolo mentes academicorum
Heu! maculavis.

xx Deinde conversus monumenta sacra
xxx Rite proponis, Labyrinthi opaci
Mysticas portas animo repandens
Ingenioso.

Tuque donatus rude, et inter omnes
Nunc honoratus, neque iners, quietem
Sedulam carpis, pia dum Beatrix
Curat amatum.

x Some authorities take the view that this obscure passage has some connection with a scurrilous lampoon found among graffiti in the ruins of Toronto

'Poisoning the student mind'.

xx Conversus. It is uncertain whether this word should be interpreted in a geographical or an ecclesiastical sense.

xxx The technical terms used in these two lines may perhaps refer to some works of scholarship popularly attributed to the subject of the Ode.

Rt. Rev. F. C. Cockin.

ENGLISH VERSION

LEARNING and wit, by godliness refined,
These are your gifts, as, youthful still in mind,
You reach your ninety years, while with one voice
Your friends rejoice.

Released from Schools, Westward you turned your gaze:
But here alas your unregenerate days
Poisoned with venom of new-fangled truth
The innocent youth.

Your wandering steps retracing (and in more
Senses than one) you turned to sacred lore
Myth, ritual and Labyrinth expounding
With skill astounding.

Discharged with honour, you may now enjoy
Your busy leisured evening's employ;
While Beatrice her loving care may spend
Your needs to attend.

Even the Hebrew poem written in honour of his ninetieth birthday and read at the Society for Old Testament Study dinner at Regent's Park College, was no solemn exercise, as will be seen from the translation (by its author) given below. But the affection and respect in it is as obvious as the humour is irrepressible. It makes a fitting finale to these lyrical offerings to our 'bard of passion and of mirth'.

A SONG OF SAMUEL

BLESSED art thou, doyen of our teachers
Ninety years old this day.
The glory of the aged is on thy face
But thine eyes are the eyes of the Beatles.[1]
With mirth hast thou clothed thyself, and it clothed thee;
A merry heart is a goodly tonic.
A Prince in scriptural study,
And father of all funny stories,
Thou hast taught beyond the western seas,
Thou hast sat in the Davidson chair,
With thine own hands didst thou build a house,
But thy driving was like the driving of Jehu,
Thy very name is Myth and Ritual.

The law of truth is in thy mouth,
For the way of truth hast thou chosen.

Thy pupils rise up to bless thee
And the lady so faithful in thy house.

G. Henton Davies.

[1]A free rendering of the Hebrew, meaning 'bright, piercing'.

POSTSCRIPTUM

A Memorial Service for Sam Hooke was held on 22 March, 1968, in the Chapel of Jesus College, Oxford; and on Sunday, 16 June, the University Sermon preached in St. Mary's by Dr. W. D. McHardy, Regius Professor of Hebrew in the University of Oxford, was presented as a tribute to the work of Professor Hooke in the field of Biblical studies, with particular reference to the subject of Kingship.

On 17 January, 1968, Sam Hooke's body had been laid in the churchyard at Buckland. Pale winter sunshine gilded the grey stones of the ancient church where he had worshipped every Sunday, the long and lofty nave of the church was filled with the voices of a large congregation singing his best-loved hymn, Newman's 'Praise to the Holiest in the height and in the depth be praise'. His old friend and collaborator over many years, Dr. W. R. Matthews, Dean Emeritus of St. Paul's Cathedral, gave a short and moving address, in large part a quotation from the concluding chapter of Sam's last book, *The Resurrection of Christ*, and a dear and younger friend, Austin Farrer,[1] Warden of Keble College, Oxford, sent him forth on the last stage of his journey with the words:

> O God of mercy, Lord of all forgiveness, grant to the soul of thy servant the refreshment of paradise, the blessing of peace, and the vision of that Face which is the joy of everything created.
>
> Amen and Amen

[1] Dr. Farrer died very suddenly on 29 December, 1968.

PRINCIPAL WORKS

OF

S. H. HOOKE

AUTHOR

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Samuel Henry Hooke, the distinguished Biblical scholar and authority on the religions and cultures of the ancient Near East, died in January 1968 within a few days of his 94th birthday. In the course of his very long life, he made countless personal friends and disciples, and became known through his books to a wide public at home and abroad. The aim of this memoir is to present an all-round picture of a very remarkable man, which will furnish those who knew him personally with a complete survey of his life and achievements, and those who met him only as a writer with some idea of the person behind the work.

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