

## A MAJOR ECUMENICAL PROBLEM: REVELATION, TRADITION AND CHURCH

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The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation from Vatican II intends to be not merely a theological document but also a forceful announcement of the gospel. As such it seeks to follow "in the footsteps of the Councils of Trent and of First Vatican."<sup>1</sup>

In this paper we shall endeavor first to briefly retrace these footsteps and then secondly to examine the latest prints laid down by Vatican II. By such means it is hoped that we may profitably evaluate the direction Rome is traveling in the ecumenical path—as this centers on the issue of revelation.

### A LOOK AT THE PAST FOOTPRINTS

*The Council of Trent*—The council declared in its fourth session, April 1546, that the truth of the gospel is

Contained in the written books, and the unwritten traditions which, received by the Apostles from the mouth of Christ himself, or from the Apostles themselves, the Holy Ghost dictating, have come down even unto us, transmitted as it were from hand to hand: the Synod following the examples of the orthodox Fathers, receives and venerates with an equal affection of piety and reverence, all the books both of the Old and of the New Testaments—seeing that one God is the author of both—as also the said traditions, as well those appertaining to faith as to morals, as having been dictated, either by Christ's own word of mouth, or by the Holy Ghost, and preserved in the Catholic Church by a continuous succession.<sup>2</sup>

The question which we must ask is simply this, Does this decree set forth clearly and unmistakably the concept of two parallel sources of revelation? In endeavoring to answer this question we must note several things. First, the final version which states that supernatural revelation is "contained in the written books, and the unwritten traditions" was preceded by a version which clearly taught a two-source theory of reve-

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1. *The Documents of Vatican II: All Sixteen Official Texts Promulgated by the Ecumenical Council 1963-1965, Translated from the Latin*, Gen. ed. Walter M. Abbott, S.J., Trans. ed. Msgr. Joseph Gallagher (New York: The American Press, An Angelus Book, 1966), p. 111.
2. Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom with A History and Critical Notes* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1877), II, p. 80.

lation. The initial draft stated that the truth is contained “*partly* in written books, *partly* in unwritten tradition.”

Because of this fact the opponents of the two-source theory argue that when the council deleted the word “*partly*” and rendered it “in the written books, and the unwritten traditions” they were intending to make a *material* change—a change which, while not denying that both Scripture and tradition are sources of revelation, nevertheless left the matter of their mutual relationship an open question.<sup>3</sup>

Geiselmann, a strong Catholic opponent of the two-source theory, asks,

What exactly, then, was actually decided by the Council of Trent about doctrine concerning the relation of Scripture and Tradition? We may now answer: neither the sufficiency of content of Holy Scripture was proclaimed, nor was the relation of Scripture and Tradition decided in the sense of ‘partly-partly.’ One cannot emphasize enough that nothing, absolutely nothing, was decided at the Council of Trent concerning the relation of Scripture and Tradition.<sup>4</sup>

Professor Berkouwer states,

The fact of the change itself and that it came after the protest against the ‘partly’ language gives credence to Geiselmann’s argument. Geiselmann’s point has been gaining ground recently and with it a more subtle interpretation of Trent’s real intention. . . .

. . . That so many have now accepted the Geiselmann thesis and see in it the real Catholic teaching about the Scripture’s unique significance is nothing less than amazing. A comparable view of Catholic teaching would have been out of the question had the ‘partly’ phraseology been maintained by Trent. It is possible only because Trent allows at least the possibility of putting an accent on the sufficiency of Scripture.<sup>5</sup>

On the other side of this debate H. Lennerz, most well known of Geiselmann’s critics, argues that there is a complete lack of evidence for the view that Trent intended a *material* revision of the original report.<sup>6</sup> All that Trent did was to make a *stylistic* improvement. “The silence of the Acts as to why the change was made in the report along with the

3. G. C. Berkouwer, *The Second Vatican Council and the New Catholicism*, trans. Lewis B. Smedes (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1965), p. 93.

4. Josef Rupert Geiselmann, “Scripture, Tradition, and the Church: An Ecumenical Problem,” *Christianity Divided: Protestant and Roman Catholic Theological Issues*, eds. Daniel J. Callahan, Heiko A. Oberman, Daniel J. O’henlon, S.J. (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1961), p. 47f.

5. Berkouwer, p. 95f.

6. *Ibid*, p. 95.

common use of the 'partly' phraseology directly after Trent lends support to Lennerz' thesis."<sup>7</sup>

It would seem as though the arguments on either side of this debate would not permit a clear-cut decision for one side or the other. At the very least the looseness of the phraseology left the intention of the drafters sufficiently ambiguous as to promote further open study.

A second factor to note is the statement of Trent that Scripture and Tradition are to be held "with an equal affection of piety and reverence." This statement aroused a great deal of discussion. On March 29, 1546 the fifty-two Council Fathers voted as follows: thirty-three affirmative, eleven wanted "similar" instead of "equal," three wished to tone down the meaning with a vague phrase—"Reverence is due to them," three were in doubt, and two rejected the idea completely.<sup>8</sup>

Quite naturally Trent's maintenance of the term "equal" is used by Geiselmann's critics as a proof that the Council really meant to teach two distinct sources of revelation. In response however, "the new interpretation of Trent sees no implications here for two sources of revelation, but only the assertion of an authoritative interpretation."<sup>9</sup>

A third factor to observe is that the unwritten traditions referred to in the pronouncement of the Council are apostolic, not ecclesiastical. "The draft does away with post-apostolic traditions. It recognizes only such apostolic traditions as have not fallen in abeyance."<sup>10</sup> And yet these traditions are not described with any degree of specificity; there is no reference to particular items. Several Bishops wanted the Council to draw up a list of apostolic traditions but this it declined to do.<sup>11</sup>

This failure of the Roman Church to delineate these traditions has led Professor Bernard Ramm to write:

By adding to the Scriptures an 'authoritative and infallible' Tradition the Catholic Church has hopelessly destroyed the boundaries of divine revelation, and thereby made equivocal the authority of God.

Never has the Roman Catholic Church given a complete and exhaustive list of the contents of oral tradition. It has not dared to do so because this oral tradition is such a nebulous entity...<sup>12</sup>

7. *Ibid.*

8. George H. Tavard, *Holy Writ or Holy Church: The Crisis of the Protestant Reformation* (London: Burns and Oates, 1959), p. 205f.

9. Berkouwer, p. 109, footnote 56.

10. Tavard, p. 202.

11. For a further helpful discussion on the meaning of Tradition see: Jaroslav Pelikan, *Obedient Rebels: Catholic Substance and Protestant Principle in Luther's Reformation* (New York: Harper and Row, Pub., 1964), p. 49ff.

12. Bernard Ramm, *The Pattern of Religious Authority* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1957), p. 68.

*Vatican I*—In discussing the source and/or sources of revelation, the First Vatican Council simply appeals to the statement given by the synod of Trent.<sup>13</sup> “Although the Vatican Council went beyond the Council of Trent in the matter of Holy Scripture by explaining its inspiration, the Vatican Council accepted the decision of the Council of Trent concerning Tradition with only unessential modifications.”<sup>14</sup>

*Papal Encyclicals*—There are two which should be noted: (1) *Humani generis*, August 12, 1950, and (2) *Ad Petri Cathedram*, May 29, 1959. In the former Pius XII speaks of the “sources” of divine revelation.

Theologians must always have recourse to the sources of divine revelation; for it is their duty to indicate how what is taught by the living *magisterium* is found, either explicitly or implicitly, in Sacred Scripture and in divine ‘tradition’.... Together with these sacred sources God has given a living *magisterium* to His Church, to illumine and clarify what is contained in the deposits of faith obscurely and implicitly. Indeed, the divine Redeemer entrusted this deposit not to individual Christians, nor to the theologians to be interpreted authentically, but to the *magisterium* of the Church alone.<sup>15</sup>

In the latter John XXIII states in respect to the subject of unity of doctrine,

In relation to doctrine, the Catholic Church expressly teaches that all the truths that have been divinely revealed must be believed faithfully and firmly. This includes all that is contained in Sacred Scripture and in oral or written tradition...<sup>16</sup>

Note that while reference is made to Sacred Scripture and oral or written tradition, nothing is said concerning their relationship to each other.

#### THE LATEST PRINTS

*Vatican II*—In the document on Revelation, chapter II, “The Transmission of Divine Revelation,” we read:

But in order to keep the gospel forever whole and alive within the Church, the apostles left bishops as their successors, ‘handing over their own teaching role’ to them. This sacred tradition, therefore, and sacred Scripture of both the Old and New Testament are like a mirror in which the pilgrim Church on

13. Henry Denzinger, *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, trans. Roy J. Deferrari (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1957), 1787.

14. Geiselman, p. 49.

15. Denzinger, p. 2314.

16. Anne Fremantle, *The Papal Encyclicals in Their Historical Context* (New York: Mentor-Omega Books, 1956), p. 321.

earth looks at God, from whom she has received everything, until she is brought finally to see Him as He is, face to face (cf. I John 3:2).

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This tradition which comes from the apostles develops in the Church with the help of the Holy Spirit . . .

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Hence there exists a close connection and communication between sacred tradition and sacred Scripture. For both of them, flowing from the same divine wellspring, in a certain way merge into a unity and tend toward the same end. For sacred Scripture is the word of God inasmuch as it is consigned to writing under the inspiration of the divine Spirit. To the successors of the apostles, sacred tradition hands on in its full purity God's word, which was entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit. Thus, led by the light of the Spirit of truth, these successors can in their preaching preserve this word of God faithfully, explain it, and make it more widely known. Consequently, it is not from sacred Scripture alone that the Church draws her certainty about everything which has been revealed. Therefore both sacred tradition and sacred scripture are to be accepted and venerated with the same sense of devotion and reverence.

Sacred tradition and sacred Scripture form one sacred deposit of the word of God, which is committed to the Church . . .

The task of authentically interpreting the word of God, whether written or handed on, has been entrusted exclusively to the living teaching office of the Church, whose authority is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ. This teaching office is not above the word of God, but serves it, teaching only what has been handed on, listening to it devoutly, guarding it scrupulously, and explaining it faithfully by divine commission and with the help of the Holy Spirit; it draws from this one deposit of faith everything which it presents for belief as divinely revealed.

It is clear, therefore, that sacred tradition, sacred Scripture, and the teaching authority of the Church, in accord with God's most wise design, are so linked and joined together that one cannot stand without the others, and that all together and each in its own way under the action of the one Holy Spirit contribute effectively to the salvation of souls.<sup>17</sup>

Again we should note two brief passages from Chapter VI, "Sacred Scripture in the Life of the Church."

17. Documents of Vatican II, p. 114ff. (II, 7, 8, 9, 10).

She the Church has always regarded the Scriptures together with sacred tradition as the supreme rule of faith, and will ever do so.

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Sacred theology rests on the written word of God, together with sacred tradition, as its primary and perpetual foundation.<sup>18</sup>

From the passages which have been cited above we may reasonably draw three conclusions: (1) First, Apostolic tradition predates Scripture; secondly, both sacred tradition (apostolic and post-apostolic) and sacred Scripture constitute the deposit of the word of God; thirdly, the task of authentically interpreting this deposit (this word of God) lies exclusively with the Church.

On the question of the two-source theory of revelation versus the sufficiency of Scripture view we may note the words of MacKenzie, "The question was much debated in the Council and the majority of the Fathers preferred not to decide it one way or the other. The final text in Art. 8 explains the nature of each of the two forms of transmission, and in Art. 9 insists on their functional unity."<sup>19</sup>

The debate on the schema on Revelation is a fascinating story. The initial schema was drafted by the Preparatory Theological Commission under Cardinal Ottaviani and personally presented by him as head of the corresponding conciliar commission. The schema consisted of five chapters, divided into twenty-nine numbered Articles.<sup>20</sup> The first chapter was entitled, "The two sources of revelation."

"From the very first the opposite sides in the Church were locked in heated debate, for this was one of the most important issues before the Council—basic, in a sense, to all else."<sup>21</sup> On the one side there were those who contended strongly for the two-source theory and on the other those who maintained the sufficiency of Scripture. Obviously the latter position is much closer to the Protestant thesis of *Sola Scriptura*. This latter position was ignored by the Theological Commission in the preparation of its draft.

We cannot reproduce in this paper the full record of the debates but simply provide a brief example of the sharpness of the argument. Cardinal Ottaviani opened the debate on Wednesday, November 14, with some admonitory remarks.

There are a number of schemata in circulation which oppose that which I am about to introduce. But this procedure violates

18. *Ibid.*, p. 125ff. (VI, 21, 24).

19. *Ibid.*, footnote 15.

20. For the titles of these Chapters and Articles see: Xavier Rynne, *Letters from Vatican City: Vatican Council II (First Session): Background and Debates* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Co., 1963), p. 140f.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 141.

the regulations. . . . The presentation of a schema belongs solely to the Holy Father; hence this way of doing things is hardly respectful of his prerogatives. Here in Council we have the right to propose amendments, and then only on the schema proposed, not on any other.<sup>22</sup>

After a few more remarks His Eminence was replaced on the rostrum by Msgr. Gorofalo, who presented the fathers with a summary of the matter contained in the schema.

He announced as the primary end of the Council the defense and promulgation of Catholic doctrine in its most exact form. Doctrine does not change, although it can and does develop. Repeating the words of his predecessor, he explained that in style and format the schema was meant to be a decree or formula, hence, it had not been elaborated as a literary document. Its objective, he confessed, was to demonstrate once more that, by its condemnation of error, the Church was ever prompt to purify the world of its errors and evils. This presentation, as far as the majority of prelates were concerned, could not have been more unfortunate coming in the wake of Cardinal Ottaviani's complaints. The immediate result was not hard to predict.

Cardinal Lienart rose at once to lead the opposition. "This schema," he said, "does not please me. It is not adequate to the matter it purports to deal with, namely Scripture and tradition. There are not and never have been two *sources* of revelation. There is only one fount of revelation—the Word of God, the good news announced by the prophets and revealed by Christ. The Word of God is the unique *source* of revelation. This schema is a cold and scholastic formula, while revelation is a supreme gift of God—God speaking directly to us. We should be thinking more along the lines of our separated brothers who have such a love and veneration for the Word of God. Our duty now is to cultivate the faith of our people and cease to condemn. Hence I propose this schema be entirely refashioned."<sup>23</sup>

After lengthy discussion, on November 20 a vote was taken on the question of whether the council should continue to discuss the schema. Those in favor of halting the discussion were to vote *Placet* (Yes); those in favor of continuing the discussion *Non Placet* (No). At 11:23 the Secretary General halted the debate to announce the results of the voting. "Present: 2,209 fathers; 1,368 *Placets*, 19 invalid votes, and 822 *Non Placets*. Since a majority of 1,473 votes is required, we shall therefore now take up Chapter I of the schema."<sup>24</sup>

22. *Ibid.*, p. 142. The schemata to which the Cardinal was referring has been prepared by committees of French, German and Dutch theologians, of which the last was the most radical.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 142f.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 165.

The debate would have gone on as intended but on the next morning (November 21) John XXIII ordered the schema withdrawn. In light of the results of the voting the Pope decided the whole matter should be re-submitted to a new commission. The new commission was made up of the Theological Commission, the Secretariat for Unity, with Cardinal Ottaviani and Cardinal Bea as co-chairmen. This turn of events was generally considered a victory for the liberal wing of the Council inasmuch as this group represented ideas very different from those reflected in the original schema.

The schema was largely rewritten and was ready for the second session in 1963. It was not presented then however, and underwent further revision the following year in the commission. Finally it was brought up for discussion and voted on in the third session, 1964. Many amendments (*modi*) were presented by the Council Fathers and further alterations were made by the commission on the basis of these. In the fourth session after additional last-minute corrections, some made at the Pope's request, the definitive text was approved by an almost unanimous vote. The final text was promulgated on November 18, 1965.

#### AN EVALUATION OF THESE FOOTPRINTS IN THE LIGHT OF ECUMENISM

Having traced the footprints of Rome in respect to revelation we may make the following observations:

1. Rome has left open the door for profitable dialogue with Protestants by stating that "there exist a close connection and communication between sacred tradition and sacred Scripture" (II, 9). If Rome had clearly adopted the "partly-partly" approach of the conservative branch of the Church, dialogue would have become extremely difficult if not impossible.

2. As it stands the "sacred tradition" referred to in the above quotation does not however properly distinguish between apostolic and post-apostolic tradition. For the Protestant, "the relation of Scripture and tradition must not be defined in the same way in reference to apostolic tradition and post-apostolic tradition."<sup>25</sup> Certainly we could agree that *apostolic* tradition is closely connected with sacred Scripture and that it must be "accepted and venerated with the same sense of devotion and reverence. But this equality does not hold for post-apostolic tradition."<sup>26</sup>

During the times of unfolding there are a large number of sources of error than in the apostolic period. The continuing living tradition is more exposed to errors than it was before. The creation of the Canon was an act of humility in which the Church itself recognized this fact: The post-apostolic tradition and the post-apostolic teaching authority are no longer on the

25. Oscar Cullmann, "The Bible in the Council," *Dialogue on the Way: Protestant Report from Rome on the Vatican Council*, ed. George A. Lindbeck (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1965), p. 131.

26. *Ibid.*

same level as Scripture. To be sure, they all depend on one another, and so in this sense can still be said to be "inter-connected;" but they no longer have the same status. The post-apostolic tradition and the post-apostolic magisterium were subjected to the norm of the apostolic tradition as this was from that point fixed in Scripture.<sup>27</sup>

Concurring with Cullmann in this recognition of an antecedent apostolic tradition, Aulen writes,

In the same way it has often been said in modern times that the New Testament is a compendium of the original, apostolic *tradition*. No real objection can be made against the statement. It is in evident agreement with the facts. But if from one point of view the New Testament may be seen under the aspect of tradition, this in no sense means a downgrading of the authority of Scripture, or an elimination of the problem of the relationship between Scripture and tradition. . . . Whether or not we call the New Testament writings primary apostolic tradition is mostly a matter of terminology. That it *can* be so designated does not jeopardize at all the primacy of Scripture in relation to all other tradition in the Church.<sup>28</sup>

3. The ecumenical implications of the document on Revelation cannot be properly evaluated apart from a consideration of the relationship of revelation and tradition to the Church. In this connection Father Gaffney writes:

I would give this point some emphasis, from the conviction that any attempt to analyze the Catholic understanding of Scripture and Tradition will ultimately depend for its effectiveness on the conceptual distinctness of this third term, Church. This distinctness disconcertingly waxes and wanes in many contemporary discussions, resulting sometimes in outright inconsistency, often in unformulated confusion.<sup>29</sup>

Again in the words of Geiselmann, "The task of viewing the relation of Scripture and Tradition in its all-embracing, Catholic sense can be solved only by placing Scripture and Tradition in the setting which embraces both, the Church."<sup>30</sup>

But what is the relationship of Scripture and tradition to the Church? Vatican II states, "This teaching office is not above the word of God, but serves it" (II, 10). But we must ask, at what point? "According to the

27. *Ibid.*, p. 133.

28. Gustaf Aulen, *Reformation and Catholicity*, trans. Eric H. Wahlstrom (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1961), p. 133.

29. James Gaffney, "Scripture and Tradition in Recent Catholic Thought," *Vatican II: The Theological Dimension*, ed. Anthony D. Lee (Washington: The Thomist Press, 1963), p. 144.

30. Geiselmann, p. 50.

Catholic conception, the church can never be judged by the Bible as if this were a tribunal standing over against the church; it is only the church as such which can interpret the Bible."<sup>31</sup> Further, is "the word of God" in the statement of Vatican II to be equated with the Bible? This is doubtful.

4. It would seem inescapable that Rome sets up a norm over the norm by setting up its own interpretation of Scripture above Scripture. Thus we read in the Tradentine decree.

Furthermore, in order to restrain petulant spirits, it decrees, that no one, relying on his own skill, shall, —in matters of faith, and of morals pertaining to the edification of Christian doctrine —wresting the sacred Scripture to his own senses, presume to interpret the said sacred Scripture contrary to that sense which holy mother Church, —whose it is to judge the true sense and interpretation of the holy Scriptures, —hath held and doth hold; even contrary to the unanimous consent of the Fathers...<sup>32</sup> Again from Vatican I we read

That is to be held as the true sense of Holy Scripture which our holy Mother Church hath held and holds, to whom it belongs to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the Holy Scripture; and therefore that it is permitted to no one to interpret the Sacred Scripture contrary to this sense, nor, likewise, contrary to the unanimous consent of the Fathers.<sup>33</sup>

The encyclical *Humani generis* states, "Indeed, the divine Redeemer entrusted this deposit not to individual Christians, nor to the theologians to be interpreted authentically, but to the *magisterium* of the Church alone."<sup>34</sup>

Finally Vatican II states, "The task of authentically interpreting the word of God...has been entrusted exclusively to the living teaching office of the Church..." (II, 10).

From this we may conclude that,

The supreme authority to which even the Pope must submit is in actual fact not Scripture itself but the Roman interpretation of Scripture, the sense of Scripture determined by the magisterium of the Church from which there is no appeal to Scripture itself.<sup>35</sup>

There is a fundamental difference here between the way in which the Church of the Reformation and the Church of Rome understand the

31. Cullmann, p. 129.

32. Schaff, II, p. 83.

33. *Ibid*, II, p. 242.

34. Denzinger, p. 2314.

35. Rudolf J. Ehrlich, *Rome: Opponent or Partner?* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1965), p. 245.

authority of Scripture in relation to the Church and its tradition. For Protestants this relationship is "pneumatic." The Church must be continually confronted with its Lord through the Holy Spirit in the Word of Scripture. The Church's authority is to be understood as always subordinate to the Word and the Spirit.

In opposition to this, Roman Catholicism is "pseudo-pneumatic." Rome separates the Holy Spirit from the Word and substitutes their own spirit for the Holy Spirit in the interpretation of the Word.

In the case of Rome, the Church or its magisterium displaces and supplants the Holy Spirit. The Church is thus not confronted by the Holy Spirit with its Lord Jesus Christ but, in identifying its own spirit or soul with the Holy Spirit, it administers, interprets and distributes the *depositum fidei* that it claims to possess.<sup>36</sup>

In all fairness it should be recognized that Protestants may fail to allow Scripture to be ultimately authoritative by setting their own subjective interpretation of Scripture above the Church and its tradition.

Protestants must and do admit that Lutheran and Calvinistic Confessionalism has at times departed from the authority of the Word of God with due results for the Church. Protestants confess with shame that there have been times—there still are—when the subjectivity of the individual preacher or minister has become the rule of faith for a congregation with truly disastrous consequences for the Church and its authority. But Protestants repudiate the Roman Catholic view that the Church of the Reformation as a Church has ever acknowledged the subjective interpretation of the individual as a binding standard or criterion of truth. It was precisely the pneumatic understanding of the relationship between Church and Scripture which made the Reformers (and Barth) aware of the unbreakable bond between the Holy Spirit and Scripture and prevented them from introducing a subjective rule of faith. In realizing that Spirit and Word cannot be separated Luther and Calvin (as well as Barth) rediscovered at the same time the true authority of the Church.<sup>37</sup>

5. From the Protestant point of view as long as Roman theology taught that Revelation had two sources, Scripture and Tradition, there was at least a logical explanation for the emergence of new dogmas in the Roman Church. But with the newer position that Scripture is the sole source of revelation and that tradition is its interpretation, the Protestant must ask, whence the dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and the Bodily Assumption? Of course the answer of Rome would be that

36. *Ibid.*

37. Ehrlich, p. 255f.

these truths are "implicitly" found in the Bible. To this answer we would respond in the words of Oscar Cullmann,

Without wishing to shock those of Catholic faith, I must say that if the bodily Assumption of Mary really is implicitly in the Bible, then I really don't know what is *not* implicitly in the Bible. I must admit that in this case I prefer the theory of conservative Catholics who flatly affirm that the Assumption is not in the Bible, but only in tradition. Except that I would add that this is a deviant tradition.<sup>38</sup>

6. Finally, let us set out the problem in outline and diagrammatic form.

The Problem: What is our *ultimate* authority?

The Solution:

*Roman Catholic*—Father Rene Latourelle at Gregorian University in his newly published work on Revelation states,

The word comes to us through Scripture, tradition, and the magisterium, and these three are intimately bound up together. To hear the Church means to hear the word written and handed down by tradition, such as it is understood and explained by the Church. In this sense, the magisterium, with respect to the faithful, is the proximate and universal norm of truth (D 2313). It is not the *constitutive* rule of faith, but the *directive* rule with respect to the word received from the apostles.<sup>39</sup>

The way in which these *three* elements are "bound up together" may be viewed in one of two ways, represented diagrammatically as follows:

Two-Source Theory	Sufficiency of Scripture Theory
Magisterium	Magisterium
Scripture — Tradition	Tradition (Interpretative)
Apostolic Tradition	Scripture
	Apostolic Tradition

*Protestant*—The Church is governed by the Word and the Spirit and therefore must be subjected to the Scriptures. All traditions and the entire ecclesiastical hierarchy must submit to this lordship. Both Luther and Calvin replaced the voice of the Church with the *testimonium*. We may set this forth diagrammatically as follows:

Apostolic Tradition  
 Scripture and Spirit  
 Tradition  
 Magisterium

38. Cullmann, p. 134. For a further excellent discussion of this matter see: Ehrlich, p. 267ff.

39. Rene Latourelle, *Theology of Revelation Including a Commentary on the Constitution "dei verbum" of Vatican II* (Staten Island: Alba House, 1966), p. 412.

### The Significance:

The ecumenical significance of this situation has been well expressed by Cullmann,

On the ecumenical level, the dialogue on the problem of tradition is making progress. On the Protestant side, we must recognize the value of the living tradition in the post-apostolic church, and we must recognize the value of a magisterium, while, on the Catholic side, there must be a recognition of the over-against-ness of Scripture as a norm superior to the church. I would replace the formula, 'Scripture alone,' by the formula, 'Scripture, tradition, and magisterium, but the Scripture as sole superior norm.'<sup>40</sup>

Another encouraging factor here arises out of the way in which Rome's *practice* differs from its *theory*. What has been said with regard to Rome's failure to submit to Scripture as a superior norm, applies to Catholic theory. As a matter of fact, very often in practice the Catholic Church is subject to Scripture. "It would be possible to show this again and again in church history, and we ought to ask ourselves if the present council, with its desire for renewal, is not, in the last analysis, inspired by practical submission to the Bible."<sup>41</sup>

40. Cullmann, p. 135.

41. *Ibid.*

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