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PROPOSALS FOR ANGLICAN/ROMAN CATHOLIC DIALOGUE

A Preliminary Anglican Statement

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Outline

Prefatory Note.

I. Introductory.

1. The approach to dialogue: dialogue and renewal.
2. The Anglican position in dialogue with Roman Catholics.
3. The historic issues of Anglican/Roman Catholic controversy.

II. The Key Issues.

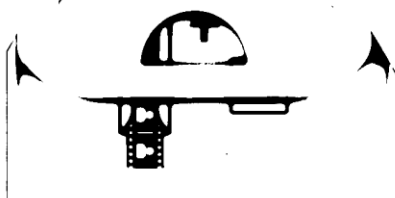
1. The Authority of Christian Doctrine:
  - a) Scripture and Tradition.
  - b) The structure of ecclesiastical authority.
  - c) The exercise of authority in doctrine.
2. The Nature of the Gospel:
  - a) The condition of man.
  - b) The Redemption of man.
  - c) Redeemed man.

III. Starting-Point for Dialogue: Revelation and the Church.

1. Revelation and Tradition:
  - a) The nature of revelation.
  - b) Tradition and Scripture.
  - c) Tradition and the magisterium.
  - d) The nature of doctrinal statements.
2. The Nature and Structure of the Church:
  - a) The mystery of the Church.
  - b) The apostolic foundation of the Church.
  - c) Apostolic episcopate and Petrine primacy.

IV. Dialogue Continued: Grace and the Sacraments.

1. The Doctrine of Grace:
  - a) The meaning of grace.
  - b) The effects of grace.
  - c) Grace and merit.
2. The Doctrine of Penance:
  - a) "Temporal punishment."
  - b) Penance and absolution.
  - c) Purgatory.
  - d) Indulgences.
3. Marian Doctrine and Devotion:
  - a) Mary and the Redemption of man.
  - b) Mary in Christian devotion.
  - c) The modern Marian definitions.



4. Sacramental Questions:

- a) The nature and number of the sacraments.
- b) Eucharistic sacrifice and presence.
- c) The Christian priesthood.
- d) The doctrine and discipline of Christian marriage.

Concluding Note.

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Prefatory Note

This paper attempts to survey, as comprehensively as the subject requires, yet as succinctly as the occasion demands, the areas which must be covered in any serious theological dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church. The limited time available both for preparation and for presentation has meant that I have necessarily dealt very summarily with a wide range of important issues: indeed, I have had to refrain from exploring any single question in depth, since to do so would be to throw the whole paper out of balance. Nevertheless, I hope that I have at least managed to say enough about each question to indicate its importance for any adequate dialogue between our two communions.

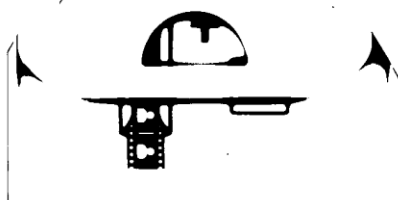
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I. Introductory

Before making any attempt to indicate the crucial substantive issues of our dialogue, I must try to define the standpoint from which this survey will be made. First, then, I shall note what I take to be an indispensable condition of fruitful ecumenical dialogue. Secondly, I shall try to state the position from which the Anglican Communion approaches dialogue with Roman Catholics. Finally, I shall list, as summarily as possible, the matters which, over the past four centuries, have become points of serious conflict between us. When all this has been done, it should be possible to make an informed analysis of the really crucial issues.

1. The approach to dialogue: dialogue and renewal

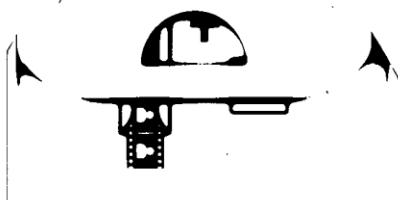
True ecumenical dialogue demands commitment to the renewal of our own ecclesiastical life. As long as we take it for granted that all is for the best in the best of all possible churches--namely, our own-- there is no real hope of corporate reconciliation. It is only when a particular church is ready to cast a critical eye on its own past and present realization of the Gospel, as well as on the doctrine and life of other churches, that it can pass from monologue to dialogue.



Happily, both the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church have at least begun to practise the self-criticism required for genuine dialogue. That we have done so is indeed no occasion for self-congratulation. At least two circumstances have forced us to reassess our actual teaching and practice. On the one hand, as we have entered, however cautiously, into the modern ecumenical movement, we have discovered that what seems obviously true and right to us is far from self-evident to sincere Christians of other traditions; as a result, we have had to ask ourselves whether our conventional theologies, usages and structures do justice to our own received standards, or even whether our traditional formularies themselves are the clearest and most balanced statements of the profound truths of our faith that we are capable of providing. On the other hand, we have been forced by the undeniable crisis of the Christian mission in the modern world to ask what is essential and enduring and what is expendable and transient in the complex of ideas, customs and institutions which constitute our tradition. Thanks to the pressure of these circumstances we have been more willing than in the past to accept the guidance of the Holy Spirit of unity, and as a result we have ceased to address one another from totally immovable positions.

This unmistakable change of attitude on the part of both churches does not, of course, guarantee a successful outcome to our quest for unity. In so far as commitment to self-criticism and renewal does involve a thoroughgoing effort to distinguish between the central and the peripheral, between the reality of the Gospel and the Church and the conceptual vocabulary and organizational forms in which that reality is expressed and embodied at any given moment, we may not unreasonably expect that our common involvement in the task of renewal will take us a long way towards a point of convergence. We cannot, however, ask that self-criticism should extend to the repudiation of either communion's clearest vision of the reality of Gospel and Church, since that would be to ask some or all of us to compromise the faith by which we live. Consequently, we must face the possibility that we may come to a point where we can only wait and pray for fuller light. At the same time, we must not exclude the possibility that a sufficiently radical examination and a sufficiently lucid exposition of the faith by which the Roman Catholic Church lives and the faith by which the Anglican Church lives will eventually make it plain to us both that we live by the same Christian and Catholic faith.

(Note: I hope it is clear that I am not advocating the formulation of a minimal agreement on the ground common to our existing standards of doctrine and discipline-- or, a fortiori, on the ground common to our current theological interpretations and practical applications of those standards. Such an agreement would, in the nature of the case, fail to do justice to the legitimate concerns of either communion. What I am suggesting is that we should ask what crucial Christian truth our formularies are designed to express-- as distinct from the partial, and often polemical, form in which that truth is actually expressed.)



## 2. The Anglican position in dialogue with Roman Catholics

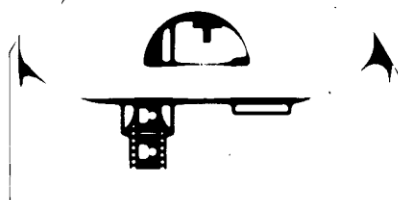
I turn now from this brief comment on the state of mind required for fruitful ecumenical dialogue to an equally brief account of the contents of the Anglican mind as it approaches dialogue with Roman Catholics. It goes without saying that I do not claim that the Anglican mind at this moment possesses the full and undistorted truth concerning either the Gospel or Roman Catholicism. It is essential, however, that we should all see, as clearly as possible, just where the Anglican Communion now stands and in what perspective Anglicans now view the Roman Catholic Church. It is our real selves, rather than some idealized image, that we must bring to the dialogue.

As any informed observer will realize, it is not at all easy to describe the Anglican attitude towards Roman Catholicism. The received Anglican formularies, interpreted rigorously and with due recognition of their moments of ambiguity, leave open a fairly wide range of attitudes on this and many other matters, and it must be acknowledged that Anglicans have not been slow to exercise their freedom. Thus different Anglicans or groups of Anglicans have held and hold significantly different views of the Roman Catholic Church. Nevertheless, it is not impossible to present a coherent outline of these views, since they do stem from a common root.

Very simply described, that common root is the appeal to the apostolic witness, embodied in Scripture, and to the continuous witness of the Church, given above all in the ancient Creeds and in the judgments of the Ecumenical Councils received by East and West alike, as the basis of doctrinal statement, and the parallel appeal to apostolic order, reflected in Scripture and in the Fathers of the Church, as the primary guide to liturgical practice and to polity. This dual appeal is clearly implied in the earliest formularies of "separate" Anglicanism, it is fully developed by the greatest Anglican apologists, and the readiness to function within the limits which it imposes is the basis of Anglican unity.

On its negative side, the Anglican criterion of faith and order, just summarized, involves the rejection of other allegedly definitive authorities, including both medieval and later Western Councils and the Roman See itself. It is common Anglican teaching that neither the definitions of the medieval Councils, Trent and the First Vatican Council nor the acts of the Roman Pontiffs (however instructive either may sometimes prove) are binding on the Christian conscience. They are not binding, it is held, because in both cases they are ultra vires. Consequently, neither Western conciliar nor papal dogmatic definitions can be regarded by Anglicans as de fide.

Especially in view of the fact that the post-Reformation Anglican Church has not believed itself entitled to define and impose dogmas of its own, this rejection of the medieval and Tridentine accumulation of dogmatic statements has necessarily resulted in a doctrinal openness (or "comprehensiveness") which has come to be recognized as a characteristic note of Anglicanism. As far as Anglican/Roman Catholic relations are concerned, this openness has permitted the development of a variety of Anglican attitudes (all of which, however, naturally retain as their common basis the rejection of medieval Western and modern Roman Catholic dogma precisely as dogma). These attitudes must now be summarily presented.



(i) One school of Anglican theologians, securely rooted in Anglican history, tends to look favourably on many (or even most) medieval and modern Roman doctrinal statements as, at any rate in their historical context, acceptable expressions of a sound theology. Theologians of this type may well find themselves very close to their Roman Catholic colleagues in their handling of such prickly themes as grace and the sacraments-- and that without any disloyalty to the Anglican dogmatic position. It must be observed, however, that such theologians are representative of the Anglican Communion and its tradition only in so far as they continue to question the dogmatic force of the doctrinal definitions with which we are concerned here.

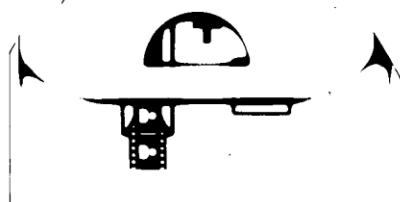
(ii) Other theologians, no less genuinely Anglican, are less positive in their estimate of the same definitions. They may indeed share the convictions underlying many of these formulations, but they will criticize the actual statements as often too narrowly Western in their treatment of a given subject, as at least occasionally appearing to give too great authority to "scholastic" philosophical categories, or (in certain instances) as canonizing speculations to which Scripture, Creeds, Councils and Fathers give no visible support. Such theologians, then, not only question the dogmatic authority of medieval and modern Roman definitions, but also find their method and idiom more or less uncongenial.

(iii) Other theologians again, speaking out of an established tradition of Anglican theology and churchmanship, will be essentially negative in their judgment of some, if not all, of these definitions. Wholeheartedly accepting, as they do, the concerns and convictions of the Reformation regarding the substance of the Gospel, they believe that the Protestant critique of medieval dogma and theology was basically sound, and they do not find the decrees of Trent reassuring. Theologians of this type, then, not only query the dogmatic status of medieval and modern Roman definitions and criticize their style and categories, but also tend to see in the convictions expressed in them a misinterpretation of the Gospel.

To the outside observer it may seem very strange indeed that a Western church, deeply involved in the theological conflicts and the political plots and counterplots of the sixteenth century, should have emerged into the modern world without having definitively resolved for its own members some of the thorniest questions of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, but for our present purpose it will do us no harm to remain puzzled on this score. It is enough for us to see clearly both the unity and the diversity in the Anglican approach to distinctively Roman Catholic dogmatic formulae. It is to this need alone that I have addressed myself in the few short paragraphs above.

### 3. The historic issues of Anglican/Roman Catholic controversy

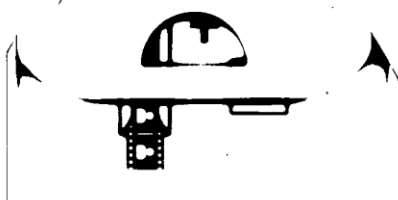
As far as Roman Catholic dogma is concerned-- and this is surely the crucial *or primary* area of controversy-- it should now be apparent that Anglican criticism has two aspects, a "formal" and a "material." On the one hand, each and every medieval Western or modern Roman Catholic dogmatic definition is queried on the ground of the insufficient authority of the definer. On the other hand, individual dogmatic definitions are more or less widely criticized on account of their content and/or style. It is clear, then, that a useful dialogue will have to cover both the underlying problem of authority and a considerable variety of particular doctrinal questions.



At this point it may be useful to offer at least a hasty survey of the specific questions which have loomed large in the minds of Anglican controversialists. While to ecumenically-attuned ears it will no doubt be painful, it should also be instructive to note the grievances recorded by a representative Anglican divine of the so-called "classical" period. "Their new creed of Pius IV," wrote the Cambridge divine, Isaac Barrow, "containeth these novelties and heterodoxies. 1. Seven sacraments. 2. Trent doctrine of justification and original sin. 3. Propitiatory sacrifice of the mass. 4. Transubstantiation. 5. Communicating under one kind. 6. Purgatory. 7. Invocation of saints. 8. Veneration of relics. 9. Worship of images. 10. The Roman church to be the mother and mistress of all churches. 11. Swearing obedience to the pope. 12. Receiving the decrees of all synods, and of Trent" (A Treatise of the Pope's Supremacy, ed. E. Cardwell, Enchiridion Theologicum Anti-Romanum, Vol. II, Oxford: University Press, 1852, p. 426). To this list we may add the titles of two tracts selected from Vol. III of Cardwell's compendium: William Sherlock, A Discourse concerning a Judge of Controversies in Matters of Religion; Simon Patrick, A Discourse about Tradition: shewing what is meant by it, and what Tradition is to be Received, and what Tradition is to be Rejected. Turning to more recent developments, we may note, finally, the Anglican opposition to the definitions of the Immaculate Conception and Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, the rejection of the dogma of papal infallibility, and the criticism of such actions as the condemnation of Anglican orders and the enforcement of the strict rules concerning mixed marriages.

It will be seen that both "formal" and "material" questions are well represented in this list. It seems obvious that the "formal" aspect of the total problem is the more fundamental one. Let us devise two examples. It is theoretically conceivable that every living Anglican might be persuaded by theological argument that the doctrine of the Assumption was probably true, but this would count for little in Roman Catholic eyes as long as Anglicans continued to maintain that the doctrine had no discoverable basis in Scripture and that in any case Pope Pius XII had no right to define it. It is also conceivable that Roman Catholics might review the question of Anglican orders with positive results, but this would not be an effective step towards corporate reunion unless the basic issue of papal authority were somehow resolved. At the same time, it is impossible to isolate the "formal" from the "material" issues. The claims of a particular person or institution to authority can hardly be discussed rationally altogether apart from some agreement as to the general compatibility of his or its utterances with already recognized authorities or with a reasonable view of the world. Moreover, each step towards agreement, however minor, contributes to mutual confidence, and therefore to better dialogue. Thus the most promising plan for dialogue would seem to be one which provided for the more or less concurrent discussion of "formal" and "material" issues.

Nevertheless, the "formal" questions possess a certain logical priority, and they must surely for that reason be pursued intensively from the beginning of our dialogue. Furthermore, it is highly probable that, as the centuries have passed, the "formal" issues have come to play a larger and the "material" issues a smaller part in shaping the attitude of most Anglicans towards the Roman Catholic Church. (For one thing, Anglican concern with the "formal" issues was significantly increased by the definition of papal infallibility in 1870. Interestingly enough, that definition was promulgated at a time when many Anglicans were coming to take a more positive view of the Tridentine decrees, and it must be said that its



promulgation was something of a setback to that development.) Consequently, it will be especially important for our Anglican/Roman Catholic dialogue to keep the "formal" questions constantly in our minds.

(Note: It will have been observed that the standard list of points of controversy includes a number of matters of discipline as well as of dogma-- e.g. communion in one kind, marriage discipline. While such matters may be technically separable from dogmatic questions, they do in fact bear on what we might call "dogmatic realities"-- e.g. the sacraments of the Eucharist and of matrimony-- and in my view they will be most effectively handled in the context of a properly theological, rather than a purely canonical, study.)

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## II. The Key Issues

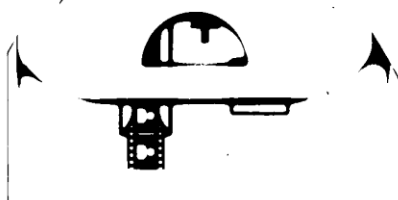
I turn now to a rapid survey of what I take to be the key questions at issue between Anglicans and Roman Catholics both in the past and to a great extent, albeit with important changes of emphasis, in the present. In my present judgment, at any rate, the issues which have dominated the Anglican/Roman Catholic debate throughout its history are two in number, one "formal" and one "material." Admittedly, the classical Anglican works of controversy cover a much longer list of topics, but I believe that the primary issues can be reduced to two, and that other questions are matters of controversy principally because these two issues, in one way or another, enter into them. For ready reference I have identified the "formal" issue as "the authority of Christian doctrine" and the "material" issue as "the nature of the Gospel." I plan to sketch each problem in turn, before I go on to make positive proposals for the ordering of our dialogue.

### 1. The Authority of Christian Doctrine

Any church, passing through such a crisis as the Church of England experienced in the sixteenth century, is driven to raise the question of the authenticity of its message. Christianity being a religion of revelation, that question must inevitably be put in this precise form: By what authority do we teach a given doctrine as true? What is the relation of any doctrinal formula to the revelation of God in Christ? If the influence of the Reformation is strong (as it was in the Church of England in the early decades of its separate history), the same question is likely to be expressed in some such form as this: How do we know that we are preaching the pure Word of God? How do human words communicate the divine Word? These problems were significant for the separation between Rome and Canterbury; presumably they will also prove significant for the projected dialogue between Rome and Canterbury.

#### a) Scripture and Tradition

The Anglican Church has never denied all authority to Tradition. On the contrary, it has appealed to Tradition in support of its ordering of its liturgy and its hierarchy, and it has referred to Councils and Fathers as authorities for its teaching. At the same time, it has clearly and repeatedly asserted what





we may call the "material sufficiency" of Scripture for the establishment of Christian doctrine.

The Anglican concern here is clear enough. Authentic Christianity depends essentially on God's self-disclosure. Anglicans are convinced that the only dependable evidence for the events of divine revelation is to be found in Scripture (or possibly in the primitive Christian confessions of faith, which in fact add nothing to the substance of Scripture). Consequently, while they recognize the value of Tradition for the interpretation of the biblical message, they consistently reject Tradition as an independent source of information about the facts of the Gospel. Even in the case of Christian institutions they do not appeal to Tradition to validate an order which has no point d'appui in Scripture. Consequently, Anglicans have consistently questioned what they have (not without reason) taken to be the prevailing view among Roman Catholics-- namely, that extrascriptural Tradition can properly be treated as a distinct channel of divine truth, independent of Scripture.

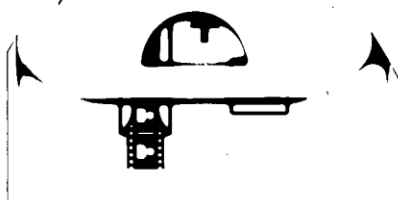
#### b) The structure of ecclesiastical authority

The Anglican Communion has never repudiated the teaching authority of the Church. On the contrary, it has affirmed that authority in general terms; it has specifically accepted the decrees of the first four Ecumenical Councils as a test of orthodox doctrine; it has acknowledged the role of the Church as interpreter of Scripture. At the same time, it has insisted on Scripture itself as the primary norm of the Church's teaching, while refusing to ascribe what we might call an "official infallibility" to any person or institution within the Church.

The concern which we have already noted reappears here. True Christian faith rests on divine, not on merely human, teaching. According to the Anglican view, the teaching authority of the Church is indeed a safeguard against purely individual and arbitrary interpretations of Scripture--i.e. against merely human teaching. But the Church's teaching itself must be safeguarded against human corruptions, and Anglicans find the required protection in the recognition of the primacy of Scripture and in the denial of institutional or personal infallibility. When Anglican theologians undertake to develop a theory of ecclesiastical authority in matters of faith, they tend to correlate very closely the collective voice of the episcopate and the consensus fidelium, so as to avoid any suggestions of the inherent infallibility of councils.

#### c) The exercise of authority in doctrine

While the Anglican Communion has not lacked speculative theologians, it has refrained from producing elaborate doctrinal statements, couched in the language of speculative theology, and its theologians have consistently been critical of any suggestion that theology can explain the mysteries of the faith with the help of the categories of speculative philosophy. Furthermore, while the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds are regularly recited in public worship and the decrees of Nicea I and subsequent councils are recognized as standards of orthodox belief, Anglican authorities have shown themselves hesitant to restrict theological reflection and exposition by any rigid insistence on the thought-forms of the patristic age. Indeed, the Anglican Communion as a whole is notoriously slow to impose any formal discipline on theologians who are seriously trying to interpret and present the received Christian faith in a fresh idiom, however novel that idiom may appear to be.





This cautious and gentle approach to the exercise of doctrinal authority is a further expression of the concern for truth, to which I have referred above. The Anglican tradition embodies a strong sense of the transcendent mystery of the true God and of the danger of pretending to describe the ineffable in his being or his action. At times this awareness may seem to have resulted in an almost complete disuse of ecclesiastical authority in doctrine-- though of course it should be remembered that the lex orandi of the Book of Common Prayer has remained at all times as an effectual lex credendi. But Anglicans by and large seem less afraid of the partial disuse than of the misuse of doctrinal authority, and they are certainly averse to any large claims to dogmatic certitude. It is clear that they will want to know whether the Roman Catholic attitude towards dogmatic formulations can become more flexible than it is widely supposed to have been in the past.

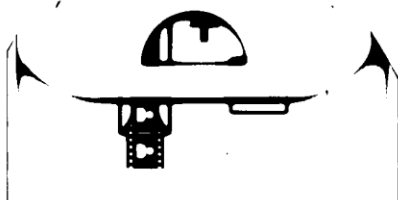
## 2. The Nature of the Gospel

The question of the "pure Word of God" carries with it, as its natural complement, the question of the message which God speaks in his Word to man. Christianity being a religion of salvation, the question of God's message must primarily be the question of the "nature of the Gospel." That question may conveniently be subdivided as follows: Why, and how badly, does man need to hear the Gospel of salvation? By whom, and how, is man saved? To what extent can man participate in the work of his salvation? In the sixteenth century the Anglican Reformers, in common with their Lutheran and Reformed colleagues, felt it necessary to protest strongly against what they at least took to be a wide-spread Pelagian infection in medieval Latin theology-- an infection against which they did not believe that papal authority was prepared to take strong enough measures.

The suspicion that Roman Catholic theology does not take the depth of man's sinfulness and the completeness of his dependence on God's grace with sufficient seriousness has lingered in the Anglican mind-- despite (or perhaps because of) its own tendency, in certain moods, to lapse into a thoroughgoing Pelagianism!-- and it has influenced Anglican views of more than one aspect of the Roman Catholic tradition. For example, the strong and widespread hostility within Anglicanism to certain features of Marian doctrine and piety and to the idea of the Mass as a "propitiatory sacrifice" does not stem from a total denial of Mary's place in the history of salvation or of the sacrificial aspect of the Eucharist, let alone from irreverence towards the Blessed Virgin or the Blessed Sacrament. It is motivated rather by the fear that man's part in the work of his salvation will be exaggerated and God's part minimized. This fear (whether justified or not) will have to be taken into account in any realistic dialogue between Anglicans and Roman Catholics.

### a) The condition of man

The Anglican Communion has never taught a doctrine of the "total depravity" of fallen man. It has never been willing to use the kind of language about human reason and human works which apparently came easily to the lips of Lutherans and Calvinists (though admittedly individual Anglican theologians can be found who used such language readily). Nevertheless, Anglicans have commonly been critical



of the treatment by Roman Catholic theology of the doctrine of the fall and original sin. In particular, they have criticized any use of the concept of a donum superadditum naturae which seemed to minimize the effects of the fall on the workings of human nature. Moreover, they have tended to interpret official Roman Catholic statements in the light of the mildest scholastic accounts of the fall and original sin. They may indeed have been led by polemical fervour into exaggeration and misrepresentation, but it is at all events clear that the issue will need to be explored.

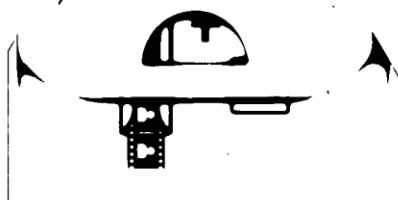
→ b) The Redemption of man

The Anglican Communion has never questioned the part played by human nature, in the person of the incarnate Word, in the work of man's Redemption. Anglican theology has revealed no sympathy with Monothelitism or with any other doctrine which would minimize the reality and the salvific role of Christ's human will and his other human powers. At the same time, it has been concerned to safeguard the fundamental truth that God alone is man's Redeemer and that no mere man is able to save himself, let alone anyone else. It is this concern that has made Anglicans critical of any Mariological thesis or of any aspect of the cult of Mary and the saints which might seem to compromise the Gospel of Redemption. For example, the description of Mary as mediatrix, even when it is duly qualified (as in Lumen Gentium, no. 60), creates serious difficulties for Anglicans. Similar difficulties would be raised by any interpretation of the eucharistic sacrifice which appeared to detract from the full efficacy of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The problems noted here will obviously have to be borne in mind in any future discussion of Mariology or of sacramental theology.

→ c) Redeemed man

The Anglican Communion has never denied the reality of man's sanctification by the grace of Christ, nor has it questioned the role of good works in man's attainment of his final destiny. On the contrary, it has filled its liturgical texts with calls to holiness, with confessions of God's sanctifying power, with prayers for grace to perform the good works which are integral to the Christian life. At the same time, Anglican theology has commonly insisted on the aspect of "imputation" in the justification of man-- not in order to construct a doctrine which would in effect make sanctification and good works extrinsic to the effectual work of salvation, but with a view to safeguarding the truth that man can never really earn his salvation, which for ever remains dependent on the forgiving love of God. Unfortunately, at least, some Roman Catholic presentations of the meaning of grace (e.g. certain interpretations of grace in terms of the category of habitus), of justification and of merit have appeared to Anglicans to corrupt or obscure this truth. It is obvious that this aspect of the doctrine of grace will need to be clarified at some point in our dialogue.

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### III. Starting-Point for Dialogue: Revelation and the Church

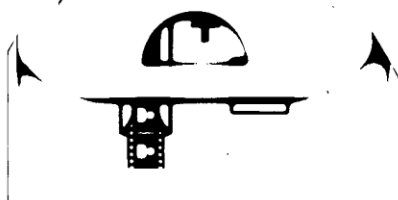
(Note: Part II of this paper was of necessity largely negative in tone. I hope it is unnecessary to explain that in writing it I was not trying to convince Roman Catholics of the error of their ways. My purpose was purely and simply to lay on the table the principal difficulties which Roman Catholic teaching and practice, as Anglicans have understood them, have presented to some, many or all Anglicans through the centuries since the Reformation. If any of these difficulties should prove to have arisen from careless language on the Roman Catholic side or misunderstanding on the Anglican side, we may happily pass over them and work on the problems that remain. I have put them forward only because they do exist at present, at least in Anglican minds, and there is no point in proceeding to dialogue until the existing weighty difficulties have been brought to light. I turn now to some specific proposals for the pattern of our dialogue, based on my analysis of the major problems. While these proposals are not exhaustive, I believe that they do cover the most sensitive areas in Anglican/Roman Catholic relations. Partly because of limited space and partly because the issues to which these proposals are addressed have already been outlined, my suggested plan will be very summarily sketched. If it seems useful, it will be possible to expand this sketch later on.)

As I observed in Part I of this paper, a happy sign of our times is the fact that neither the Roman Catholic Church nor the Anglican Church can any longer be accused of standing frozen in a position of unshakable self-satisfaction. Both churches have at least begun to respond to the call to that renewal which is so urgently needed if they are to meet the needs of the Christian life and the Christian mission in our time. In both churches new modes of thought and new patterns of action are winning their way.

It seems nothing less than providential that this renewal should already have touched both Roman Catholic and Anglican views of the problem which I have described as the key "formal" issue for Anglican/Roman Catholic dialogue. On the one hand, in its two great dogmatic constitutions, Dei Verbum and Lumen Gentium, Vatican II has both set the old question of Scripture and Tradition in a new perspective and presented the reality of the Church in a way which sheds new light on the question of ecclesiastical authority. On the other hand, Anglicans, drawing both on the neglected resources of their own tradition, and on the results of recent biblical and historical research and ecumenical dialogue, seem to be moving, less spectacularly but not less surely, towards a point of convergence with these important trends in contemporary Roman Catholic thought. My first proposal, therefore, is that we should build our dialogue on what has already been accomplished and proceed to a common study of the themes which I have labelled "Revelation and Tradition" and "The Nature and Structure of the Church."

#### 1. Revelation and Tradition

In the constitution Dei Verbum the Second Vatican Council has provided both Roman Catholicism and the entire Christian world with a fresh and substantial treatise on the basis of Christian doctrine and theology, ranging from the concept of revelation itself, through the significance of Tradition, Scripture and the Church's teaching office, to the exercise of doctrinal authority. As it happens, the constitution's main ideas on most of these points come very close to the



conclusions which representative Anglican, Protestant and Orthodox theologians have reached or are approaching. Common reflection on the broad theme of Dei Verbum should therefore be a promising point of departure for dialogue on the outstanding points of difference.

a) The nature of revelation

A more integrally personal and less verbalistic, abstract and formal notion of revelation has come to the fore in present-day theology, both Roman Catholic and non-Roman Catholic. This development opens the way to the reconsideration of such questions as the transmission of revelation and the nature and exercise of ecclesiastical authority, particularly in the doctrinal sphere.

b) Tradition and Scripture

Modern biblical, historical and theological studies have rendered obsolete the rigid dualism of Scripture and Tradition which bedevilled theological teaching and controversy in the age of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. Moreover, in a time when a Roman Catholic dogmatic constitution on divine revelation and its transmission can devote more than half its space to the Bible and its interpretation, while a Faith and Order Conference of the World Council of Churches (Montreal, 1963) can consider with equanimity the formula sola traditione, it is clear that old controversial stereotypes have lost whatever relevance they once had. Surely this new situation is a compelling invitation to dialogue.

c) Tradition and the magisterium

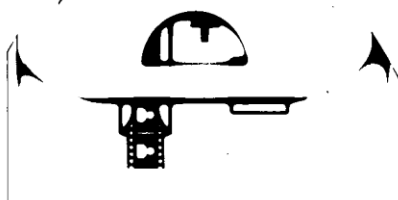
If consensus can be reached on a personal, rather than a narrowly conceptual, view of revelation, and on a communal rather than an atomistic view of the transmission of revelation, a profitable review of the nature and institutional form of the Church's teaching office should be feasible. In particular, it should be easier than it has been in the past to avoid an excessively juridical interpretation and performance of the Church's teaching function.

d) The nature of doctrinal statements

On the same basis, the nature of dogmatic formulations can readily be conceived in a less "fundamentalist" way-- i.e. with less preoccupation with the verbal forms of dogma-- than has been the case in most churches in recent centuries. Such a change of emphasis could be of major importance for the reconsideration of past and present dogmatic conflicts.

2. The Nature and Structure of the Church

In the constitution Lumen Gentium the Second Vatican Council has promulgated a solid treatise on ecclesiology, ranging from a basic description of the Church as Body of Christ and People of God, through a full discussion of its institutional structure and an extended treatment of its vocation to holiness, to a presentation of its eschatological destiny. The constitution on the Church, as its teaching is assimilated by Roman Catholic theology, will inevitably bring the latter into close rapport with living Anglican, Protestant and Orthodox thought. Common study of the broad theme of Lumen Gentium should therefore be an advantageous starting-point for dialogue on the outstanding points of difference in the area of ecclesiology.



a) The mystery of the Church

→ | A more organic and mystical and less institutional and external view of the Church has been rapidly gaining ground in present-day ecclesiology, both Roman Catholic and non-Roman Catholic. This shift of perspective should make possible a fresh and fruitful investigation of such controversial questions as the nature of the ecclesiastical hierarchy and the relation of papal authority (which Roman Catholics alone affirm) to episcopal authority (which is common ground for the Roman Church and other episcopal churches).

b) The apostolic foundation of the Church

→ | From the Anglican standpoint, at any rate, an approach to the question of the ecclesiastical hierarchy through a study of the apostolic mission, in which the Church itself was constituted, promises to be worthwhile-- affirming as it does the distinctive authority of the ordained ministry in the Church without making that ministry external to the Church. Lumen Gentium thus supplies a good starting-point for dialogue on the nature and status of the hierarchy.

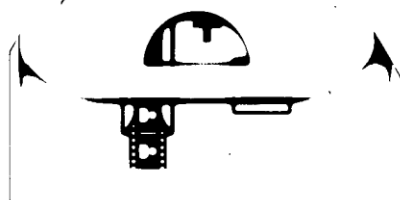
c) Apostolic episcopate and Petrine primacy

→ | Discussion of the hierarchy, and especially of the episcopal college, in relation to the mission of the apostles, leads naturally into consideration of the primatial claims of the Roman bishops as successors of St. Peter. It seems safe to predict that the question of papal primacy and infallibility will be the thorniest issue in our entire dialogue. If a solution can be reached, however, I make bold to suggest that its basis will be found in a deeper exploration of the New Testament evidence for the establishment of the apostolate and in fuller reflection on the nature of the episcopal college, as based on the apostolate.

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IV. Dialogue Continued: Grace and the Sacraments

→ | When we turn to what I have called the key "material" issue for Anglican/Roman Catholic dialogue, we shall find that much less significant progress has been made towards a preliminary consensus, and in particular that we have no major document of Vatican II to help us forward. (The two partial exceptions to this generalization are the Marian question and the problem of the eucharistic sacrifice.) Nonetheless, hopeful stirrings can be detected in this area of theology, and it seems likely that new resources will present themselves as we proceed with our dialogue. In any case, as I have already pointed out (in Part II above), the issue is too important to be ignored. I suggest, therefore, that at some point we undertake a common study of "Grace and the Sacraments," with attention at least to those aspects of the problem which I have labelled "The Doctrine of Grace," "The Doctrine of Penance," "Marian Doctrine and Devotion" and "Sacramental Questions."



## 1. The Doctrine of Grace

A common mind on the fundamental question of the relation between nature and grace is clearly the prerequisite of real mutual understanding on certain of the most controversial issues of the past. As I have already suggested in Part II of this paper, this problem underlies many of the historic disputes between Anglicans and Roman Catholics.

### a) The meaning of grace

To begin with, it will be important to clarify the significance of grace as God's act and gift, which never becomes man's possession apart from his personal relation to God. Here we shall find-- most fortunately for our purpose-- that the interest of modern Roman Catholic theology in the doctrine of gratia increata coincides with long-standing concerns of Anglican theologians.

### b) The effects of grace

Clarification of our understanding of the gracious action of God towards man will be a further essential step. Happily, there is reason to suppose that, in the light of modern biblical studies in particular, a way can be found to transcend the old controversies concerning justification and sanctification.

### c) Grace and merit

→ | The effect of man's good works under the influence of grace has long been expressed in Latin theology in terms of a notion of merit which, at least to Anglican ears, too easily suggests that man can really earn his standing before God, and is therefore not constantly dependent on divine grace. It would be useful to explore this question in common, with a view to ascertaining whether a less juridical and extrinsic mode of expression would not alleviate this difficulty.

## 2. The Doctrine of Penance

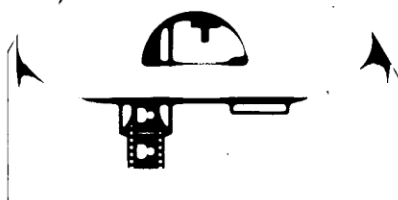
Under the same general rubric of the relation between divine and human action certain specific questions arise, which may be grouped under the heading of "The Doctrine of Penance." These questions all relate to certain uses of the notion of satisfaction in Latin theology, and they all have created difficulties in the past. It will be important for us to explore these questions together.

### a) "Temporal punishment"

In the first place, it will be necessary to ask whether the terminology of "penalty" or "punishment" is the most suitable idiom in which to express the theological meaning of penitential discipline, or whether a less juridical and more personal vocabulary might not be less misleading. The root of the problem seems to lie here.

### b) Penance and absolution

→ | A related question is that of the connection between the imposition of a "penance" and the giving of absolution. Since the Roman Catholic requirement of a penance has no parallel in Orthodox or Anglican standards, it would be ecumenically useful to discover just what theological considerations are involved in the Roman practice.



### c) Purgatory

→ The application of the idea of "temporal penalty" to Roman Catholic eschatology, in the form of the developed doctrine of purgatory, is a matter not merely of difference but of active controversy between Roman Catholics and other Christians (including both Anglicans and Orthodox). It will sooner or later be necessary to explore this question, preferably in the present context of the theology of penance.

### d) Indulgences

→ While the practice of indulgences is no longer a focal point of bitter controversy (as it was, of course, at the time of the Reformation), the theory of indulgences, like the doctrine of purgatory, remains a stumbling-block to Anglicans, Orthodox and others. It will be necessary, then, to include this question in our discussion of the notion of satisfaction and its implications.

## 3. Marian Doctrine and Devotion

→ It is appropriate to consider the Marian question under the heading of "The Doctrine of Grace," since it is ultimately the fear (justified or otherwise) that Mary will be regarded as a source rather than a recipient and instrument of grace that has led, at least in the non-Roman Catholic West, to prolonged distrust and controversy. More precisely, it is the tendency to assimilate Mary to Christ in a way which seems to isolate her from the Church's other members-- e.g. in the development of a doctrine of "co-redemption"-- that arouses deep fears. In the case of certain Marian doctrines, the problem of ecclesiastical authority is also involved. The whole issue will obviously have to be discussed fully in the course of our dialogue.

### a) Mary and the Redemption of man

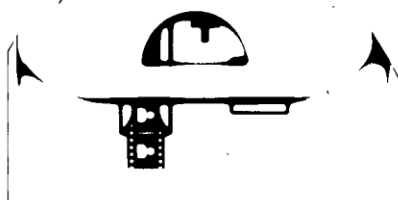
As it happens, in Lumen Gentium, chapter VIII, Vatican II has supplied us with a helpful starting-point for dialogue on Marian doctrine and devotion. In its main outlines, at any rate, the interpretation of Mary's role in the history of salvation worked out in Lumen Gentium coincides with views widely held in classical Anglican theology. We may thus hope to find at least some common ground at the very beginning of our discussion of this question.

### b) Mary in Christian Devotion

The same constitution also gives us a useful starting-point for the discussion of Marian devotion. Both Roman Catholics and Anglicans should find it instructive to explore together, with the help of Lumen Gentium, the question of the appropriate expressions of our common reverence for the Blessed Virgin Mary.

### c) The modern Marian definitions

→ By reason both of their content and of their manner of promulgation, the definitions of 1854 and 1950 have undoubtedly complicated the relations of other Christians with the Roman Catholic Church. Our dialogue should explore thoroughly both the relation of these dogmas to other widely accepted dogmas and the grounds on which the Roman See has defined them as dogmas.





#### 4. Sacramental Questions

→ In view of the extensive ferment in contemporary thinking about the sacraments, our dialogue might well contribute to the enlightenment both of Roman Catholic and of Anglican theologians if it included a comprehensive discussion of sacramental theology and practice. The most urgent questions, however, seem to be those which are more or less directly related to the issue of nature and grace—although we shall have to add one further question which constitutes an immediate practical problem for Anglican/Roman Catholic relations.

##### a) The nature and number of the sacraments

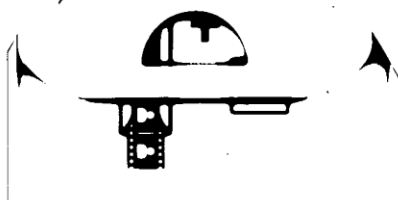
Past and present controversies on the subject make it essential for us to explore fully the meaning of sacramental actions as effectual signs of divine grace. On the one hand, it will be important for us to distinguish this doctrine clearly from any notion of a sacrament as an instrument for human manipulation of grace. (Past debates on the formula ex opere operato may well prove instructive here.) On the other hand, we must try to uncover the concern underlying past insistence on the unique sacramental status of Baptism and the Eucharist— even though modern biblical and historical studies have already put the question in a somewhat different light. To my mind, that essential concern was quite clearly the concern that the doctrine and practice, both of the "sacraments of the Gospel" and of the five rites "commonly called sacraments," should be conformed strictly to the revealed purpose of the God of grace.

##### b) Eucharistic sacrifice and presence

→ During the past four centuries, two crucial doctrinal questions concerning the Eucharist have been repeatedly raised. In the one case— that of the eucharistic sacrifice— the heart of the controversy was clearly the fear (on the part of Anglicans and Protestants) that human action would somehow be construed as supplementing the self-oblation of Christ. In the other case— that of the eucharistic presence— while other considerations have come into play, the most persistent criticism of the dogma of transubstantiation as an interpretation of the eucharistic presence has stemmed from a deep suspicion of the formula as a rationalistic intrusion into the sacramental mystery. In the light of modern studies in eucharistic theology, it should be possible for us to carry on a fruitful dialogue on both these issues.

##### c) The Christian priesthood

→ The problem of the eucharistic sacrifice has played a major role in Anglican/Roman Catholic controversy concerning the priesthood (including the prolonged debate on Anglican orders). The extensive studies already carried out in both churches on the eucharistic sacrifice and the nature and function of priesthood should provide a firm basis for dialogue. In my judgment, it will not be profitable to discuss the validity of Anglican ordinations until the doctrines of the Eucharist and the Christian priesthood have been fully considered.



d) The doctrine and discipline of Christian marriage

→ The rapidly changing conditions of modern society have at least contributed to the raising, in most Christian communions, of a number of questions concerning the theology and the ethics of Christian marriage. Dialogue on the question of marriage, in all its aspects, should therefore be of real benefit to both Anglicans and Roman Catholics. It is probable that the practical problems connected with "mixed marriages" can most profitably be discussed in this wider context.

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Concluding Note

The above proposals, while summarily presented, are nonetheless quite specific. Obviously, I cannot (and do not) presume to offer them as anything like a definitive agenda for our dialogue. I believe, nonetheless, that all these issues will have to be faced in the course of our work together.

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