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THE ECCLESIOLOGICAL INFLUENCE OF T.C. HAMMOND

Chase Kuhn

Introduction

T.C. Hammond is not remembered for any groundbreaking theological conclusions or the development of any distinctive school of theological thought.¹ The contribution of his ministry was a timely intellectual voice for Evangelicalism. In the UK his handbook on theology, *In Understanding Be Men*,² played a critical role in the evangelical renaissance of the 1930s and 1940s. In Australia, he aided Moore College in rediscovering the school's evangelical heritage and gave it intellectual depth. On both continents, Hammond's lasting impact was the strong voice that he offered conservative evangelicals and the battles he fought in the name of Evangelicalism against liberal and Roman Catholic opponents. Ecclesiology is a noteworthy doctrine in Hammond's thought, as it was the doctrine of the church that served as the battleground for much of his ministry. The following is an exploration of Hammond's ecclesiology, with concern for how it served as a defence for evangelical Protestantism.

Hammond's Historical and Ecclesiastical Context

Thomas Chatterton Hammond (T.C.) was born 20 February 1877 in Cork, Ireland. His Christian conversion came in 1892. He was ordained as deacon in 1903, and as presbyter in 1905. Prior to his ordination he studied at Trinity College Dublin where he excelled in philosophy and won the Downes Prize (1902) and the Wray prize (1903), and graduated with the Gold Medal. Years later, Archbishop Marcus Loane reflected on Hammond's passion for philosophy: 'His own lifelong approach to Theology always emanated from the background of Philosophy. He saw Philosophy as the handmaid of Theology; he saw Theology as the Queen of the Sciences.'³ It was a skill that served him well throughout his ministry, in street preaching, debates and theological instruction.

Much of Hammond's early ministry set the tone for his work later in life. After ordination he served at St Kevin's Church in Dublin, first as a curate (1903–10) and then as rector (1910–19). He left the parish to

¹ Warren Nelson, *T.C. Hammond: Irish Christian: His Life and Legacy in Ireland and Australia* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1994), pp. 107–108.

² T.C. Hammond, *In Understanding Be Men: A Synopsis of Christian Doctrine for Non-Theological Students* (London: Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 1936; 6th ed., ed. David Wright, London: IVP, 1968).

³ Marcus Loane, *Mark These Men* (Canberra: Acorn Press, 1985), p. 71.

become Superintendent, and later General Superintendent, of the Irish Church Mission. He spent much of his time on the streets of Dublin preaching, directing most of his messages towards a Roman Catholic audience. During these years of service in Ireland he saw over 500 people converted from Roman Catholicism, at least 25 of whom were priests.⁴ This concern for evangelism and the defence of the Protestant faith remained the focus of the rest of his life in ministry. His priority was equipping people in the truth found in Scripture and training them to defend it. His passion arose from a deep conviction that Roman Catholicism had distorted this truth.

Hammond left this ministry in Ireland to accept the call to be Principal at Moore Theological College in 1936.⁵ The Anglican leadership in Sydney was already acquainted with Hammond and was impressed by both his academic ability and his firm stance against the Church of Rome. He had a reputation of a quick wit and rigour in debate. These skills would be highly valued in a context where Anglo-Catholicism threatened the traditionally evangelical Anglican theology of the Sydney Diocese.

Hammond's scholarly work consisted in both published writing and public addresses. He produced more than half a dozen books. The three best known are *In Understanding Be Men* (theology), *Perfect Freedom* (ethics),⁶ and *Reasoning Faith* (apologetics).⁷ In addition to these volumes, he wrote many small booklets and articles during his Sydney years.

His public addresses include lectures in the classroom, public debates, and his contribution to a bi-weekly radio program. At Moore College, Hammond lectured to students preparing for ministry on a wide array of topics across multiple disciplines such as New & Old Testament, Philosophy of Religion, and Prayer Book.⁸ Outside the classroom he participated in debates of different sorts, ranging from public street-side disputes to formal moderated debates at Sydney University.⁹ The bi-weekly radio program was broadcast on Sydney's 2CH on Sunday evenings and was sponsored by the Council of Churches in conjunction with the Loyal Orange Institution of New South Wales (of which Hammond was Grand Chaplain from 1943–47, 1950–61 and Grand Master in 1961).

⁴ Loane, *Mark These Men*, p. 72.

⁵ Nelson, *T.C. Hammond: Irish Christian*, pp. 88–90. The call came from Sydney in 1935; Hammond occupied the position in 1936.

⁶ T.C. Hammond, *Perfect Freedom: An Introduction to Christian Ethics* (London: Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 1938).

⁷ T.C. Hammond, *Reasoning Faith: An Introduction to Christian Apologetics* (London: Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 1943).

⁸ Nelson, *T.C. Hammond: Irish Christian*, p. 101.

⁹ One of the most well known debates was against John Anderson, professor of philosophy at Sydney University, in 1941. Donald Robinson, then a student and later Archbishop of Sydney, arranged this debate. See Nelson, *T.C. Hammond: Irish Christian*, p. 112.

During his time as Principal of Moore College, Hammond brought his Protestant doctrine to bear on the ecclesiastical issues of the day. Two examples stand out. In 1943 Bishop A.L. Wylde of the Diocese of Bathurst authorised the printing and limited distribution of a book that was red in colour entitled ‘The Holy Eucharist,’ incorporating part of the Roman Catholic order of service.¹⁰ Some of the practices introduced were ‘the use of decidedly medieval catholic actions such as the ringing of a sanctus bell, making the sign of the cross, and implicitly encouraging belief in “the real presence” (in the Roman Catholic sense).’¹¹ When Archbishop Mowll, as Metropolitan of the Province of New South Wales, requested the removal of the book, Bishop Wylde refused and the case ended up in the Supreme Court. The case lasted for four years with the decision ultimately in favour of the evangelicals. The ‘Red Book’ was withdrawn, but was replaced almost immediately by only a slightly less controversial ‘Green Book.’ The controversy became known as the ‘Red Book Case’ and brought to the forefront questions of the Australian Church’s loyalty to the Book of Common Prayer and the Church of England. Prayer Book revision seemed necessary, but would not be possible until a new church constitution was drafted and agreed upon.

In the wake of this controversy, Hammond became involved in the drafting of a constitution for the Church of England in Australia (from 1971 the Anglican Church of Australia). Judd and Cable have commented about the evangelical victory in the ‘Red Book Case’ and its ramifications for constitutional revision:

The success, however limited, of Evangelicals in any negotiations for a new Constitution could be neither steam-rollered nor ignored. Any workable Constitution had to take considerable account of their views and position. That meant that, far from being an embattled minority, Sydney Evangelicals were in a position of strength in the fresh constitutional debates of the early 1950s.¹²

¹⁰ Stephen Judd and Kenneth Cable, *Sydney Anglicans: A History of the Diocese* (Sydney: Anglican Information Office, 1987), pp. 253–255. K.J. Cable, ‘T.C. Hammond,’ *Australian Dictionary of Biography* Vol 14: 1940–1980, p. 368. Ian Breward, *A History of the Australian Churches* (St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1993), pp. 137–138. On the red book case see D.J. Knox, *What is ‘The Red Book’?: An Account of the Bathurst Case* (Sydney: Church Publican Society, 1946). D. Galbraith, *Just Enough Religion to Make Us Hate: An Historio-Legal Study of the Red Book Case* (Unpublished PhD thesis: University of New South Wales, 1998).

¹¹ Nelson, T.C. *Hammond: Irish Christian*, p. 115.

¹² Judd and Cable, *Sydney Anglicans*, p. 255.

Constitutional drafting, debate and revision took place until a consensus was achieved. The final form of the constitution, agreed to by Hammond, was not what his younger evangelical friends in Sydney had hoped for, especially the perceived inability of the new constitution to protect the doctrine of the church.¹³ Nevertheless, Hammond believed it to be the best possible outcome given the political realities of the day.

Hammond's activity for and on behalf of the church in Sydney was shaped by his ecclesiological convictions. These were hardly novel, but they were thought through carefully by a man with a first-rate mind and were sharpened by his years of sectarian debate.

Theological Method

The areas Hammond treated theologically were often those relevant to the battles he was fighting. Hammond did not pursue innovation in his scholarship. Rather, he worked to expound and cultivate thinking rooted in the Protestant Reformation. Nelson comments, 'As a teacher he was no innovator. He started no school of theology nor did he give the world fresh insights. He expounded Christian orthodoxy, presenting the historic and classic core of the faith as it has come down through the centuries, serving it up in Anglican dress.'¹⁴ It is hardly surprising, then, that Hammond would ground his teaching in the creeds and the Thirty-Nine Articles. He would offer theological insights from these historic sources, reinforcing the traditional evangelical view, and then extend arguments against perceived misunderstandings, distortions and departures from evangelical doctrine.

At Moore College, the Thirty-Nine Articles provided a rough syllabus for Hammond's lectures. He began a term or lecture series with logical questions that opened discussion and provided justification for further theological discussion. This time of introduction also provided a broad survey of the material for the series. For example, in his lectures on the doctrine of the church, Hammond opened with questions such as: What are the sources for our doctrine of the church? Did Jesus teach concerning the church? When was the church founded? And, are there two natures of the church (visible and invisible)? From these questions others naturally followed, such as: If Jesus did not teach directly concerning the church, as some maintain (Eschatologists), did he use any cognate terms (as opposed to *ἐκκλησία*) that pertained to ecclesiology? Does the church have a corporate life? And, if there are two natures of the church, visible and

¹³ Judd and Cable, *Sydney Anglicans*, p. 256. On the constitutional debate see John Davis, *Australian Anglicans and their Constitutions* (Canberra: Acorn Press, 1993), pp. 131–179.

¹⁴ Nelson, *T.C. Hammond: Irish Christian*, pp. 107–108.

invisible, are there two churches?¹⁵ Using these questions as a stimulus, Hammond proceeded into examination of creedal truths and then followed the structure of the Thirty-Nine Articles, thus progressing from introduction to general Christian Orthodoxy (the creeds), to narrower convictions of the Anglican tradition (Thirty-Nine Articles).

Integrated into his doctrinal elucidation was a pointed defence against departures from Protestantism. In his teaching on the church, Hammond explicitly addressed issues such as the nature of the church, the unity of the church, and the authority of the church. His target was invariably the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglicans who wished to join them.

One feature of Hammond's theological approach is the philosophical rigour that he brought to issues. Marcus Loane commented,

This was something that he shared in common with the German and Scottish theologians, but it was in contrast with the English writers whose studies were always rooted in sound exegesis rather than in philosophy. Few men of his generation in the Anglican Communion were so genuinely at home in the literature and modes of thought of the medieval schoolmen.¹⁶

An example of Hammond's fascination with medieval schoolmen is the study he undertook throughout his life of Robert Bellarmine (1542–1621). This study served as ammunition for his engagement with Roman Catholic doctrine, as Hammond was well versed in counter-reformation reasoning and thought. Interacting with Bellarmine in his writing and lectures provided him with credibility and gave his enunciations a certain rhetorical force as he frequently pointed to a prominent Catholic authority on doctrine.

Hammond's preference for theology did not produce a lack of regard for exegesis or for the Bible—far from it. Philosophy was simply where he was most at home. He thought in terms of logic and systems. In his explanations he chose reason as his means of constructing an argument, often employing analogy or illustration to make his point. One example of this is an analogy he utilised in his excursus on the visible and invisible nature of the church. He compared the visible nature of the church to an institution such as a government and the invisible nature of the church to an association or society. Institutions, such as governments, he argued, have visible markers such as flags and symbols that mark them physically.

¹⁵ T.C. Hammond, *Verbatim Notes from Moore Theological College Th.L. Doctrine II Lectures* transcribed by G.W. Christopher (Unpublished, 1943), pp. 1–14. The only available notes from T.C. Hammond's lectures on doctrine are his ecclesiology lectures, which exclusively cover Articles XIX–XXIV. Thus, these notes are the only available source for typesetting his lecture format. Hereafter referred to as *Notes*.

¹⁶ Loane, *Mark These Men*, p. 71.

However, what bonds people within an institution is a personal allegiance that is invisible.¹⁷ It is this sort of analogy that Hammond would use to make his point in collaboration with the biblical evidence.

It could be argued that Hammond assumed too much and relied too heavily on reasoning rather than justifying his conclusions in the teaching of Scripture. For example, in *In Understanding Be Men* Hammond surveys evangelical theology, providing readers with a clear, concise, and systematic overview of the Christian faith. However, the role of the Bible in the text seems to be marginal. Scripture passages are provided at the conclusion of each chapter rather than being integrated into his discourse, and therein failing to demonstrate how each truth is arrived at biblically. However, elsewhere, in his *The One Hundred Texts*,¹⁸ there is clear evidence of the primacy of Scripture in his theological method. As its name indicates, this volume is a treatise on one hundred key texts aiming to establish and defend Protestant doctrine. Beyond this volume, Hammond's lectures and discussions contain other small indications of his exegetical abilities and his high esteem for the Bible.¹⁹

In the classroom Hammond primarily engaged with other Anglicans as interlocutors for his lectures. In his biography of Hammond, Warren Nelson identifies W.H. Griffith Thomas' *Principles of Theology*²⁰ as the primary textbook for Hammond's doctrine courses.²¹ However, notes from his second year lectures in doctrine from 1943 indicate that E.J. Bicknell's *A Theological Introduction to the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England*²² was the common text for discussion.²³ When he

¹⁷ T.C. Hammond, 'The Church,' radio address on 2CH 10 April 1960. This analogy appears to be one that Hammond has adopted and made modified from E.J. Bicknell. Hammond never credits this to Bicknell, but the similarities are too great. See E.J. Bicknell, *A Theological Introduction to the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England* (2d ed.; London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1925), pp. 298–299.

¹⁸ T.C. Hammond, *The One Hundred Texts of the Society For Irish Church Missions: A Manual of Theology* (6th ed.; London: Society for Irish Church Missions, and Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1962). The selection of texts predates Hammond, dating back as far as the mid-nineteenth century.

¹⁹ For example, see Hammond's discussion of the ordination of Presbyters in *Notes*, pp. 60–61.

²⁰ W.H. Griffith Thomas, *The Principles of Theology: An Introduction to the Thirty-Nine Articles* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1930; 6th ed. rev., London: Vine Books, 1978).

²¹ Nelson, *T.C. Hammond: Irish Christian*, p. 101.

²² E.J. Bicknell, *A Theological Introduction to the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England* (London: Longmans, Green & Co. 1919; 3d ed., London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1955).

²³ Peter Jensen confirms this in his introduction to the selected works of D. Broughton Knox. Jensen, 'Broughton Knox on Training for the Ministry,' in D.

disagreed or was unsatisfied with Bicknell, such as on the charter of the church,²⁴ he would turn to other Anglican theologians such as Richard Hooker to fortify his argument.²⁵ All three of these interlocutors—Thomas, Bicknell and Hooker—demonstrate Hammond's anchoring in the Anglican tradition and his priority of expounding that tradition.

Hammond also possessed a deep knowledge of wider church history, citing Ignatius, Clement, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Gregory Nazianzen amongst others. His reference to historical figures served the purpose of demonstrating the roots of doctrine. For example, in his case for episcopacy he cites Ignatius of Antioch as the first writer to mention the term 'episcopacy' in the modern sense (AD110), and from the Ignatian Epistles he builds a case for the legitimacy of episcopacy in ecclesial polity.²⁶

Overall, Hammond's theological method cannot be divorced from his circumstances, first as a Protestant apologist in Ireland and later as a defender of Protestant orthodoxy as Principal of Moore College. The context in which his teaching and writings took shape, whether in Ireland or Australia, was often defined by controversy and contention. Hammond fought for a conception of orthodoxy associated with the Protestant cause. Nelson writes of Hammond,

He had come [to Australia] when the evangelical cause was weak and lacking in theological depth, and when Roman Catholicism had its eyes set on turning Australia into a Catholic country. He had come when the hollow fruits of modernism and the bitter attacks of ritualism were in danger of changing the character of the Diocese of Sydney, and he helped to turn back the tide.²⁷

Hammond saw evangelical theology under attack on two fronts, from Catholicism and Liberalism, and for this reason his work and tone were often polemical; he worked tirelessly to see the future of the Anglican Church in Sydney (and abroad!) as one marked by evangelical doctrine.

Major Emphases in Hammond's Ecclesiology

Three major ideas occur often in T.C. Hammond's ecclesiology: the visible and invisible nature of the church, the unity of the church, and authority in the church. These three themes are, of course, prominent in the Thirty-

Broughton Knox: Selected Works: Volume 1: The Doctrine of God (ed. Tony Payne; Kingsford, NSW: Matthias Media, 2000), p. 23.

²⁴ Hammond, *Notes*, pp. 16–20.

²⁵ Hammond (or his stenographer) left no record of the works he was citing, but undoubtedly the reference is to Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*.

²⁶ Hammond, *Notes*, pp. 63–64.

²⁷ Nelson, *T.C. Hammond: Irish Christian*, p. 130.

Nine Articles, but they were also critical in Hammond's intellectual battle with Roman Catholicism. As we explore each of these themes in turn, the connection with this polemical context will be evident.

Visible & Invisible

The first theme is the most prominent in Hammond's ecclesiology: the visible and invisible nature of the church. Hammond wrote and taught on this theme throughout his ministry, with most of his work on the topic flowing from Article XIX.²⁸ However, the most forthright address he gave on the topic came at the end of his life. At some point during his ministry in Sydney, likely towards the end of his career,²⁹ some Roman Catholic accusers attacked Protestant ecclesiology claiming Protestants subscribed to a deficient understanding of the church, reducing it to an invisible reality.³⁰ Hammond responded with a radio address devoted to a rebuttal of this accusation. He began,

It may sound to many of my hearers like casuistry, but I am anxious to point out the position of the Protestant Church when, she maintains there is an invisible body as well as a visible body, or perhaps to speak more correctly, that the bond that unites men to Jesus Christ is not sensible, not capable of being expressed accurately and fully by any visible sign or form or adhesion. But that it is nevertheless a real bond which finds expression in the organisations of communities for worship of God and the service of Jesus Christ our Lord. That is the position that the Protestants adopt. The church of God is known to God only in its fullest, truest and widest sense. The adhesion to certain fundamental principles that are laid down in the Sacred Scriptures.³¹

Hammond recognised that the bond that unites men to Christ, and therein unites Christians to one another, is not something that can be expressed fully in visible form. This does not discount or discredit the visible manifestation of this bond—in fact it affirms it—but recognises there is something deeper than the superficial visible markers, especially since the visible markers are not always accurate; there are many who

²⁸ See Hammond, *In Understanding Be Men*, p. 162; Hammond, *Notes*, pp. 8–13.

²⁹ The ambiguity surrounding the timing of this attack exists because neither the attacker nor the context in which the attack arose are disclosed. The likelihood of the date being later in Hammond's life is related to the date of the radio address, 10 April 1960.

³⁰ Hammond, 'The Church.' Hammond quotes his opponents as saying (in effect), 'The Church has become obscured by the errors of the Protestant belief, that they have caused it to fade away into nothingness. They have reduced their belief to the existence of an invisible Church.'

³¹ Hammond, 'The Church.'

appear to be members of the visible church who are not in fact united to Christ. He is careful not to be guilty of the critique of his accusers; the church is not merely an ethereal reality, rather the visible is real and meaningful. However, the truest form of the church is an ethereal reality that finds visible expression.

Hammond turns to historical authorities to justify his conclusions. Concerning the visible church he turns to the Thirty-Nine Articles arguing that the visible church is identified where the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are duly administered. Where the Articles are silent, particularly concerning the invisible church, he turns to the Westminster Confession of Faith for theological support. The main thrust of his argument concerning the invisible church is its timeless nature. In short, the visible church is manifested worldwide relating to Christians in space, and the invisible church is timeless relating to Christians throughout all of time.³²

This defence of the visible and invisible natures of the church targeted an underlying conflict with the Roman Catholic notion that the Roman Church is coextensive with the invisible church.³³ One of the primary angles Hammond takes is the practical problem of this line of thinking and church unity. He writes,

But the vast body of believers, who have been chosen of God from the foundation of the world, cannot, by the very limitation of time and space, so exhibit unity. The unity which they possess, is that which has been contributed to them by God, and they must, in obedience to His mind and will, exhibit it, some in the glory, praising His name to all eternity and some in time, sometimes enduring great hardness, because of their faith in Him.³⁴

In other words, the Roman Catholic Church cannot be coextensive with the invisible church simply because the visible does not fully express the invisible; the present, visible church in the world, does not represent all believers for all time. More so, the Roman Church is not representative of all who have placed faith in Jesus Christ, especially since the Protestant Reformation. Conversely he states, ‘The Visible Church is never co-extensive with the Church Invisible even on earth, because there are often attached to communities of professing Christians those who do not really belong to them (1 Jn. ii. 19). There may thus be membership in the Visible Church which does not secure membership in the Invisible.’³⁵

³² Hammond, ‘The Church.’ This summary is drawn from Hammond’s expression of the dichotomy in Christian worship of some expressing worship in time and others in glory (eternally).

³³ See Hammond, *In Understanding Be Men*, p. 162.

³⁴ Hammond, ‘The Church.’

³⁵ Hammond, *In Understanding Be Men*, p. 162.

The existential reality of ‘tares among the wheat,’ or unbelievers amongst believers in the visible church, is further rationale for the invisible church. Not only is the church bound by time and space, but also its true membership is not known on earth or in time.

What is lacking in Hammond’s development of the visible and invisible church is a sustained reflection on the cohesion of the two concepts. A careful reading of his work, at places, leaves the reader with an either/or scenario between the visible and invisible. He is explicit in his lectures on the church that there are not two distinct churches.

The Visible Church is the expression in sensible form of the Invisible. What we call the Invisible may otherwise be described as the secret bond that unites believers to the Lord...The Visible Church never represents completely the Invisible. On the other hand, the Invisible is never without visible manifestation.³⁶

However, he seems to indicate that the visible and invisible operate independently, one across space (visible) and the other across time (invisible). He writes, ‘The Church is something that is independent of time, it does not consist merely of the members who are present [sic] constituted as a visible assembly, it consists of those who reposed faith in Jesus Christ and passed into eternal judgment.’³⁷ This statement is clear and an appropriate description of the invisible and visible church. However, Hammond continues to discuss how the boundaries of time and space then cause division between the visible and the invisible. As we have seen already, Hammond writes, ‘The unity which they possess, is that which has been contributed to them by God, and they must, in obedience to His mind and will, exhibit it, some in the [sic] glory, praising His name to all eternity, and some in time, sometimes enduring great hardness because of their faith in Him.’³⁸ While he is clear to say that the two coincide, he does not fully address how the visible is a manifestation in space of the timeless invisible church. Hammond seems to argue that simultaneously some believers participate in the visible, while others participate in the invisible. But how can the New Testament claim that Christians are presently already seated with Christ in the heavenly places (Eph 2:6)? Is there a sense in which the visible is participating in the heavenly/invisible? These questions were never answered further by Hammond, but would be considered and developed later by some of his successors, such as D.B. Knox.³⁹

In his radio address, Hammond takes care to recognise it is the place of no man to determine who belongs to the true church. He writes

³⁶ Hammond, *Notes*, p. 10.

³⁷ Hammond, ‘The Church.’

³⁸ Hammond, ‘The Church.’

³⁹ See D. Broughton Knox, ‘De-Mythologizing the Church,’ in *The Reformed Theological Review*, vol 32 1973, pp. 48–55.

concerning the Catholic Church, ‘We dare not communicate concerning sundry [sic] her gross and grievous abominations, yet touching these main parts of Christian truth, wherein they constantly still persist, we gladly acknowledge them to be of the family of Jesus Christ.’⁴⁰ The question that naturally arises concerning Hammond’s embrace of Roman Catholics as Christian brothers is, ‘Why crusade against the Roman Church?’ Hammond saw a distinction between fighting for doctrine and determining who belonged to the church. Poor doctrine does not necessitate exclusion from the church.⁴¹ Hammond writes,

All who profess a living faith in Jesus Christ are united in the visible [invisible?] body which is called His Church, even though unhappily, through the sin of men, and many misconceptions, they may err grievously concerning the faith. It is our duty to point out these difficulties and differences, and it is our obligation to insist as firmly as ever we can, upon the maintenance of the truth as it is revealed in Sacred Scripture, but it is no part of our province to pass judgment upon other people, and to assume that because they are, in our judgment, manifestly in error, therefore they are entirely rejected from the body of Christ.⁴²

Underlying all of his critique of Roman Catholic doctrine was a genuine passion for reform and a desire for unity. Hammond did not believe that the notion of Protestant and Roman Catholic unity was absurd. Rather, he deeply believed it already existed in Christ and he longed for a visible unity that could come from the ‘adhesion to Jesus Christ, and...hope of eternal salvation only in him.’⁴³ This desire and demeanour of longing for unity was the posture Hammond believed every Protestant should have in regard to Roman Catholics.

Unity

The second major theme in T.C. Hammond’s ecclesiology is the unity of the church. Hammond’s concept of unity was deeply entrenched in his thinking about the nature of the church. Hammond disagreed with

⁴⁰ Hammond, ‘The Church.’

⁴¹ In his unpublished document ‘Article XIX,’ Hammond writes, ‘The expressed confessions of faith, where they may be had, afford a suitable standard by which we can judge the Church. That body which imposes, as articles of faith, that which cannot be established by God’s Word, or that body which fails to observe the necessary requirements in the administration of the sacraments, is shown to have departed from the character of a visible church’ (p. 2). Hammond writes these words with regard to church authority and individual choice in places for fellowship. His concern in this statement appears to be more the corporate rather than the individual. This is rationale for the Protestant Reformation.

⁴² Hammond, ‘The Church.’ Here Hammond is drawing from Hooker.

⁴³ Hammond, ‘The Church.’

Bicknell's argument that 'you cannot divide an invisible body.'⁴⁴ Hammond believed that both the visible and the invisible church were divided. He writes, 'The divisions of the invisible church are present imperfections within the body which will finally be surmounted; the divisions in the visible church are twofold: Divisions due to imperfections, and divisions to the incrustations of alien elements.'⁴⁵ Disunity, however, does not mean destruction. Hammond attributes much of the current disunity in the church as the lesser of two evils, the greater evil being a suppression of conscience.⁴⁶ Hammond believes in and endorses the right of individual conscience, as is necessitated by his Protestantism (and perhaps also his Irish background!). He argues that non-conformity does not always produce disunity, and that multiple expressions and manifestations of churches may actually be united even in disagreement.

In order to define and defend his views of unity, Hammond employs an analogy of nations.⁴⁷ He writes, 'They [nations] consist of separate individuals, with varying outlooks, which sometimes attain very large dimensions, and threaten national integrity. But underlying the difference, there is a common spirit, and a broad common inheritance.'⁴⁸ Like a nation, Hammond identifies similar uniting forces within Christianity. Externally Christians are bound by their common inheritance through faith, a common environment of worship, and general moral and spiritual principles. Internally Christians share the bond of the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁹ Hammond argues that above all, the locus of the church's unity is in its Headship, which is in Christ Jesus.⁵⁰

Several questions arise about Hammond's view of the divided invisible church. First, how if the invisible church is comprised of the saints in glory, do there remain imperfections? Are these imperfections rooted in the visible manifestation of the invisible? These questions return to the deficiency of Hammond's consideration of the present reality of believers being seated in the heavenly places (Eph 2:6). Second, do both the external and internal uniting bonds of Christianity necessitate a united invisible church? Is the believer's existential membership in the invisible church not the realisation of this unity and the full expression of these bonds?

Hammond worked to provide bridges for unity, as seen in the inclusive nature of *In Understanding Be Men* written for evangelical Protestants

⁴⁴ Bicknell, *Thirty-Nine Articles*, p. 303. See Hammond, *Notes*, pp. 19–20.

⁴⁵ Hammond, *Notes*, p. 20.

⁴⁶ Hammond, *Notes*, p. 21.

⁴⁷ Hammond obtains this analogy as well as similar analogies with the same purpose, of the family unit illustrating unity, from Bicknell. See Bicknell, *Thirty-Nine Articles*, pp. 298–299.

⁴⁸ Hammond, *Notes*, pp. 23–24.

⁴⁹ Hammond, *Notes*, p. 24.

⁵⁰ Hammond, *In Understanding Be Men*, p. 163.

rather than Anglicans exclusively. He deeply hoped and longed for the unity of the church. However, he recognised that disunity superseded issues of polity and other functional and superficial disagreements. Should the Roman Church rescind its claims of exclusivity, the Church of England could not reunite with Rome on the basis of polity alone. The Reformation took place because of desperate need for doctrinal reform. Hammond's place as a theologian was one in continuation of this spirit of the Reformation.

Authority

The third major theme of T.C. Hammond's ecclesiology is the authority of the church. Hammond, in many ways, treats this issue as *prolegomena* to the rest of his consideration of the church, understanding the Bible to be the ultimate authority over the church.⁵¹ The authority of the church is grounded in Scripture, and this authority extends only so far as Scripture permits. Hammond contended that the church's fidelity to Scripture is essential to its purpose. He writes, 'The primary function of the church is that of witness. This leads directly to the place of Holy Scripture. We maintain that the church is the servant and not the mistress of her message.'⁵² The question that must be answered is, 'What is the Word of God?' The Roman Church's elevation of history to an equal position to Scripture in the scheme of divine revelation is a major point of contention. Hammond is not dismissive of obvious questions that arise from this controversy, addressing issues such as: 'Who decides what section [denomination/faction] of the church has authority?' and, 'Who gave it this authority?'⁵³ Not avoiding these questions, but answering them on a different level, Hammond proposes, 'The authority of the church is real, but not absolute.'⁵⁴ He argues that corporate authority is the norm, however, in extreme circumstances the enlightened conscience may challenge corporate authority. This conscience, of course, must proceed prudently and only stand against the corporate if there is an imposition of mandates lacking Scriptural warrant. With this point, Hammond again demonstrates that his theological grounding is in the Thirty-Nine Articles.⁵⁵

For Hammond, the most relevant battle over the issue of the authority of the church is the Roman Church's imposition of extra-biblical doctrine. This imposition has largely been carried out under the authority ascribed by apostolic succession. Hammond's view of apostolic

⁵¹ Hammond, *Notes*, p. 1. Notice his introduction to ecclesiology.

⁵² Hammond, *Notes*, p. 31.

⁵³ Hammond, *Notes*, pp. 30–31.

⁵⁴ Hammond, *Notes*, p. 31.

⁵⁵ Hammond's comments on limits to ecclesial authority, especially over doctrine, are rooted in Article XX.

succession is as follows: ‘The essence of apostolic succession is found in the Christian deposit. That is the gauge by which everything must be tested. The authority of the Apostles is not due to an accident in time, nor to their inherent genius, but to the fact that they were the recipients of the message of Christ.’⁵⁶ The misunderstanding of this doctrine has allowed for many other non-biblical practices to be carried out in the church under false authority. This is, perhaps, most explicitly seen in the sacerdotal priesthood. Hammond believes that Rome has both misunderstood and abused the notion of apostolic succession and the ‘power of the keys,’ using this as a power play and an afterthought to accommodate their *ex opere operato* view of the sacraments. He concludes with a warning against sacerdotalism writing, ‘The idea that the Christian minister is in any sense a mediator between God and man is “repugnant to holy Scripture.”’⁵⁷ It is to such a doctrine that Hammond would argue for the intervention of the scripturally informed individual conscience.

Hammond’s Ecclesiological Influence

The great contribution of T.C. Hammond’s ecclesiology was the intellectual voice he provided Evangelicalism. His ecclesiology emerged from his Anglican heritage, finding its grounding in the Thirty-Nine Articles and the creeds. However, Hammond was not naïve. He asked questions of his tradition and engaged with voices of other traditions. His doctrine was shaped in the face of opposition and therefore articulated in contrast. The juxtaposition of Protestant ecclesiological convictions over/against Roman Catholic doctrine served as a powerful tool in bolstering the evangelical cause. For him, these claims against Catholic doctrine were not academic exercises. Hammond demonstrated clearly why the Church of England departed from the Roman Church and why there was continual doctrinal strife. The three main themes we have explored in his ecclesiology—the nature of the church, the unity of the church, and the authority of the church—have served as case studies for the contradistinction between Protestantism and Catholicism. While Hammond’s thinking was not innovative, it served his context well in recovering and re-establishing an evangelical foundation.

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⁵⁶ Hammond, *Notes*, p. 27.

⁵⁷ Hammond, *In Understanding Be Men*, p. 172.