

ANGLICAN/ROMAN CATHOLIC INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION

"An examination of Vatican 11's Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (Dei Verbum) as an authoritative description of the authority of Scripture."

Raymond Pelly

Abbreviations.

- Caprile = Giovanni Caprile, S.J. 11 Concilio Vaticano 11.
6 vols. Rome 1966.
- Commentary = Commentary on the Documents of Vatican 11. Ed.
H. Vorgrimler. 6 vols. London 1968.
- DV = Constitutio Dogmatica De Divina Revelatione, 'Dei
Verbum', promulgated 18.11.65.
- Denzinger = Enchiridion Symbolorum. 33rd Ed. Ed. A.
Schönmetzer. Barcelona 1965.
- Dupuy = Vatican 11. La Révélation Divine. Ed. B.-D.
Dupuy, O.P. Two Vols. Paris 1968.
- GC = General Congregation.
- Hampe = Die Autorität der Freiheit. Hrsg. J.C. Hampe.
3 vols. Munich 1967.
- Montreal = The Fourth World Conference on Faith and Order.
The Report from Montreal 1963. Ed. P.C. Rodger
and L. Vischer. London 1964.
- Warlock = English Bishops at the Council. 3rd Session
Council Speeches. Ed. D. Warlock. London 1965.
- Yzermans = American Participation in the Second Vatican
Council. Ed. Mgr. V. A. Yzermans. New York 1967.

An examination of Vatican II's Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (Dei Verbum) as an authoritative description of the authority of scripture.

Background

To pose the question of authority as that of the authority of scripture is illustrative of the extent to which Anglicanism has its roots in the Reformation. As the title of the document known as Dei Verbum, 'Constitutio Dogmatica de Divina Revelatione', suggests, the rôle allotted to scripture is a subordinate one. Or, put more ironically, it is seen in a wider context of other elements of equal or greater importance.

A prima facie reading of the Constitution leaves the impression that the fundamental theological issue under discussion is that of revelation and its transmission; and that this is not reducible to a discussion of the degree of authority ascribed to scripture. Also involved in the imaginative effort necessary to understand Dei Verbum on its own terms is a clarification of how the fundamental questions it tries to answer differ from those posed to the Council of Trent and Vatican I.

Trent sought to reply to the 'sola scriptura' principle of the Reform. Far from allowing that the true nature of christianity could be determined by appeal to scripture alone it taught that the evidence afforded by the traditions of the Church was to be treated 'pari pietatis affectu ac reverentia'.¹ This is not to be confused with the later polemics of the Counter Reform where Tradition, in the singular, and almost in the abstract,² was put forward as a source of revelation in addition to scripture. Nor is it to be confused with the recent debate³ as

to whether the verbal change from 'partim - partim' to 'et - et' in the drafting of the decree concerned at Trent implied a change of theology. Though it is generally conceded that little can be read into the change of wording⁴, the subsequent debate has centred around whether the 'et - et' is to be taken in the sense of 'partim - partim' or 'totum - totum'. If revelation is partly in scripture and partly in tradition then we have a clear two sources theory.⁵ If, on the other hand, revelation is wholly in scripture and wholly in tradition it follows, despite seeming to concede too much to tradition, that tradition cannot contain anything which is not also contained in scripture.⁶

Far-reaching as the consequences of such arguments are for the whole of theology they remain in the formal rather than the material mode. As such it is liable to become sterile, over-complicated, and unreal. The injection of life it requires is a consideration of what is meant by revelation and how it is given through scripture and/or tradition(s).

If its conciliar theology is representative of Roman Catholic theology⁷ Vatican 1 can be seen as the attempt to provide the groundwork for a theology of revelation. The chief pre-occupation was to reaffirm the place of reason in knowledge of God. Accordingly the Council committed itself to the amazing statement, "Huic divinae revelationi tribuendum quidem est, ut ea, quae in rebus divinis humanae rationi per se impervia non sunt, in praesenti quoque generis humani conditione ab omnibus expedite, firma certitudine et nulla admixtio errore cognosci possint."⁸ From the standpoint of Vatican 11⁹ this approach to the theology of revelation seems strange. Yet the question underlying that of the relation of scripture and tradition is posed. Thus, though Vatican 11 has much that is instructive on

scripture,¹⁰ its fundamental concern is with clarifying law or on what basis theological affirmations are made, if they can be made at all.¹¹ Another way of stating the intellectual continuity between the two Vatican Councils would be to say that both are concerned with the issue of certainty, but in different contexts and in different ways.¹²

Revelation

It is arguable that the major achievement of Dei Verbum is to put the Roman Catholic theology of revelation on a new footing. Because this is determinative for the understanding of the relation of scripture and tradition it is worth following through in detail.

Schema 1¹³ assumes that revelation is verbal or propositional, that it is given and recorded in words. The various circumlocutions for revelation in paragraph two of chapter 1 betray this fact. Revelation is given 'per praedicationem', and is variously described as 'verbum Dei', 'verbum Domini', 'doctrina Christi', or 'sermo Dei'.¹⁴ Behind this is the traditional conception of revelation as 'locutio Dei' with its concomitant appeal to Hebrews 1:1 as proof-text.¹⁵ André Scrima has written with justice, "L'expression, il est vrai, est empruntée à Heb. 1:1: abstraite cependant de son contexte biblique elle devint l'objet d'une analyse conceptuelle et d'une définition notionnelle de la locutio. C'est ainsi que la formule 'Dieu parle' fut annexée au champ sémantique du langage selon son acception scolastique: 'nihil est aliud loqui ad alterum quam conceptum mentis alteri manifestari'."¹⁶

Schema 11 marks the transition from a 'locutio Dei' theology of revelation to one which is complemented by much that is refreshingly different. Typical of the old way of thinking is the sentence in the Prooemium(3), "In Christo et per Spiritum Christi, Apostolis promissum ut illos omnia doceret, quaecumque ipse Christus dixerat (cf. Jn. 14:26), publica revelatio ultima et integra facta est (cf. Heb. 1:1). The breakthrough, if that is not too strong a word, comes in the next paragraph when revelation is no longer confined to Christ's words. "Opera Christi, quae dedit ei Peter ut faceret ea, testimonium perhibent de eo (cf. Jn. 5:36), cum Christus divinitatem suam non verbis dumtaxat affirmaverit, sed etiam vita sanctissima, miraculis, prophetiis et maxime resurrectione gloriosa ex mortuis confirmaverit." Also to be noted from Schema 11 is the first appearance of the phrase "verbis et gestis"¹⁷ which come to occupy such a central place in the Council's theology of revelation.¹⁸

In Schema 111 the 'locutio Dei' theology is juxtaposed with an 'opera Dei' theology of revelation. As the latter strengthens and develops there appears the beginnings of an attempt to find a synthesis of the two. This is how the drafters now express it: "Hac itaque revelatione Deus invisibilis (cf. Col. 1:15; 1 Tim. 1:17) ex abundantia caritatis suae homines tamquam amicus alloquitur (cf. Ex. 33:11; Jn. 15:14;15) et cum eis conversatur (cf. Bar. 3:38), ut eas ad societatem cum Patre et Filio et Spiritu Sancto invitet et admittet. Hac revelatione oeconomia fit gestis verbisque intrinsece inter se connexis, ita ut opera, in historia salutis a Deo patrata, doctrinam et rem verbis significatam manifestent et corroborent, verba

autem opera proclament et mysterium in eis contentum elucident." The 'locutio Dei' receives a wider definition as an 'oeconomia' of words and actions which illuminate each other and together constitute the revelation. For the understanding of the expressions 'locutio Dei' and 'verbum Dei' in the final text this is extremely important.¹⁹ Further, as in Schema 11, the theology of revelation has Christ as its centre. In Schema 111 this christological theology is deepened and extended. God's whole coming to man, which is both revelation and redemption, is summed up in Christ; and not only in his words and actions but in his very person, in 'tota sua persona'.²⁰ This christocentric doctrine of revelation can be described with equal justice as historical, personal, or even sacramental.²¹ Despite the voices raised against the new thinking²², some of the consequences of it are increasingly drawn. For example, I, VI (= I, V in Schema II) is rewritten so as to avoid any charge of mere intellectualism. The purpose of revelation is that men should share in the divine life 'which surpasses all human understanding'. The contrast with the following sentence is marked.²³ But the upshot is that revelation, though it includes words, cannot be reduced to or expressed only in words. By its nature and purpose, it exceeds the written or spoken word.

This, then, is the necessary background for understanding the relation of scripture to revelation. Schema III teaches, "Divinitus revelata quae afflante Spiritu Sancto litteris consignata sunt, in Sacra Scriptura continentur et prostant."²⁴ Scripture is revelation only in a derivative sense. Revelation itself is in Christ, in his person, his words and his actions.

Schema IV represents the virtual culmination of the Council's thinking on revelation. Two alterations from Schema III are worth noting. First, the new theology of revelation has obvious implications for the account given of the act of faith. It can no longer be assent to propositions but rather the total human act of obedience in response to God's revelation of himself. "Deo revelanti praestanda est 'obaeditia fidei' (Rom. 12:26; cf. Rom. 1:5; 2 Cor. 1a:5-6), qua homo se totum libere Deo committit et 'plenum revelanti Deo intellectus et voluntatis obsequium praestat', voluntarie veritati ab eo revelatae assentiens".²⁵ Secondly, the phrase 'tota sua persona' becomes 'tota Suiipsius praesentia ac manifestatione'.²⁶ The intention behind this change is to find an even more comprehensive term for the revelation in Christ than 'persona'. Also, as the Relatio explains, the words 'praesentia' and 'manifestatio' were chosen as the nearest Latin equivalents to the Greek 'epiphaneia' and to avoid all confusion with the use of 'persona' in the christology of the early church.²⁷ Words, actions, signs, miracles - all these are facets of Christ's epiphany which singularly and in their totality reveal God.

The whole orientation and flavour of Vatican II's approach to the theology of revelation can be summarized by one further comparison with Vatican I. It can be brought out²⁸ by looking at the relevant texts side by side:

Vatican I

....placuisse eius sapientiae et bonitati...se ipsum ac aeterna voluntatis suae decreta humano genere revelare

Vatican II

Placuit Deo in suo bonitate et sapientia seipsum revelare et notum facere sacramentum voluntatis suae (cf. Eph. 1:9).²⁹

In his commentary Joseph Ratzinger writes: "Here, instead of the abstract values 'sapientia et bonitas' we first have a reference to God himself' in his wisdom and goodness', thus giving a far greater emphasis to the personal and theocentric starting-point when compared with Vatican I: it is God himself, the person of God, from whom the revelation proceeds and to whom it returns, and thus revelation necessarily reaches - also with the person who receives it - into the personal centre of man, it touches him in the depth of his being, not 'only in his individual faculties, in his will and understanding. The second difference between the two texts is more important: instead of the words 'the eternal decree of his will' we have the 'sacramentum' of his will. Instead of the legalistic view which sees revelation largely as the issuing of divine decrees, we have a sacramental view, which sees law and grace, word and deed, message and sign, the person and his utterance within the one comprehensive mystery."³⁰ What are the implications of this kind of theology for the Council's teaching on the handing on of revelation in time?

The Transmission of Revelation

To follow the argument from Chapter I to Chapter II of *Dei Verbum* it is necessary to be aware of an important change in terminology. In speaking of the continued living work of God's revelation in the Church the Council uses the word 'Evangelium'.³¹ Thus in 2, VII and 2, VIII 'Evangelium' is the basic category of the theological thinking deployed.

With this change in vocabulary from 'Revelatio' to 'Evangelium' there comes a potential source of misunderstandings.

It lies in the closer definition of 'Evangelium'³² which is used, as is perhaps obvious, in a much wider sense than is usual in Reformed and Lutheran theology.³³ Not only does it include the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, it also includes - and this is what is really important in the Constitution - all those things in the life of the Church which correspond to and therefore transmit the revelation given in Christ. Since, as we have seen, 'Revelatio' is already very broadly interpreted (words, actions, presence) 'Evangelium' too is given a correspondingly comprehensive definition.

It is here perhaps that the Anglican theologian might wish to raise questions about the sort of correspondence that is implied. Is it legitimate to make a complete transition from christology to ecclesiology so that the whole life of the Church is now revelatory in the same way that the life of Christ was the revelation of God? Or the question could be whether certain elements are gratuitously added to the definition of 'Evangelium' which are not strictly deducible even from the considerable amount which has already been packed into the definition of 'Revelatio'.

The crucial transition comes in 2, VII, 1. God intends his revelation of himself in Christ to be transmitted integrally to all generations. Hence a mandate was given to the Apostles to preach the "Evangelium" as 'fontem omnis et salutaris veritatis et morum disciplinae'. The text then continues, "Quod quidem fideliter factum est, tum ab Apostolis, qui in praedicatione orali, exemplis et institutionibus ea tradiderunt quae sive ex ore, conversatione et operibus Christi acceperant, sive a Spiritu Sancto suggerente didicerant...." The

characteristic widening of the definition of 'Evangelium' comes in the inclusion of 'institutions' and other things 'suggested by the Holy Spirit.'³⁴ It is quite clear from 2, VIII, 2 that the 'Evangelium' transmitted by the Apostles and the Bishops their successors is in effect identical with the whole form, belief and life of the Church. "Quod vero ab Apostolis traditum est, ea omnia complectitur quae ad Populi Dei vitam sancte ducendam fidemque augendam conferunt, sicque Ecclesia, in sua doctrina, vita et cultu, perpetuat cunctisque generationibus transmittit omne quod ipsa est, omne quod credit."

How far is this an adequate understanding of the Gospel? Is there not the danger that any means of deciding what is a true or false understanding of the Gospel has been submerged? An identification of Gospel and Church seems close. Once the Gospel has been given such an all-embracing definition it becomes less and less possible to isolate the scriptures as a privileged expression of the Gospel. The consequence is that the final locus of authority tends to be seen in the focus of the total life of the Church which includes rather than stands under the Bible. However, this is to anticipate.

Scripture and Tradition

The ambiguities in the theology of revelation and the closely related account of its transmission as 'Evangelium' in the life of the Church begin to appear when the Council tries to translate it into affirmations about the rôles played by scripture and tradition respectively in the transmission of revelation in the Church.

Following the main lines of the Council's theology as

outlined above 'Traditio' is the whole process within the Church whereby all that God has given is preserved, handed on, and where it lives and is responded to. Unlike Trent, Vatican II always refers to 'Traditio' in the singular, the process, rather than to traditions in the plural, as referring to anything specific.³⁵ Nevertheless the 'Traditio' must have content in the 'traditum' or 'tradita'. It begins with the 'praedicatio apostolica' which in the first place is of course oral.³⁶ As time goes on it is committed to writing but without any suggestion of a diminution of the sense in which it continues orally. The scriptures express it 'speciali modo' but by no means exclusively or even exhaustively. "... praedicatio apostolica, quae in inspiratis libris speciali modo exprimitur, continua successione usque ad consummationem temporum conservari debebat."³⁷ However, it is fair to say, at least as concerns 2, VIII, 1-4, that 'Traditio' is understood as inclusive of scripture. It is the whole ongoing life of the Church 'in sua doctrina, vita et cultu.'³⁸

At this level the thought patterns of Vatican II and the Montreal Faith and Order Conference (1963), even after allowing for obvious differences of emphasis, are remarkably similar. Montreal teaches, "By the Tradition is meant the gospel itself, transmitted from generation to generation in and by the Church, Christ himself present in the life of the Church. By tradition is meant the traditionary process."³⁹

Returning to Vatican II, it is at precisely this point that the ambiguities referred to earlier appear. In a speech made during the third session Abbott Butler said that the text

seemed to be using the word tradition in two different senses: in one as including scripture and in another as distinct from it.⁴⁰ This was a perceptive remark. So far we have paid most attention to the former sense. We must now turn to the latter.

Here the assumption is that scripture and tradition are distinct however closely they can be seen as relating a posteriori. Without underestimating the extent to which the Council tried to escape a two sources of revelation theory it undoubtedly forms the indispensable background for grasping the intention behind a number of crucial sentences in the Constitution. Thus, besides saying that tradition has a certain precedence over scripture as determinative of the Canon and inspiration of scripture⁴¹ the Council was at pains to emphasize their oneness. It does so by means of two images. First, tradition and scripture (in that order) proceed from the same source or spring, 'ex eadem...scaturigine'.⁴² Alternatively, tradition and the scriptures of both testaments are like a mirror in which the pilgrim Church contemplates God.⁴³ The way these images are interpreted depends on the assumptions taken to lay behind them. Possibly they represent the transition from one way of thinking to another. Certainly the respective definitions of scripture and tradition in 2, IX are not entirely free of the old theology. Here they are distinct. "Etenim Sacra Scriptura est locutio Dei quatenus divino afflante Spiritu scripto consignatur; Sacra autem Traditio verbum Dei, a Christo Domino et a Spiritu Sancto Apostolis concreditum, successoribus eorum integre transmittit....; quo fit ut Ecclesia certitudinem suam de omnibus revelatis non per Solam Sacram Scriptoram hauriat."⁴⁴ Even granted that 'verbum Dei' and 'locutio Dei' are virtually

synonyms,⁴⁵ that they can both be said to transmit divine revelation,⁴⁶ they nevertheless contain and transmit revelation in different ways which is not accounted for merely by saying that one operates through the written word and the other orally.⁴⁷ It is difficult to be more precise. Symptomatic of what is at stake is the series of affirmations made by Cardinal Florit (as he was by then) in his *Relatio* explaining the *Mōdi* or suggested alterations which were incorporated into the final text. On the one hand it is said that tradition transmits the word of God (= revelation) integrally. On the other hand, Cardinal Florit explained that although tradition was not to be taken as a qualitative addition or supplement to scripture, neither was scripture to be regarded as an integral codification of revelation. Bringing these points together to illuminate the crucial issue of certainty, he said, "In tuto ponitur doctrina catholica, constanti Ecclesiae praxi sancita, iuxta quam Ecclesia certitudinem suam de revelatis haurit per sacram Scripturam nonnisi cum Traditione coniunctam; quapropter, ubi ad illam certitudinem assequendam Scriptura sola non sufficit, Traditio decisivum affere potest argumentum." If it is asked how exactly tradition brings decisive arguments, the answer would be through the magisterium. In another typically catholic 'sola' it is said, "Munus autem authenticæ interpretandi verbum Dei soli vivo Ecclesiae Magisterio concreditum est.--".⁴⁹ Even though 'verbum Dei' here is 'scriptum vel traditum' the impression given over the question of so relating tradition to scripture as to produce certainty is that in the end it is not the incomplete codification of revelation (scripture) which matters so much as the ongoing life of the Church, tradition

in the all-embracing sense of that which integrally transmits revelation, which - as focused in the Magisterium - is the decisive interpretative criterion of anything particular in the life of the Church be it scripture or whatever. This conclusion stands in spite of the fact that there is plenty of evidence that the Council deliberately left open the controverted questions of the 'material sufficiency of scripture'⁵⁰ or, conversely, the so-called 'latius patere' of tradition.⁵¹

With this complex rather involuted knot of problems there goes another to which Vittorio Subilia has rightly drawn attention. He writes, "Les choses que Dieu a révélées sont envisagées comme constituant un dépôt. L'existence d'un dépôt entraîne la nécessité de gardiens qui veillent sur lui et qui l'administrent avec la compétence nécessaire."⁵² In other words, besides the main stream of thought running through words like 'Revelatio', 'Evangelium', 'Traditio', 'verbum Dei' which works with personal and organic categories there is another that is basically propositional. In one sense this is inevitable. There have to be statements of what is believed to be true. The fact that revelation is not propositional does not mean there cannot be propositions about revelation. These, however, become dangerous when isolated from a living theology of revelation as providing the source from which they are derived and the context in which they can be interpreted. This tendency is noticeable whenever Dei Verbum speaks of 'things revealed' (revelata) instead of revelation as the one indivisible 'praesentia' of Christ in the incarnation and in the life of the Church.

The divinely revealed things, or perhaps propositions, are in scripture; but not entirely so.⁵³ They exist in the one 'Depositum Fidei' - an expression integral to this whole way of thinking - which is itself composed of things drawn from both scripture and tradition. "Sacra Traditio et Sacra Scriptura unum verbi Dei sacrum depositum constituunt Ecclesiae commissum."⁵⁴ Once given the 'Depositum Fidei' remains the same for ever. No further public revelation is to be expected before the glorious return of Christ.⁵⁵ Still it is nevertheless the Magisterium which, as the history of the Church proceeds, proposes what is to be believed as revealed.⁵⁶ The famous 'pie audit' in the sentence alluded to is only reassuring in so far as the Magisterium is accountable to the 'verbum Dei'. The unease, on the other hand, with which even this can be viewed stems not only from the imprecise definition of 'verbum Dei' but from the propositional theology of revelation which seems to be presupposed at this point. Here the Council is not abreast of its own best thinking. The divergence of thought is epitomized in the Prooemium where revelation is presented both as a 'salutis praeconio' and as a 'doctrina'. What is the link between the two views?

Criteria.

Whichever theme is dominant there remains to be considered the fundamental issue of criteria. The question arises whether tradition is thought of as embracing or as distinct from scripture. Thus it is said that the 'perceptio' and 'intelligentia' of the meaning of tradition ^{grow} as the centuries pass'.⁵⁷ By what criteria can the truth or falsity of such

developments be judged? It must be admitted that there is little of real bite on the subject in Dei Verbum. The argument tends to be circular. Tradition is true because it is apostolic. Apostolic, so it can be argued, is not so much an implied historical statement as one concerned primarily with the present life of the Church. Joseph Ratzinger writes of the Council of Trent: "it (the criterion) was found in the reception by the whole Church A second criterion was apostolicity.... In practice, however, the reception of tradition by the Church was taken as a criterion of apostolicity, so that the latter was largely excluded as a separate yardstick"⁵⁸. Comparing this with Vatican II Ratzinger doubts whether it really progressed beyond the 'quasi per manus traditae ad nos usque pervenerunt' of Trent.⁵⁹

This was not for want of vigorous protests from some of the Bishops. During the 3rd Session (1964), for example, Cardinal Meyer of Chicago made two forthright speeches. Speaking on chapters 1, II of Dei Verbum he listed deficiencies in the tradition as, "the long, obscure theological doctrine concerning the resurrection of Christ, moralism with exaggerated casuistry, non-liturgical piety and the neglect of Sacred Scripture;"⁶⁰ and he then went on in another speech on section VIII of chapter 2 to say what the criterion should be. He pleaded for the following addition: "Nevertheless, this living tradition does not always and in all things advance and grow. For when the Pilgrim Church contemplates divine matters, it can fail in some respects and actually has failed. For this reason, it carries within itself Sacred Scripture as an abiding norm, one against which it can measure its own life and thus

unceasingly correct and improve itself."⁶¹ Along the same lines was the speech by Cardinal Léger of Montreal. He asked that the term 'verbum Dei' be restricted to the revelation as it transcended the life of the Church and the Magisterium. Though he did not explicitly identify revelation with the Bible he emphasized that this sense of the transcendence of revelation was a precondition for the renewal of the Church as well as a help in facilitating dialogue with the separated brethren.⁶² However, as Ratzinger rightly diagnoses, none of this was adopted into the text.

At the same time there are statements in chapter VI 'De Sacra Scriptura in Vita Ecclesiae' which, in describing the rôle scripture ought to play in the life of the Church go beyond what is said in the more cautious, more dogmatic statements of chapter II.⁶³ Here scripture clearly plays a more important rôle than tradition. For example it is said that the study of scripture is the soul of theology. "Sacrae Paginae studium sit veluti anima Sacrae Theologiae."⁶⁴ The standard 'una cum traditione' seems for once to have slipped out of the picture. Similar is the statement that preaching must be nourished and ruled by scripture. "Omnis ergo praedicatio ecclesiastica sicut ipso religio christiana Sacra Scriptura nutriatur et regatur oportet."⁶⁵ The full significance of this can perhaps be seen by comparing it with Schema 1 where the role of scripture was merely to illustrate ('illustrare') statements derived from elsewhere.⁶⁶ There may be a wide divergence of fundamental theology implied in the change from 'illustrare' to 'regere'. Indeed one of the chief impressions left by the careful study of the texts of Vatican II is a vivid perception of how

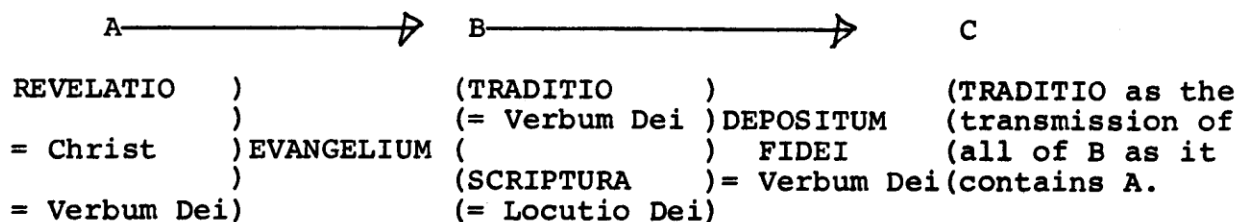
Roman Catholic theology in practice actually develops. Things moved a long way during the Council. It would be entirely arbitrary to suppose that they ceased to do so when the Council finished in 1965.⁶⁷

Conclusions

The fact remains that the question of the authority of scripture was not asked in Anglican terms at Vatican II. Exact comparisons between Anglican and Roman Catholic positions are hard to make satisfactorily because each single point is set in a whole context of thought and practice which gives it its particular meaning and flavour. An instance would be a comparison of Article VI of the 39 Articles with DV 3, XI. Article VI says that, "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation." The relevant sentence of DV 3, XI reads, "Cum ergo omne id, quod auctores inspirati seu hagiographi asserunt, retineri debeat assertum a Spiritu Sancto, Scripturae libri veritatem, quem Deus nostrae salutis causa Litteris Sacris consignari voluit, firmiter, fideliter et sine errore docere profitendi sunt." In so far as the two documents are comparable there is a certain convergence. At the same time read in their respective historical contexts they are saying different things. In addition there is nothing in Dei Verbum on the traditional Anglican concerns with reason and conscience. Interpretation of scripture is an ecclesial activity and in the final instance the prerogative of the Magisterium.⁶⁸

The briefest summary of the position (not altogether clear) on the relation between scripture and tradition would be that there is in the first place no naïve polemic to the

effect that tradition precedes scripture both temporarily and in importance. That would only be the reverse side of the idea that everything in the life of the Church comes from scripture alone. Perhaps the present position can be represented diagrammatically.



Two observations may be in order. First, the diagram faithfully reproduces the ambiguity in the word 'Traditio' as between stages B and C. The diagram could also be drawn with B and C overlaying each other. Secondly, there is the question which must be asked in the light of the recent Marian dogmas: Does stage C add 'secundum quid' to either B or even A? There is always in the background the suspicion that the Roman Catholic Church for all its talk of an historical revelation is more 'unilluminisme bien organisé'. Austin Farrer spoke even more graphically of "an infallible fact-factory going full blast".⁶⁹ How much truth is there in these charges?

The most 'ecumenically acceptable' view of the relation of scripture to tradition, and one undoubtedly present in some of the Council's thinking, has been well expressed by Bishop Butler. "The....view, that Scripture in a sense contains everything, but needs Tradition for its understanding and elucidation, began to appear in the nineteenth century, and was in fact put forward by J. H. Newman in his celebrated reply to

Dr. Pusey.... If Newman is right, then we have a foundation for dialogue with Protestants. And this the more, since in non-Catholic ecumenical circles there is a growing tendency to revalue the rôle of Tradition - not as a supplement to Scripture, but as its interpreter."⁷⁰ The idea of tradition as the interpreter of scripture merits further discussion.

At the risk of sounding ungrateful it should also be asked whether Vatican II in trying to escape all suspicion of a two sources of revelation doctrine has not gone to the other extreme of so closely linking scripture and tradition that there is no longer any 'moment' in the Church's life which transcends it and stands over against it - be it scripture or whatever. In answering one of the questions posed by the Reformation it has neglected the second, more serious one, the famous 'Gegenüber', as Karl Barth has put it. To ask how far this is itself a Reformed or Lutheran question rather than an Anglican one is, inter alia, also to ask fundamental questions about Anglicanism.

This leads on naturally to the final point. By common consent the speech on Dei Verbum during the 3rd Session which made the profoundest impression was that by a Uniat Bishop, Mgr. M. Edelby.⁷¹ Speaking from within the eastern tradition he wished to locate scripture and tradition where, he urged, as one living whole, they truly belong: in a liturgical and therefore in a pneumatological context. He said, "L'Écriture est une réalité liturgique et prophétique, une proclamation avant d'être un livre, le témoignage de l'esprit Saint sur l'événement du Christ dont le moment privilégié est la Liturgie eucharistique. C'est par ce témoignage de l'Esprit que toute l'Économie du Verbe révèle le Père. La controverse post-tridentine a surtout vu dans l'Écriture une norme écrite; les Églises orientales y

voient la consécration de l'histoire du salut sous les espèces de la parole humaine mais inséparablement de la consécration eucharistique où toute l'histoire est recapitulée dans le Corps de Christ.... A cette consécration il faut une épiclese, et c'est la Sainte Tradition. La Tradition est l'épiclese de l'histoire du salut, la théophanie de l'Esprit Saint sans laquelle l'histoire reste incompréhensible et l'Ecriture lettre morte". This is worth quoting at length because although it came too late to have any effect on the drafting of Dei Verbum, in the opinion of many it represents the direction in which the Constitution might well have developed.⁷²

The nearest Dei Verbum approaches this is in 2, VIII, 4. "Sanctorum Patrum dicta huius Traditionis vivificam testificantur praesentiam, cuius divitiae in praxim vitamque credentis et orantis Ecclesiae transfunduntur." This should be read alongside the Relatio to Schema III explaining why the sentence was added. "Allusio fit ad Ecclesia ad instituta in genere, et in specie ad liturgiam; haec enim, quatenus gestis et verbis exprimitur, testimonium constituit privilegium vivae Traditionis, ita ut, 'on trouverait difficilement une vérifié de la foi chrétienne, qui ne soit exprimée en quelque manière dans la liturgie' (Pius XII..)". Even though Dei Verbum also speaks of the triad scripture - tradition - magisterium 'sub actione unius Spiritus Sancti',⁷³ all these statements seem flat-footed and undeveloped compared with Mgr. Edelby's speech. But does Montreal do any better? It says, "The Scriptures as documents can be letter only. It is the Spirit who is the Lord and giver of life. Accordingly we may say that the right interpretation (taking the words in the widest possible sense) is that interpretation which

is guided by the Holy Spirit."⁷⁴ Is it not just at this point of understanding how scripture and tradition come alive in the liturgy through the consecration of the Holy Spirit that the West needs to put its house in order and begin to glimpse a genuinely ecumenical theology?

FOOTNOTES

1. Denzinger 1501. Cp. B. C. Butler in, Warlock p. 153.
2. M. Bévenot has pointed out that Trent speaks of 'traditions' in the plural. These referred to 'the traditional observances of the Church of their day' 'tum ad fidem tum ad mores pertinentes'. 'Traditions' in the Council of Trent. Heythrop Journal, 1963/4, pp. 333-347.
3. Usually associated with J. R. Geiselman.
4. Sc. Geiselman. "Was hat also das Konzil mit dem "et" über das Verhältnis von Schrift u. Tradition entschieden? Die Antwort kann nur lauten: nichts, gar nichts. Mit dem "et" ist das Konzil einer Entscheidung ausgewichen, weil diese Frage nach nicht entscheidungsreif war. Das ist das Ergebnis unserer Untersuchung...". Die Mündliche Überlieferung. Hrsg. M. Schmaus. München, 1957, p. 163.
5. Schema I of the Constitution on Revelation issued to the Fathers on 13th July 1962 was entitled 'De Duplici Fonte Revelationis'. In the context of the debate we are discussing the 'official' theology was assumed by the Theological Commission to be that, "...sancta mater Ecclesia semper credidit et credit integrum revelationem, non in sola Scriptura, sed in Scriptura et Traditione, tanquam in duplici fonte contineri, alio tamen ac alia modo." I, IV.
6. The danger of such a position for Churches stemming from or influenced by the Reformation is that it could have a symmetry which enables it to be used in reverse i.e. there is nothing in scripture which is not also in tradition.
7. If it is not almost insuperable difficulties arise over agreeing on who are the 'representative' theologians at any given moment.
8. Denzinger 3005.
9. Vatican II loyally quotes this and one other sentence from Vatican I's 'Dei Filius'. Cf. I, VI, 2.
10. E.g. DV 5, XIX, 2, "Auctores autem sacri...communicarent" - which is an interesting attempt to find an approach to the study of the Gospels mutually acceptable to Roman Catholic New Testament scholars and the Magisterium.
11. So B. -D. Dupuy O.P. Dupuy I, p. 72.
12. Compare, for example, the 'firma certitudine' of Vatican I (quoted supra) with Paul VI's modus to DV, "...quo fit ut Ecclesia certitudinem suam de omnibus revelatis non per solam Sacram Scripturam hauriat" 2, IX.

13. DV went through five main drafts. The Textgeschichte is conveniently summarized in Dupuy II, pp. 573-4.
14. The only hint of another kind of thinking is in the phrase "sive in verbis sive in historiae rebus" in 3, XV a paragraph, significantly, on the Old Testament.
15. Contrast the exegesis of Hebrews 1:1 in the final draft: 3, XI³.
16. Dupuy II, p. 525.
17. "... se verbis et gestis revelavit" 3, XIV.
18. Cf. DV I, II, I; 4, XIV; 5, XVII, 1.
19. Cf. DV 2, IX; 2, X, 1-2.
20. I, IV, I.
21. All three adjectives appear in the Illustratio Doctrinalis of Archbishop Florit's Relatio to *Schema III*, dated 25.9.64. 'Sacramental' bears on the word 'rem' in I, II (cp. I, II, I final text), and is explained in the Illustratio, "...sacramentalis autem, quia gestorum integra significatio nonnisi per verba, scilicet per locutionem Dei (quae et ipsa historicus est eventus), nobis innotescit." - the familiar distinction between a 'sacramentum' and the 'res sacramenti'. When the word 'res' was challenged the Theological Commission justified its presence in Schema IV as follows: "...vocabulum res hic adhiberi eo fere sensu quam habet in expressione 'res sacramenti', ut significetur profunda realites, quae per verba significatur et per gesta in sua realitate exprimitur.
22. In the Relatio to Schema III some of the Fathers are reported as protesting, "non sufficienter in lucem poni revelationem essentialiter consistere in Dei locutione secundum Heb. 1:1 -2...". Cp. the speech by Cardinal Browne of the Holy Office, "Sarebbe opportuno sottolineare che la rivelazione si esprime prima in parole e poi in gesti, poiché le parole, come segni manifestativi del pensiero, hanno la priorità". 92nd G.C., 1.10.64. Caprile III, p. 119.
23. i.e. the sentence quoted above ~~from~~ from Vatican I (= I, VI, 2 final text.)
24. 3, XI. 'Divinitus revelata' replaces 'Divina revelatio' (Schema II). In some ways this is a pity. Instead of being one and indivisible - one recalls the adjective 'personal' - revelation is now a number of 'revelata'. The change was made, as the Relatio makes clear, to avoid giving the impression that the whole of revelation was in scripture whether or not it was in tradition.
25. I, V. Significantly the words 'veritati ab eo revelatae assentiens', which could be interpreted as assent to propositions, becomes in the final text, '...revelationi ab Eo datae assentienda' in order to make clearer the subject (God). God therefore the nature of revelation.

26. I, IV. 1. * παρουσία
27. Henri de Lubac S.J. writes, "Cette formule a l'avantage de traduire les deux mots scripturaires et traditionnels de 'parousie' (*, adventus, praesentia) et d'épiphanie (ἐπιφάνεια, φανερωσις illuminatio, manifestatio, ostensio, declaratio, apparatio), mots souvent repris par les théologiens de notre temps...." Dupuy 1, pp. 222-3.
28. So R. Latourelle, La Révélation, p. 40; J. Ratzinger, Commentary III, p. 171.
29. DV I, II, 1.
30. Ibid.
31. Used frequently in chapter 1 'revelatio' only occurs once in 2, VII, 1 and then only to summarize what has been said hitherto. "Ideo Christus Dominus in quo summi Dei tota revelatio consummatur..."
32. Cf. B.C. Butler, The Theology of Vatican II. London 1967, p. 38.
33. Cp. especially the words 'viva vox Evangelii' 2, VIII, 4.
34. In a way this is no more than the position advocated by A.M. Ramsey in 'The Gospel and the Catholic Church'. But how far can it be taken? How can the danger of a 'metabasis eis allo genos' be avoided?
35. Cf. J. Ratzinger, "Whereas Trent had used the idea of tradition only in the plural - as traditions - Vatican II, except for one quotation from Scripture (2 Thess. 2:15) uses it only in the singular: traditio. This makes clear, however, the difference in the two positions, never consciously realized. Vatican II starts from an abstract concept whereas Trent was concerned with the concrete phenomenon, the actually existing traditions, by which it meant the form of the Church's life as it was actually practised: the Lord's Supper was celebrated as a sacrifice in the form of the Mass, there were days of fasting, one baptized children, prayed facing east, crossed oneself while praying.... Thus for the Fathers of Trent, the question of Tradition was more a question of the reform of church life than a question of Church teaching." Commentary, III, pp. 183-4.
36. 2, VII, 1.
37. 2, VIII, 1.
38. 2, VIII, 2. Cp. 2, VIII, 4 "Sanctorum Patrum dicta huius Traditionis vivificam testificantur praesentiam, cuius divitiae in praxim vitamque credentis et orantis Ecclesiae transfunduntur".

39. Montreal, p. 50.
40. 2.10.64. 93 G.C. Caprile III, p. 125.
41. 2, VIII, 4. "Per eandem Traditionem integer Sacrorum librorum canon Ecclesiae innotescit, ipsaeque Sacrae Litterae in ea penitus intelliguntur et indesinenter actuosae redduntur; ...". Cp. Archbishop Florit's *Illustratio Doctrinalis in the Relatio delivered 25.9.64.* "...Per hanc ultimam affirmationem, singulare Traditionis momentum asseritur, quod in eo est ut saltem in uno Scripturam, quoad contentum objectivum, ipso excedat: in testimonio nempe, de integra canone et inspiratione librorum sacrorum exhibendo." That is, of course, not to say that the inspiration of scripture derives from tradition. Archbishop Florit went on to say that the 'carisma inspirationis' was the 'praerogativa propria' of scripture.
42. 'Scaturigo' is used instead of 'fons' to avoid obvious misunderstandings.
43. 2, VII, 2.
44. A full account of how the words "quo fit...hauriat" were added to the text has been given by G. Caprile S.J.; "Trois Amendements au Schéma sur la Révélation." In, Dupuy, II esp. pp. 669-677.
45. Cp. 2, X, 1, "Sacra Traditio et Sacra Scriptura unum verbi Dei sacrum depositum constituunt Ecclesiae commissum..."
46. "...omnīae Revelationem aequae divinam dicuntur transmittere..." *Illustratio Doctrinalis of Mgr. Florit's Relatio 25.9.64.*
47. Cp. Mgr. Florit's *Relatio 25.9.64.* "Biformis huius praedicationis obiectum idem est qualitative, quatenus ea amplectitur quae quoad Ecclesiae constitutionem, doctrinam, vitam qualicumque modo Apostoli a Christo acceperant vel Spiritus Sancti suggestionem didicerunt. Ob hanc rerum traditarum qualitativam identitatem, praedictio oralis a praedicatione scripta non quod verbis tantummodo constet, sed simpliciter quia scripta est."
48. Dated 22.10.65.
49. 2, X, 2.
50. "Quoad vero utriusque praedicationis obiectum sub aspectu quantitativo consideratum, Schema indeterminate loquitur: quaestio itaque vitatur praedictio oralis, quoad contentum obiectivum, praedicationem scriptam excedat necne." Archbishop Florit's *Relatio to Schema III.* This remained the policy for subsequent texts.
51. What is involved can be seen from J. Feiner's summary of part of the text put before the Mixed Commission (Theological Commission and Secretariat for Unity) in December 1962. "Certum est Traditionem oralem ab

Apostolis profluentem, sive a Christo sive a Spiritu Sancto edoctis, latius patere (vel plus continere) quam sacram scripturam in his quae ad fidem et mores spectant; ideoque, una cum sit Revelatio, duobus tamen distinctis mediis ad nos usque perverit, quae media fontes in Ecclesia Catholica appellari merito consueverunt."

Dupuy, I, p. 144. It appears that the chief protagonist of this point of view in the Theological Commission was H. Schauf. Cf. Dupuy, I, pp. 314n. 12; 317.

52. Le Nouveau Visage du Catholicisme. Geneva 1968, p. 235.
53. Cp. 3, XI with 2, IX.
54. 2, X, 1.
55. I, IV, 2.
56. 2, X, 2. The whole sentence reads, "Quod quidem Magisterium non supra verbum Dei est (= scriptum vel traditum = depositum fidei), sed eidem ministrat, docens non nisi quod traditum est, quatenus illud, ex divino mandato et Spiritu Sancto assistente, pie audit, sancte custodit et fideliter exponit, ac ea omnia ex hoc uno fidei deposito haurit quae tamquam divinitus revelata credenda proponit."
57. 2, VIII, 3.
58. Commentary III, p. 185.
59. Denzinger 1501. Cp. J.K.S. Reid. Hompe 1, p. 229f.
60. 30.9.64. 94th GC. Text: Yzermans, p. 111.
61. 5.10.64. 94th GC. ibid. p. 114. Cp. Montreal, p. 48. "How can we distinguish between traditions embodying the true Tradition and merely human traditions?" Cp. also J. L. Leuka (one of the architects of the Montreal Report on Tradition), La Tradition à Montreal et à Vatican II: Convergences et questions. In: Dupuy II, pp. 475-497.
62. 1.10.64. 95th GC. Text: Dupuy, II, pp. 642-644.
63. Cf. E. Schlink. Dupuy, II, pp. 507; 508.
64. 6, XXIV, 2.
65. 6, XXXI, 1.
66. I, V; VI.
67. What Archbishop Florit said of Schema IV presumably applies just as much to the final text. "Textus...opus humanum est et manet; quod, propterea, ipsa sua ulterius perfici potest."
68. 2, X, 2.

69. Infallibility and Historical Revelation. In, Infallibility in the Church. London 1968, p. 23.
70. Conference 1.10.74. Text: Worlock p. 154. The most favourable 'protestant' reaction to DV comes from Max Thurion and Roger Schutz. La Parole Vivante ou Concile. Taizé. 2nd Ed. 1966.
71. 5.10.64. 94th GC. Text: Dupuy II, pp. 651-3.
72. Cf. Dupuy I, pp. 92; 98; 107-8; 114.
73. 2, X, 3 - an addition only introduced into the final text.
74. Montreal, p. 53.