

TRADITION IN EARLY POST-TRIDENTINE THEOLOGY

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THE PURPOSE of this essay is to investigate the concept of tradition as it appeared in several Catholic works a few years after the publication, by the fourth session of the Council of Trent, of the decree on Scripture and the apostolic traditions. I wish to find what traces, if any, were left by the decree of April 8, 1546, in some of the first writings on tradition published after that date.

In the conclusion of *Holy Writ or Holy Church* (New York, 1959) I wrote the following lines:

In spite of the Council of Trent, the classical conception all but disappeared from Catholic theology during the Counter-Reformation. A study of this new period would show that the main post-Tridentine theologians misrepresented the formula of the Council. Perez de Ayala, publishing in 1549 his *De divinis, apostolicis et ecclesiasticis traditionibus*, propagated the notion of two sources of faith, which we have labelled "dualistic." The influential *De locis theologicis* of Melchior Cano was posthumously published in 1564. Composed, however, in the 1540's, it perpetuated the pre-Tridentine synthesis of Pigue or Driedo, which Perez de Ayala also advocated.

A more thorough perusal of these two works has now persuaded me that this passage is inadequate and their doctrine is much more subtle than I suggested. I have, therefore, been led to wonder if the early post-Tridentine theologians actually misrepresented the thought of the Council. Since Prof. Josef Geiselman's studies on tradition, it has become commonplace to say that they, especially Cano, misunderstood the doctrine of the Council.¹ On the meaning of the formula by which the Tridentine Fathers expressed the Catholic conception of Scripture and tradition I will not come back here. Geiselman's opinion, that the Council refused to canonize the idea of two partial "sources" of faith, I made mine through an independent study in *Holy Writ or Holy Church*. The various criticisms that have been offered, for in-

¹ "Das Konzil von Trient über das Verhältnis der Heiligen Schrift und der nicht geschriebenen Traditionen," in Michael Schmaus (ed.), *Die mündliche Überlieferung* (Munich, 1957) pp. 123-206. The only work of Geiselman that has been translated into English is "Scripture, Tradition and the Church: An Ecumenical Problem," in Daniel Callahan et al. (ed.), *Christianity Divided* (New York, 1961) pp. 39-72.

stance by H. Lennerz, Johannes Beumer, and Maurice Bévenot,² have not convinced me, and I see no reason to change anything in the interpretation of Trent that I have already given. My problem now will be to carry the investigation another step forward, into the first post-Tridentine works on tradition.

I

Melchior Cano is the best known of the authors to be surveyed. His *De locis theologicis*, published in 1564, was written in the 1540's, and probably after 1546. The decree of 1546 on Scripture and the traditions is referred to several times in the first books, the only ones that are relevant to the present topic. These must, therefore, have been either posterior to the fourth session of the Council or revised some time later.

The usual interpretation of Cano's doctrine is that he simply endorsed the notion of two sources of faith, which had been adopted by Albert Pigge³ and, relatively new as it was, constituted one of the major Catholic positions at the time of the Council of Trent: Scripture and the traditions are two "sources" of faith, containing distinct parts of the revelation. God revealed Himself in two ways, in writings and orally. The writings form the Scriptures; the oral part of revelation constitutes the apostolic traditions. According to Geiselmann, Cano is responsible for the misunderstanding of the Council of Trent which reads such a conception back into the decree of April 8, 1546: "Melchior Cano was the first to begin the merry-go-round of those who called on the Council of Trent as the star witness for the *partim-partim*."⁴

Cano's position, however, is not so simple as this would suggest. The purpose of the *De locis theologicis* is to determine the criteria of theological argumentation and their relative value. These criteria may

² H. Lennerz, "Scriptura sola?" *Gregorianum* 40 (1959) 38-53; "Sine scripto traditiones," *ibid.*, pp. 624-35; Johannes Beumer, "Katholisches und protestantisches Schriftprinzip im Urteil des Trienter Konzils," *Scholastik* 34 (1959) 249-58; "Der Begriff der 'Traditiones' auf dem Trienter Konzil im Lichte der mittelalterlichen Kanonistik," *ibid.* 35 (1960) 342-62; Maurice Bévenot, "Tradition, Church and Dogma," *Heythrop Journal* 1 (1960) 34-47.

³ Cf. *Holy Writ or Holy Church*, pp. 131-50.

⁴ "Scripture, Tradition and the Church," p. 42.

be listed, in Cano's own order: the authority of Holy Scripture; the "authority of the traditions of Christ and the apostles, which, since they were not written but have reached us from ear to ear, you will rightly call sayings of a living voice";⁵ then the authority of the Catholic Church, of the councils, of the Roman Church, of the old Fathers, of the Schoolmen, of natural reason, of philosophers, of history. It is to be noted that the word "authority" (*auctoritas*) is still to be taken with its medieval connotations: it is an appeal to these sources, a quotation from them; and the problem is to know if and when reference to the sources of theological argumentation must carry conviction. "Nothing can be taught more fruitfully in the theological school than to learn which source provides solid or on the contrary weak arguments."⁶

Cano reaches the problem of tradition by way of a methodological reflection. He was too good a Thomist to forget St. Thomas' statement: "Innititur fides nostra revelationi Apostolis et Prophetis factae, qui canonicos libros scripserunt; non autem revelationi, si qua fuit aliis doctoribus facta" (*Sum. theol.* 1, q. 1, a. 8, ad 2m). Cano remains perfectly traditional in placing Scripture first among the *loci* of theology: "The first *locus* is the authority of Sacred Scripture, which is contained in the canonical books." The value of this source is absolute: "The first *locus* is without question solid, its authority divine and most reliable."⁸ Cano forcefully insists on the primacy of Scripture: "Unless you faithfully establish this foundation, your theological superstructure will crumble; and this city of God, whose foundation is in the holy mountains and in the writings of the princes who were in it, will also crumble. Not man, but God, is their author."⁹

⁵ *De locis theologicis*, Book 1, chap. 3 (Migne, *Theologiae cursus completus* 1 [Paris, 1837] col. 82); hereafter referred to by book, chapter, and Migne column (e.g., 1, 3, 82).

⁶ *Ibid.* 2, *proemium*, 85-86.

⁷ *Ibid.* 1, 3, 82: "Primus locus est auctoritas Sacrae Scripturae, quae libris canonicis continetur."

⁸ *Ibid.* 2, 1, 85: "Ac primus quidem locus sine controversia firmus est, divina eademque gravissima auctoritas."

⁹ *Ibid.* 2, 1, 85: "Nisi enim fundamentum hoc fideliter jeceris, quidquid in theologia superstruxeris, corruet; corruetque adeo civitas illa Dei, cujus fundamenta in montibus sanctis et in scripturis principum, qui fuerunt in ea. Quarum Scripturarum auctor non est homo, sed Deus."

It is equally traditional to affirm: "To judge the Scriptures by the Scriptures themselves is by no means adequate."¹⁰ The Church alone can judge canonicity. All together, and all its parts concurring to it, Scripture contains the gospel:

If the apostles and Evangelists were made good ministers of the New Testament, their adequacy is not theirs but God's; their error is God's, not theirs. We have received Christ's testament from the apostles, and when we hear them we hear Christ; when we read their gospel we read Christ's gospel. Since the Mosaic law, which is a ministry of death, was written with such exact care that not one iota or one accent can be lost, all the more so will Christ's gospel, which is a ministry of spirit and life, be written with such care and such earnest divine assistance that not only each word but also each accent will be supplied by the divine Spirit.¹¹

Scripture is thus identical with the gospel. This is not mere lip service to customary language. For Cano pleads: "But in all my discourse, reader, remember that I defend the Scholastic doctrine, which has been established on the foundation of the Sacred Letters."¹² And after criticizing unsafe theologies, he defines a Scholastic theologian as one "who reasons about God and divine things capably, prudently, and learnedly, *starting from the Sacred Letters and institutions.*"¹³

This classical starting point brings Melchior Cano to the second *locus* of theology, "auctoritas Traditionum Christi et Apostolorum, quas, quoniam scriptae non sunt, sed de aure in aurem ad nos pervenerunt, vivae vocis oracula rectissime dixeris."¹⁴ This *locus* is not

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 2, 7, 113: "Judicium de Scripturis per Scripturas ipsas nullo pacto idoneum esse potest."

¹¹ *Ibid.* 2, 17, 215: "Et si novi Testamenti ideonei administri Apostoli et Evangelistae facti sunt, illorum profecto sufficientia non ex illis, sed ex Deo est; illorum proinde error Dei est, non illorum. Nos enim ab Apostolis Christi Testamentum accipimus; et cum illos audimus, Christum audimus; cum eorum Evangelium legimus, Christi legimus Evangelium. At cum lex Moysis, quod est ministerium mortis, tam exacta diligentia scripta sit, ut iota unum aut unus apex ex ea praeteriri non possit, multo certe magis Evangelium Christi, quod est ministerium spiritus et vitae, scriptum erit tanta cura et Dei assistentis afflatu, ut non modo verbum sed ne apex quidem nullus sit, qui non sit a Spiritu divino supeditatus."

¹² *Ibid.* 8, 1, 502-3: "Sed in omni oratione memento, lector, eam me defendere scholae doctrinam, quae sacrarum litterarum fundamentis constituta sit."

¹³ *Ibid.* 8, 1, 503: "qui de Deo rebusque divinis apte, prudenter, docte *e litteris institutisque sacris* ratiocinetur."

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 1, 3, 82: "auctoritas Traditionum Christi et Apostolorum, quas, quoniam scriptae non sunt, sed de aure in aurem ad nos pervenerunt, vivae vocis oracula rectissime dixeris."

intended to replace the first or to take away its primacy as the *fundamentum* of theology. But it holds second place for several reasons.

First, there is a chronological anteriority of the Church over Scripture, and it would be possible, as a result, to establish the faith without referring to Scripture: "The Church is older than Scripture; faith and religion stand without Scripture."¹⁵ None of the ensuing conclusions was new or unusual compared to the most classical medieval doctrine on Scripture and tradition:

It is thus evident that the writing of the Gospels followed—followed, I say, not preceded—the spread of the doctrine of faith. Evidently also the Christian Church and religion did not rest first on writings but on tradition. It is further evident that in the primitive Church the doctrine of faith had not its authority from the Scriptures, but on the contrary the Scriptures had theirs from tradition. . . . It is evident, finally, that at one time in the Church of Christ there were Catholic dogmas which were not contained in any Sacred Letters.¹⁶

These careful conclusions imply no inferiority in Scripture; and if at one time (*aliquando*) dogmas were not written, because nothing then was written, Cano does not say, at this point, that there are still unwritten dogmas.

Secondly, the traditions are needed for interpreting Scripture: "Nothing is more certain, more stable, and more necessary to explain the Sacred Letters, than that in which the Church's tradition is contained."¹⁷ For many points of Scripture are obscure: "Not all that pertains to Christian doctrine has been yet expressed in the Sacred Letters."¹⁸

Only with the next two reasons does Cano introduce the dualistic concept of Scripture and tradition, which is thus superadded to his

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 3, 3, 243: "Ecclesiam esse antiquiorem Scripturae, fidemque proinde ac religionem sine Scriptura constare."

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 3, 3, 244: "Constat igitur doctrinae fidei jam vulgatae scriptionem Evangeliorum accessisse; accessisse, inquam, non praecessisse. Constat item, christianam Ecclesiam et religionem non litteris primum, sed traditione substituisse. Constat rursus, fidei doctrinam in Ecclesia primitiva non a Scripturis habuisse auctoritatem, sed contra Scripturas a traditione. . . . Constat denique aliquando in Ecclesia Christi fuisse catholica dogmata, quae sacris nullis litteris continerentur."

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 3, 2, 243: "Nullum esse certiores, nullum stabiliorem, nullum denique sacris litteris exponendis magis necessarium, quam is est, quo Ecclesiae Traditio continetur."

¹⁸ *Ibid.* 3, 3, 245: "non omnia, quae ad doctrinam christianam pertinent, esse etiamnum in sacris litteris expressa."

previous explanations on Scripture being the gospel and the foundation of faith. Yet, even here, his endorsement of the dualistic conception is not unequivocal. "Many things pertain to Christian doctrine and faith which are contained in the Sacred Letters neither clearly nor obscurely."¹⁹ Cano gives several instances and concludes: "There are, therefore, many dogmas of the Catholic faith which are not in the Sacred Letters."²⁰ This is still in keeping with the constant practice of the Schoolmen, who asserted the sufficiency of *Scriptura sacra*, yet drew on other sources than the canonical Scriptures, especially in their sacramental theology.

The final reason given by Melchior Cano for the existence of traditions is the dualistic conception of the sources of faith. "For very important reasons the apostles revealed some things in writing, others with their living voice."²¹

The crux of the matter does not lie in the distinction, common at all times, between "writings" and "living voice," but in the distinction between *alia* and *alia*. If the apostles said different things in writing and orally, then we should ascertain what they said orally. The difference between written and oral teaching is one of content: "Apostolos Evangelii doctrinam partim scripto, partim etiam verbo tradidisse."²² After referring to patristic and biblical testimonies, Cano concludes: "Let us, therefore, agree that undeniably the doctrine of faith has not been totally transmitted by the apostles in writing, but partly orally."²³ The main guide to this oral doctrine is universality and continuity of belief, both in the past among the Fathers, and today "in the unanimous consensus of the faithful"²⁴ or the unanimous agreement of churchmen, *viri ecclesiastici*, that a doctrine is apostolic.²⁵

Yet, Cano's concept of tradition (or traditions, since he employs the

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 3, 3, 245: "Multa pertinere ad Christianorum doctrinam et fidem, quae nec aperte nec obscure in sacris litteris continentur."

²⁰ *Ibid.* 3, 3, 246: "Multa igitur sunt fidei catholicae dogmata quae in sacris litteris non habentur."

²¹ *Ibid.* 3, 3, 246: "Apostolos maximis de causis alia quidem litteris, alia autem viva voce prodidisse."

²² *Ibid.* 3, 3, 252: "Apostolos Evangelii doctrinam partim scripto, partim etiam verbo tradidisse."

²³ *Ibid.* 3, 3, 253: "Consentiamus igitur, quod negari non potest, fidei doctrinam non scripto totam, sed ex parte verbo ab Apostolis esse traditam."

²⁴ *Ibid.* 3, 4, 255. ²⁵ *Ibid.* 3, 4, 257.

singular and the plural indifferently) remains unclear, for he uses the term with two mutually incompatible meanings.

For a long time in the Old Testament the Hebrews kept the covenant, "non aut membranis aut tabulis inscriptum, sed in animis consuetudine imbutis quasi impressum."²⁶ In like manner, "The evangelical law, which is a law of the spirit and not of the letter, was not from the beginning set down in letters, but inscribed in the soul of the faithful . . ."²⁷ As the manifestation of this evangelical law of the hearts, tradition anteceded Scripture, and has continued after the New Testament was written. It is also the contemporary transmission of the word of God as a "living word which, passing from the doctors' mouth to the disciples' ears, sounds more loud."²⁸ This alone is the word of God, for "To speak truly and properly, a written word is not a word."²⁹ A word becomes living speech only when it is spoken. The word of God is spoken in the hearts of the faithful. "It was, therefore, not proper that all doctrine of the gospel, which is a law of spirit and life, should be entirely entrusted to dead letters and no part of it to the hearts."³⁰ This would not be worthy of our vocation as sons of God. "Let the Jewish law, which prescribes everything, even very small details, be written. But let sons, already adults and called to the freedom of grace, have the law inscribed in their hearts."³¹ Such a tradition is not parallel to, or outside of, Scripture: it is the way in which the gospel, which is the meaning of Scripture, is known to us. The gospel is written in the hearts of Christians. This may be called a spiritual notion of tradition.

It would seem logical to conclude from the gospel in the heart to the inscription of the whole gospel in the hearts of all the faithful. But Cano rejects this. If traditions were available to all, "there would

²⁶ *Ibid.* 3, 3, 244.

²⁷ *Ibid.* 3, 3, 244: "lex evangelica, quae lex spiritus est, non litterae, non est a principio litteris exarata, sed in animis fidelium inculpta."

²⁸ *Ibid.* 3, 3, 250: "verbum vivum, quod ex doctorum ore in discipulorum transfusum aures fortius resonat."

²⁹ *Ibid.* 3, 3, 249: "scriptum verbum, si vere ac proprie loqui volumus, non est verbum."

³⁰ *Ibid.* 3, 3, 249: "Indignum ergo erat, ut tota Evangelii doctrina, quae lex est spiritus et vitae, mortuis ubique litteris committeretur, nec ulla ex parte committeretur cordibus."

³¹ *Ibid.* 3, 3, 249: "Judaeorum ergo sit scripta haec lex, qua universa, etiam minima, praefiniantur. At filii perfecti jam viri, et in libertatem gratiae vocati, habeant legem inculptam in cordibus."

be no doctors of the Church, but anyone, however lowly and ignorant, would by himself, without a master, seek to understand."⁸² This would be wrong. For when the apostles "transmitted the understanding of Sacred Scripture orally to their disciples,"⁸³ they did not communicate it to all indifferently. "The apostolic traditions have not been entrusted to all, but, according to St. Paul, to the wise and prudent, to faithful and pious guardians of the mystery confided to them, who would also be able to teach others."⁸⁴ Two orders of Christians are thus created: "adults, who have the keys to the kingdom of heaven, the sacrosanct mysteries of Sacred Scripture, who open them to whom it seems proper according to circumstances of time and place; and minors, who receive the Book's hidden mysteries from the Church's masters."⁸⁵ As it is not proper "in porcos spargere margaritas,"⁸⁶ the apostles did not reveal to all "the forms and rites of the sacraments and other like secrets."⁸⁷ Secret traditions were originally known to the chosen few. Cano goes much further in this direction than most advocates of the dualistic conception: "For this reason the apostles had to communicate certain things in secret, from soul to soul, through the instrumentality of the word alone. It was logical that some sacred mysteries should be closed to the ignorant and made known to the perfect and adults."⁸⁸ This type of tradition is not adequately described as unwritten; it is also esoteric.

Thus, Melchior Cano's theology juxtaposes, without fully articulating, two heterogeneous conceptions. The one is a "spiritual" view of tradition as the gospel written, not on stones, tablets, or paper, but in

⁸² *Ibid.* 3, 3, 251.

⁸³ *Ibid.* 3, 3, 251: "intelligentiam Scripturae sacrae discipulis suis viva voce tradiderunt."

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* 3, 3, 251: "Nunc autem traditiones apostolicae non quibuslibet commendatae sunt, sed, juxta Paulum, sapientibus et prudentibus, fidelibus quoque ac religiosi depositi sacramenti custodibus, qui etiam idonei sint et alios docere."

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* 3, 3, 251: "majores, qui regni coelorum claves habent, sacrosancta Scripturae sacrae mysteria, quibus quoque et tempore et loco dignum visum fuerit, aperiunt, et minores ab Ecclesiae magistris libri clausa sacramenta percipiunt."

⁸⁶ *Ibid.* 3, 3, 248.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* 3, 3, 248: "quibus formis sacramenta essent conficienda, quibusve ritibus administranda, aliaque id genus religionis secreta."

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* 3, 3, 248: "Quae videlicet causa Apostolis fuit ut secreto quaedam ex animo in animum solo intercedente verbo transfunderent. Consentaneum enim erat mysteria quaedam, praesertim sacra, clam populo rudi habere, perfectis et majoribus seorsum communicanda."

the hearts of the faithful. Were this logically held, it would imply that the whole gospel is somehow present in the soul of all believers. Of it Melchior Cano could say what he states of belief in Scripture: "We have received it from the Fathers; it is interior to and, as it were, sculptured in the souls of the faithful."³⁹ This concept of a spiritual tradition inscribed in the faithful soul is akin to the notion of Scripture as the first *locus* of faith and theology, with which Cano began his *De locis theologicis*. The second idea, which lies side by side with the former, makes tradition an oral transmission of unwritten and even hidden doctrines, made by the apostles to their successors and by these to their own successors. Tradition becomes an institutional prerogative of Church authority, containing an extrascriptural part of revelation unknown to most of the faithful.

Where do these two views come from? The "spiritual" notion of tradition as the gospel entrusted to the faithful and written on the tablets of their hearts appeared frequently in the theological controversies of the sixteenth century. I have myself shown in *Holy Writ or Holy Church* that John Eck, in his *Enchiridion* (1525), was brought to a study of "the gospel" by Luther's concern for the gospel as opposed to the law. For Eck, the gospel to which both Scripture and the Church's decisions, customs, and traditions are referred, is the "gospel in the hearts," which is common to the Church as a whole and to the faithful who know the true revelation.⁴⁰ The appeal to the gospel in the heart belonged to the common stock of the Catholic polemicists against the Reformers.⁴¹ It may seem strange, a priori, that this should have been so. The "gospel in the hearts" evokes the subjectivity of each believer, a point which would seem likely to favor Luther's understanding of the interiority of the gospel as opposed to the exteriority of authority. Yet, Luther's most decided opponents persist in appealing to the gospel written inwardly in the hearts. The following quotation is neither from Luther nor from Calvin: "What belongs to faith and salvation should not be learnt from another than the Spirit of faith, who teaches all the truth of faith and salvation which should be believed, proposing it either by Himself in an inward in-

³⁹ *Ibid.* 2, 17, 216: "Id a Patribus accepimus, id fidelibus animis inditum et quasi insculptum est."

⁴⁰ Cf. *Holy Writ or Holy Church*, pp. 120-21. ⁴¹ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 133.

spiration alone, or else through men, prophets like Christ, the apostles, the Church."⁴² This was written in 1533 by John Driedo, a noted Catholic controversialist.

The Catholic polemicists thus came close to the Reformers' trust that they knew the gospel interiorly without the exterior assistance of the teaching authority of the Church of their day. Driedo's confidence that faith and salvation can be known "in an inward inspiration alone" is not too far from Luther's profound insight: "The soul has nothing else, either in heaven or on earth, wherein she can be alive, quiet, free, and Christian, than the holy gospel, the word of God preached by Christ."⁴³ The freedom of a Christian man and fidelity to the interior voice of the gospel are germane conceptions. In other circumstances they could have been interchanged. The very fact that a key position of the Catholic polemicists was so similar to the central bulwark of their adversaries is eloquent. The Catholics would hardly have dared approach so near to Reformed positions unless this was a hinge of their own doctrine. In fact, they could not give up this point without renouncing a major part of their theological tradition. In their appeal to the "gospel of the hearts," they echoed the theology of medieval and patristic centuries.

During the two centuries preceding the Reformation this emphasis underwent a partial eclipse. It had been held by the humanists, whose theology was steeped in patristic thought.⁴⁴ But the Scholastics of that time do not seem to have been preoccupied by it,⁴⁵ although the stress of Scotism on the "affective" elements of theology is related to the notion of the gospel in the heart. Insistence on the gospel in the heart is, on the contrary, well marked in the great Scholastics. For St. Bonaventure I can refer to my study of his theology, *Transiency and Permanence*. The Word of God, inspired into the soul by faith, makes us understand the mysteries of God in the measure of our intimacy with Him.⁴⁶ In the doctrine of St. Thomas, the faithful are given by

⁴² Quoted in John L. Murphy, *The Notion of Tradition in John Driedo* (Milwaukee, 1959) p. 91. I have modified the translation.

⁴³ *Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen*, n. 5.

⁴⁴ Cf. *Holy Writ or Holy Church*, chap. 5.

⁴⁵ Cf. Paul de Vooght, *Les sources de la doctrine chrétienne d'après les théologiens du XIV^e siècle et du début du XV^e* (Bruges, 1954).

⁴⁶ Cf. G. H. Tavard, *Transiency and Permanence* (St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1954) pp. 40, 212-28.

the Spirit an "interior instinct" which guides them, in a sense, infallibly; for even an uncultured Christian follows, in his faith, the very Truth of God. In the words of Fr. Guérard des Lauriers, "The infallibility, founded on Christ's promise to the apostles and especially to St. Peter, belongs to the whole Church, in the sense that the faithful themselves enjoy a certain 'interior instinct' that keeps them from error."⁴⁷ This "instinct from the Holy Spirit" is a guide of faith and of behavior: when caught in a moral dilemma, the faithful can rely on a "spiritual instinct." For in the words of St. Thomas, "love teaches all that is necessary to salvation."⁴⁸ What Bonaventure calls the "inspired Word" and what Thomas names the "interior instinct" are the "gospel in the heart" of the sixteenth century. As a witness to this tradition, we should cite the correspondence between the Church as a whole and the soul of each Christian, one of the great spiritual themes of the Middle Ages. Henri de Lubac has studied it in *Catholicisme* (4th ed.; Paris, 1947) and *Méditation sur l'église* (Paris, 1953). This was a link between the Middle Ages and patristic times. The soul as microcosmos of the Church implies that the gospel, present to the whole, is also present to each. The good news of the Spirit in the heart of the Church has also been entrusted to the heart of each faithful. "Each faithful soul," in the words of Isaac of Stella, "is bride of the Word of God, mother, daughter, and sister of Christ."⁴⁹ To each the gospel has been imparted.

The notion of the "gospel in the soul," as found in Melchior Cano's explanation of tradition, appears thus to be a permanent acquisition of the Catholic understanding of God's dealings with men. After a short eclipse in the Scholastic decadence of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the theologians of the sixteenth century restored it, partly under the impact of the return of the Renaissance to a patristic theology, partly as a result of the Reformers' appeal to the "freedom of the gospel."

To this "spiritual" and "eschatological" view of tradition Melchior Cano joined another conception: tradition is an extrascriptural store of revealed, though unwritten, apostolic doctrines. In the form in

⁴⁷ *Dimensions de la foi* 1 (Paris, 1952) 301; with references to St. Thomas in Vol. 2 (1952) 128, n. 497.

⁴⁸ *De decem praeceptis*, chap. 3.

⁴⁹ Quoted in Henri de Lubac, *Catholicisme* (4th ed.; Paris, 1947) p. 382.

which we have found this in his theology, it means that some revealed doctrines are contained in the Scriptures, while others are contained in this unwritten, oral apostolic tradition. The revelation has two parts, scriptural and nonscriptural.

The origin of this notion has been clarified by recent studies. Melchior Cano used the expression *partim partim* (revelation is partly in Scripture, partly in tradition). This expression has a well-documented history. Geiselmann has traced it back to Ambrose Traversari, who translated the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* of Pseudo-Dionysius into Latin: the apostles transmitted to us the mysteries "partim scriptis, partim non scriptis constitutionibus suis."⁵⁰ This was a mistranslation, for the Greek text says *te . . . kai*, that is, "both . . . and," rather than "partly . . . partly." But the mistranslation was successful. Geiselmann attributes its introduction into the polemics of the sixteenth century to St. John Fisher, who used this expression in 1524.⁵¹ This, I suspect, may be a slight mistake. In his *Responsio ad convitia* of 1523, St. Thomas More had already used it.⁵² Did Thomas More borrow it from his friend Fisher, or did he take it straight from Traversari's translation of Pseudo-Denys? I do not know, but a third hypothesis is possible. More, in this work, was defending King Henry VIII's *Assertio septem sacramentorum* and justified *partim partim* as representing the royal doctrine. It could be that this expression was injected into the polemics of the sixteenth century by a royal sponsor, Henry VIII. This would bring some irony to the situation.

Let us, however, return to less hypothetical ground. The expression "partly, partly" separates Scripture and a nonscriptural source of revelation. I have shown in *Holy Writ or Holy Church* that the question did not arise in the sixteenth century. It grew out of a dichotomy introduced into theology at the end of the thirteenth century through the mediation of Henry of Ghent, who envisioned the theoretical possibility of an opposition between Scripture and the Church. This dichotomy increased during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁵³ Dom de Vooght has given ample evidence that though most theologians between 1317 and 1415 affirmed, according to older formulae, that all

⁵⁰ Cf. Geiselmann, "Das Konzil von Trient . . .," in *Die mündliche Überlieferung*, pp. 142-43.

⁵¹ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 140. ⁵² Cf. *Holy Writ or Holy Church*, p. 132.

⁵³ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 22-79.

doctrine necessary to salvation is in Scripture, they nevertheless drew on nonscriptural sources to justify Catholic doctrine and practice.⁵⁴ In the fifteenth century, an influential English theologian, the Carmelite Thomas Netter, openly claimed "unwritten traditions" as sources of faith.⁵⁵ There were few dissenting voices, though there were some.

The Catholics who argued with the Reformers inherited, like their adversaries themselves, this growing dichotomy. For the Reformers, this meant opposing Scripture, as the word of God, and the traditions of the Church, seen as merely human even when pious inventions. For John Eck, John Fisher, John Fabri, John Driedo, Albert Pigge, and others, this meant viewing the traditions as partial conveyors of revelation, which explain, explicate, and complement Scripture. Not all Catholics shared this idea of partial sources of faith. There were at least two other conceptions. One maintained that Scripture contains all that is necessary to salvation.⁵⁶ The other believed that the true source of faith today is a series of continuing revelations made to the Church since the death of the apostles.⁵⁷ It should be also remembered that the full-fledged theory of two partial sources was formulated, by Albert Pigge, only shortly before the Council of Trent. In other words, its adoption was largely due to the controversies of the Reformation, which it furnished with a sharp weapon. To crown this elaboration of the treatise *De traditione* or *De traditionibus* as distinct from *De scriptura*, an attempt was made to introduce *partim partim* into the decree on Scripture and the traditions which was adopted by the Council of Trent in April, 1546. This attempt failed.⁵⁸

Yet, later theologians argued from the Council of Trent in favor of the dualistic conception, the *partim partim* which had been discarded by the Fathers of the Council. Geiselman puts the blame for this on Melchior Cano, whom he accuses of misquoting the Council in order to prove his "categorical and a priori *partim partim*."⁵⁹ True, Cano does not quote the Council in its own words and in condensing the

⁵⁴ Cf. Paul de Vooght, *op. cit.* ⁵⁵ Cf. *Holy Writ or Holy Church*, pp. 56 ff.

⁵⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 172-91.

⁵⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 151-71; also G. H. Tavard, "A Forgotten Theology of Inspiration: Nikolaus Ellenbog's Refutation of 'Scriptura sola,'" *Franciscan Studies* 15 (1955) 106-22.

⁵⁸ Cf. *Holy Writ or Holy Church*, pp. 195-209.

⁵⁹ Geiselman, "Scripture, Tradition and the Church," in *Christianity Divided*, p. 41.

text he modifies it. But Geiselman's major indictment does not seem to be warranted.

In the first place, Cano's version admittedly condenses the beginning of the decree: "Sacrosancta Tridentina Synodus, prospiciens veritatem Evangelii salutarem et morum doctrinam contineri in libris scriptis et sine scripto traditionibus . . ." ^{59a} This makes no mention of the Council's phrase, that Jesus ordered the gospel to be preached "tanquam fontem omnis et salutaris veritatis et morum disciplinae." Yet, as this idea is close to Cano's own doctrine, "Evangelium Christi est minister spiritus et vitae," ⁶⁰ there is no reason to think that Cano's formula, in his shortened quote, "veritas Evangelii salutaris et morum doctrina," alters the meaning of the text.

In the second place, the Council of Trent is not used by Cano to prove the dualistic conception of tradition illustrated by the expression *partim partim*. It shows, rather, in his own words, that "those who have despised traditions have always been justly and deservedly rejected by the Church as heretics." ⁶¹ Cano ascribes a defense of the traditions, but no special conception of their nature, to the decree of the Council of Trent.

Cano does not, therefore, deserve the *odium theologicum* that has lately fallen on him. His problem was not that he read too much into the Council of Trent, or even that he innovated in the theology of tradition. It was simply that he did not attempt to reconcile the two views of revelation which stand side by side in his *De locis*: revelation as the gospel imparted to the heart of the faithful, out of which faith brings things old and new, old in their origin but new in their formulation; and revelation as a deposit committed to the Church in two series of containers, the Holy Scriptures, with part of it, and an oral tradition communicated by the apostles, with another part. The former view had a long history; the latter was relatively new, being the product of the Scholastic decadence of the last two and a half centuries. But can these conceptions survive together? Or are they mutually exclusive?

The fault of Melchior Cano, if it is one, is that he did not raise these questions.

^{59a} *De locis theologicis* 3, 6, 263.

⁶⁰ See *supra* n. 11.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* 3, 6, 263: "qui traditiones contempserint, eos tanquam hereticos jure ac merito ab Ecclesia fuisse semper explosos."

II

Martin Perez de Ayala, a member of the Military Order of Santiago, was present at the first part of the Council of Trent as one of the Emperor's delegates; but he arrived only in the second half of 1546, thus missing the session where the traditions were treated. He became Bishop of Cadiz in 1548 and was transferred to Segovia in 1560. He attended the second and the third parts of the Council.

At the beginning of his long volume *De divinis, apostolicis atque ecclesiasticis traditionibus*, published at Cologne in 1549, Perez de Ayala remarks that this subject has never been completely treated. His purpose is, therefore, not to formulate a theory, but simply to explain the traditional doctrine on the matter, in reference to the controversies of his time.

Perez' book begins with a definition of tradition. In a wide sense, the term designates any "primitive doctrine, whatever its mode, oral or written, of transmission." It is indifferent to the manner of its revelation or transmission and covers all primitive doctrine. In this sense, "All the gospel may be called tradition, since it was at first sown in the hearts of men by the living voice of Jesus Christ and the apostles, although afterwards it was serialized in the Scriptures by the holy Evangelists."⁸² The essential point of tradition, taken in this sense, lies in its origin, the living voice of Jesus and the apostles, and in its seat, the hearts of men. It is identical with the gospel.

A more restricted sense, which Perez calls "proper," concerns what is not fully contained in the Scriptures: "the doctrine of the ancient and the greatest in the government of the faithful, received from their living voice, transmitted from fathers to sons in continuous succession, supported by a very old custom, and not contained in the official books of that government; and although it has been written in other

⁸² *De divinis . . . traditionibus*, fol. 2v: "Doctrina quovis modo primitus tradita, sive ore tenus, sive per scripturam." "Totum evangelium potest dici traditio, eo quod per vivam Jesu Christi et apostolorum vocem, primitus in cordibus hominum disseminatum est, licet postea per sanctos evangelistas in Scripturas fuerit digestum." "Doctrina primorum ac majorum in politia fidelium, viva voce accepta, et continua successione a patribus ad filios derivata, et consuetudine pervetusta firmata, et in libris authenticis illius politiae minime contenta: ac licet in aliis instrumentis vel libris fide dignis scripta fuerit, non ob id Traditionis nomen amittit, tandem sic accipitur ut distinguatur a doctrina quae in libris canonicis reperitur."

reliable documents and books, it has not lost its name of tradition, but is thus called to distinguish it from the doctrine of the canonical books" (*ibid.*).

This is "tradition from ear to ear," "a sacred doctrine supported by the custom of the faithful, transmitted from soul to soul from the ancients to their successors through the medium of the word."⁶³ At the origin of Christianity was the gospel in the heart, "the law and worship of God sculptured in the depths of the hearts,"⁶⁴ the law written "by God's finger in the hearts' recess."⁶⁵ "All the counsels, words, and deeds of Christ were sculptured in the faithful hearts; all was word and action."⁶⁶ This was already the holy tradition, given by Christ, living in the hearts of the apostles, and destined to be the norm for all that was to follow. Of this gospel Perez states: "The gospel contains the main points that pertain to faith, to the sacraments, and to Christian perfection, that we may know where we must aspire to go and by what ways."^{66a}

Only later, when "the divine law began to languish in the hearts of men," were the Scriptures written, "which would contain a good part of the divine dogmas and institutions."⁶⁷ They were introduced "divino consilio," for an objective norm was needed to judge and regulate Christian faith and life. Perez' formulation of this fundamental function of Scripture leaves nothing outside their scope, and therefore gives them primacy over subsequent ages and developments: "by which heresies would be exposed, faith preserved, sins reprov'd, the faithful instructed and solaced; by which also traditions would be approved; and which would be like a norm and a straight rule to which the other things, unwritten but transmitted by hand, could be

⁶³ *Ibid.*, fol. 3r: "traditio ab aure ad aurem"; "arcana doctrina consuetudine fidelium roborata, ex animo in animum a majoribus in posteros, medio incurrente verbo, transfusa."

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, fol. 220r: "lex et cultus Dei in cordium penetralibus sculpta."

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, fol. 5r: "intra cordium secessus, digito Dei."

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, fol. 15r: "Omnia enim Christi monita, verba et opera cordibus fidelibus erant insculpta, omnia in ore, omnia in opere."

^{66a} *Ibid.*, fol. 99r: "Continentur in evangelio praecipua quae ad fidem et sacramenta et Christianam perfectionem pertinent, ut sciamus quo tendere debeamus et quibus mediis."

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, fol. 15r: "quae bonam partem dogmatum et institutorum divinatorum continent." "Quibus haereses convincerentur, fides conservaretur, peccata corripere, et fideles instruere et consolarentur, et quibus denique Traditiones approbarentur, essentque tanquam norma et inobliquabilis regula, ad quam cetera non scripta, sed per manus tradita, dirigi possent."

directed" (*ibid.*). The regulative function of Scripture extends to traditions: it is the norm toward which these converge. Thus, the Scriptures were accepted by the Church because they tallied with the early tradition, the gospel imparted to the apostles.⁶⁸ Yet, henceforth they are the norm to which all must conform. The difference between Protestants and Catholics is that the former misunderstand this conformity.

To think that Scripture suffices is "the one source and origin of all errors,"⁶⁹ "the whole source of Lutheranism,"⁷⁰ "the basis and foundation of all their errors."⁷¹

In the Catholic notion, revelation does not consist in what is "expressed with dead ink in the sacred books,"⁷² "on material or stone tablets,"⁷³ in "the external writing."⁷⁴ It is irrelevant that "the ink has this and that shape"; and "to have dead Scriptures, without the legitimate meaning of its truth, is to have all but nothing."⁷⁵ The heart of Scripture resides in its meaning, "which is the spirit and soul of Scripture itself,"⁷⁶ "in the meaning and understanding of the Scriptures, than which no greater truth could shine upon them, and in which is the salvation of the universal Church" (*ibid.*). This sense proceeds, like Scripture itself, from the Holy Spirit. And we must choose, Perez de Ayala believes, between a theology of new revelations, by which the Spirit would, at sundry times and in diverse manners, reveal the meaning of Scripture, and a theology of tradition. But the first provides no solution, for each new revelation would have to be interpreted by a new one, and so on indefinitely.⁷⁷ We must, therefore, conclude that the Spirit shows the sense of Scripture in the traditions.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, fol. 8r.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, fol. Aiiij r: "unus fons et origo omnium errorum."

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, fol. 13v: "totius Lutheranismi fons."

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, fol. 124r: "basis et fundamentum omnium suorum errorum."

⁷² *Ibid.*, fol. Aiiij r: "atramento mortuo in sacris codicibus expressum."

⁷³ *Ibid.*, fol. 5r: "in materialibus aut lapideis tabulis."

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, fol. 5v: "externa scriptura."

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, fol. 30v: "atramentum est sic et sic delineatum"; "scripturas habere mortuas, sine sensu veritatis legitimo, pene nihil est habere."

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, fol. 46r: "qui spiritus et anima ipsius Scripturae est"; "sensum et intellectum Scripturarum, quo nulla major veritas illis innotescere potuit, et in quo universalis Ecclesiae salus est."

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, fol. 10r.

Not everyone is a suitable interpreter of Holy Writ. A spiritual man alone can understand it: "Only a man of spirit and experience can extract and understand the core with the fruit."⁷⁸ One must beware of "omnis spiritus privatus."⁷⁹ Only "when it can be received as no longer private, but as common and public,"⁸⁰ may one trust an individual interpretation, for it then coincides with the sense of the Church. "Sacred Scripture is a light, we believe, but it is not understood by all and must be shown gradually. It belongs to the whole Church, not to any individual."⁸¹ The Church's tradition, "a sacred doctrine supported by the custom of the faithful, transmitted from soul to soul by the first to their successors through the medium of the word,"⁸² brings this interior heart of Scripture to light.

Tradition is not an extraneous element superadded to Scripture, but rather an integral part of its spirit and meaning. Without tradition, Scripture is a dead, senseless letter. Perez insists that both were legated together by the apostles, "so that, for the old Fathers, the rule of information in matters of faith was not Scripture alone, but Scripture united to the tradition of the apostles and ancients."⁸³ That the Scriptures are in the Church would be meaningless, "unless the Church of Christ had with her their meaning, transmitted by the magisterium of the Holy Spirit, and a divine light by which she can interpret them for the use of her members."⁸⁴

Quotations could easily be multiplied to show that the first function of tradition is to interpret Scripture. It is "traditio sensus Scripturae."⁸⁵ "It interprets and makes clear the divine Scripture in its obscurities."⁸⁶

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, fol. 15r: "Nucleum extrahere et cum fructu percipere, solus spiritualis et exercitatus potest."

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, fol. 32v.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, fol. 32v: "non cum jam pro privato, sed pro communi et publico possit haberi."

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, fol. 26v: "Scriptura sacra est lux, fatemur, sed non omnibus comprehensa, sed paulatim ostendenda. Possessio est totius Ecclesiae, non cujuslibet privati."

⁸² *Ibid.*, fol. 3r: "arcana doctrina consuetudine fidelium roborata, ex animo in animum a majoribus in posteros medio incurrente verbo transfusa."

⁸³ *Ibid.*, fol. 36r: "ita ut non sola Scriptura fuerit illis antiquis patribus regula informationis rerum fidei, sed cum apostolorum et majorum traditione conjuncta."

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, fol. 40v: "nisi penes se haberet Ecclesia Christi sensum earum per magisterium Spiritus Sancti traditum, atque divinum lumen, quo posset ad utilitatem suorum membrorum eam interpretari."

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, fol. 45v.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, fol. 220v: "Scripturam divinam in obscuris interpretatur atque dilucidat."

Yet, our theologian also maintains that, besides giving us the sense of Scripture, the traditions contain revealed truths that are not explicit in Scripture. "The Apostle Paul makes it clear that tradition did not disappear, but it reserved to itself many things that were not in the Scriptures and were legated by the apostles and their disciples together with Scripture, and it also introduced some new things."⁸⁷ "Besides the Scriptures, Paul wanted some things to be held and observed by tradition, which he did not want to write."⁸⁸ "The living tradition remained in the Church besides Scripture."⁸⁹ "Add to this that many things have been received in the universal Church and are indeed necessary to salvation which can hardly be clearly proven from canonical Scripture but were made known to her by the tradition of the apostles of Christ."⁹⁰ Nonetheless, Perez establishes this *from Scripture itself*. He even maintains that these unwritten traditions, found in their entirety outside of Scripture, have a basis in it. This applies to the three types of traditions which he distinguishes. "Divine traditions," coming from the Lord Himself, and "apostolic traditions," from the apostles, are equally inspired with Scripture. "I make no difference here between what the apostles themselves transmitted and instituted at the Holy Spirit's order or promulgated at Christ's order, and what Christ Himself personally committed to His Church. Both have divine authority and equal magisterium."⁹¹ In this matter, "see no difference between tradition and Scripture,"⁹² since both have the same source and equally confess the gospel. They are always given together. *Traditio sensus Scripturae* evidently implies an essential

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, fol. 7v: "Sed quod non cessaverit Traditio, imo multa sibi reservaverit quae in Scripturis non erant, et simul cum ipsa Scriptura ab apostolis et eorum discipulis commendata fuerunt, et aliqua etiam noviter introduxerit, Paulus apostolus palam facit."

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, fol. 13r: "Quam praeter Scripturas volebat Paulus aliqua per traditionem teneri et observari, quae noluit Scripturae mandare."

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, fol. 35v: "Praeter Scripturam viva traditio in Ecclesia remansit." Similar texts: fol. 44r, 124r.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, fol. 144r: "Adde quod multa sunt in Ecclesia universali recepta, et ea quidem ad salutem necessaria, quae Scriptura canonica dilucide constare minime possunt, sed per Christi apostolorum traditionem illi innouerunt."

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, fol. 45v: "Nec hic facio differentiam inter ea quae, dictante Spiritu Sancto, ipsi apostoli tradiderunt et instituerunt, sive jubente Christo promulgaverunt; et ea quae per se ipse Christus Ecclesiae suae tradere dignatus est. Utrobique enim est divina auctoritas et par magisterium."

⁹² *Ibid.*, fol. 214v: "nullam differentiam vides inter Traditionem et Scripturam."

correlation with Scripture. *Traditio sacramentorum*, to which Perez devotes seventy-nine folios, contains many details that are not explicitly in Scripture, of which he reports: "A plain and clear account of this sacramental institution, as regards its substance and circumstances, appears only in the divine tradition."⁹³ Yet, Perez tries to find a scriptural basis or analogy for each point. He proves his doctrine, "tum ratione in Scripturis fundata, tum etiam divina traditione, usu antiquae et apostolicae Ecclesiae confirmata,"⁹⁴ "ratione et Scripturae testimoniis et traditione sancta,"⁹⁵ "tum per Scripturas, tum totius Ecclesiae consensum ab ipsis apostolis usque in praesentem diem,"⁹⁶ "ratione et scripturis et totius Ecclesiae usu."⁹⁷ He investigates "quid ratio, quid Scriptura et sancta traditio" declare.⁹⁸ Objections appear to be "contra traditionem Ecclesiae et divinam Scripturam."⁹⁹ Private doctrines must be proved "Scriptura vel apostolica traditione, consensu sanctorum vel Ecclesiae firmata."¹⁰⁰ A doctrine may be "adumbrata" in Scripture, and the divine tradition "completes and declares it."¹⁰¹ Scripture and apostolic tradition support each other, forming the whole of the gospel.

The third sort of tradition which Perez lists is "episcopal," having its *fons* in the authority of bishops. These ecclesiastical traditions do not come from the Lord or the apostles. Yet, their authority can be established "by the open Scriptures and the apostolic tradition."¹⁰² "For although what has been transmitted by tradition is not contained expressly and particularly in the Scriptures, it has nonetheless authority from Scripture itself."¹⁰³ The field covered by episcopal traditions is "the order of ecclesiastical government."¹⁰⁴

Distinct as Scripture and tradition are, they are so united that, "as it were, the one cannot stand perfectly without the other."¹⁰⁵ They are distinct in so far as the one is written and the other, "viva traditio in

⁹³ *Ibid.*, fol. 51r: "Nuda et clara hujus sacramentalis instituti ratio, quantum ad substantiam et circumstantias ejus, divina Traditione solum constat."

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, fol. 93v. ⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, fol. 98r. ⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, fol. 124v. ⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, fol. 187v.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, fol. 130r. ⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, fol. 97v. ¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, fol. 32v. ¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, fol. 61r.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, fol. 218v: "apertis Scripturis et traditione apostolica."

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, fol. 226v: "nam licet in Scripturis expresse et particulariter non contineantur quae tradita sunt, auctoritatem tamen habent ex ipsa Scriptura."

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, fol. 190r: "ordo politiae ecclesiasticae."

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, fol. 212r: "quasi unum sine altero perfecte constare non possit."

Ecclesia,"¹⁰⁶ is the living voice of the Church, reading Scripture in the light of the sacramental life inherited from the apostles. *Traditio sensus Scripturae* is identical with Scripture spiritually understood: it is the spirit and soul of Scripture. *Traditio sacramentorum*, which contains many points that are only adumbrated in Scripture and others that can hardly be found in it at all, does not constitute a new "source" of faith, but a necessary framework for reading Scripture. Both together constitute the gospel today. Perez succinctly formulates the difference between this traditionally Catholic view and the Protestant principle of Scripture alone: "There is great difference between illustrating something from Scripture and deducing it from Scripture by way of compelling argumentation."¹⁰⁷ The first method is Catholic, the second is not.

Perez de Ayala's conception of Scripture and tradition is, therefore, not the dualistic view of partial sources of faith. In complete agreement with the Council of Trent, which, however, he never mentions in this volume, Perez holds the gospel, *evangelium*, to be the norm of Christian faith and life. This Gospel was present in the heart of the apostles at the beginning and is present today in Scripture interpreted by tradition in the Church. It is, then, equivalent to say: Scripture is "a norm and a straight rule to which the other things, unwritten but transmitted by hand, could be directed";¹⁰⁸ and: "The rule of information in matters of faith was not Scripture alone, but Scripture united to the tradition of the apostles and ancients";¹⁰⁹ and still: "He who denies tradition subverts nearly the whole Christian religion."¹¹⁰ The Scriptures and the traditions are one; their unity is the gospel.

It is, therefore, a mistake to understand Perez' doctrine in the sense of *partim partim*. Scripture and tradition are not separate *fontes*. The word *fontes* is used only in Perez' investigation of the "three sources of

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, fol. 35v.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, fol. 209r: "Multum inter se differunt, ab exemplo Scripturae aliquid stabiliri, et ex ipsa Scriptura argumento necessario aliquid deduci."

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, fol. 15r: "norma et obliquabilis regula ad quam cetera non scripta, sed per manus tradita, dirigi possent."

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, fol. 36r: "non sola Scriptura fuerit . . . regula informationis rerum fidei, sed cum apostolorum et majorum traditione conjuncta."

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, fol. 14v: "qui traditionem negat, totam Christianam religionem pene subvertit."

traditions, the divine, the apostolic, and the episcopal magisterium."¹¹¹ When Perez says that tradition is so called "to distinguish it from the doctrine of the canonical books,"¹¹² he does not negate the coinherence and the mutual support and necessity of Scripture and tradition, on which he strongly insists elsewhere. To affirm distinction is not to deny unity.

Admittedly, Perez de Ayala quotes both Dionysius and St. Basil with the *partim partim* that was found in the Latin translations he used. But his interpretation of these texts is restrained. After quoting Dionysius, he explains: "By these words this apostolic man states two things that are relevant enough to our subject: first, that through the Holy Spirit the holy apostles and Evangelists transmitted some mysteries under visible form to the Church; second, that they left a part of them in the canonical Scriptures."¹¹³ Thus, Dionysius is understood simply to say that *traditio sacramentorum* is partly in Scripture, which implies that sacramental doctrine, where Perez finds Scripture the least explicit, is nevertheless adumbrated in it. There is no suggestion of diverse *fontes* of faith. Likewise, Perez quotes the famous passage of St. Basil's *De Spiritu sancto*, which also, in the Latin translation in use, contained the terms *partim partim*. He explains it in the following way: "First he [i.e., Basil] attributes equal value for the protection and preservation of piety to ecclesiastical tradition and to Scripture, which is what we said; second, [he shows] that the authority of Scripture is shaken and reduced only to a word if ecclesiastical tradition is rejected, for it is tradition that points out to us the authority of divine Scripture."¹¹⁴ Thus, Basil is understood to deal, not with the origin or source of faith, but with a question of authority.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, fol. 203r: "tres fontes traditionum, puta divinum magisterium, apostolicum et episcopale."

¹¹² *Ibid.*, fol. 2v: "ut distinguatur a doctrina quae in libris canonicis reperitur."

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, fol. 46v-47r: "Quibus verbis duo satis ad nostrum propositum pertinentia affirmat hic vir apostolicus: alterum, quod sancti apostoli et evangelistae per Spiritum Sanctum in visibilibus signis tradiderunt Ecclesiae aliqua sacramenta; alterum, quod aliquam partem ex his in Scripturis canonicis reliquerunt. . ."

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, fol. 213v: "Primum, aequalem vim tribuit ad pietatem tutandam et conservandam Traditioni ecclesiasticae sicut et Scripturae, quod nostra affirmatio affirmavit. Secundo, quod Scripturae auctoritas enervatur et ad nudum nomen contrahitur, cum Traditio ecclesiastica rejicitur: nam Traditione constat nobis de Scripturae divinae auctoritate."

His quotation throws light, not on the material contents of Scripture and tradition, but on their formal value. Far from thinking in terms of separate, incomplete sources of revelation, Perez does not even interpret Basil as referring to the distinction of Scripture and apostolic tradition. He rather concludes to the unity, in authority, of Scripture and ecclesiastical tradition—which is a totally different question.

With Perez de Ayala, as with Melchior Cano, the theology of tradition is not yet that of two independent sources of faith.

III

In 1549, the famous polemicist Johannes Cochlaeus published a short pamphlet *De auctoritate ecclesiae et Scripturae in Calvini errores et blasphemias*. Like the long volume of Perez de Ayala, it contains no reference to the fourth session of the Council of Trent. It is hardly an important publication, dealing, in too large a part, with superficial points and marred by an excessively polemical tone. The dedication, to the Benedictine Abbot of St. Trudo, alludes to Perez' book on tradition: Cochlaeus declares himself the more confident to publish his pamphlet, "the more I see its agreement with the ten books which Perez de Ayala has published concerning these same discussions."¹¹⁵ The doctrine of this pamphlet is the same as Cochlaeus' pre-Tridentine theology on Scripture, which I have studied elsewhere.¹¹⁶ The expression *partim partim* occurs, with another sense than what later theologians will understand: "Jesus Christ is the foundation of the Church . . . The word of the Lord, which remains for eternity, is never said to be Scripture, but Truth . . . This word of the Lord, which remains for eternity . . . He transmitted to His apostles and disciples, not in writing . . . but partly with His own mouth and living voice, partly through the Holy Spirit."¹¹⁷ *Partim partim* refers to two ways in which Christ revealed Himself to the apostles, to modes, not sources, of revelation, neither of which corresponds to Scripture or to tradition.

¹¹⁵ *De auctoritate*, Preface [no page numbers]: "quanto plus eum video consonare decem libris quos . . . oedit ad easdem has nundinas R. D. Peresius Ayala."

¹¹⁶ *Holy Writ or Holy Church*, chap. 8.

¹¹⁷ *De auctoritate* [no page numbers]: "Christus Jesus est fundamentum Ecclesiae. . . . Verbum autem Domini, quod manet in aeternum, nusquam dicitur Scriptura, sed veritas. . . . Hoc autem verbum Domini, quod manet in aeternum . . . tradidit apostolis et discipulis suis, non in scriptis, sed partim ore proprio et viva voce, partim per Spiritum Sanctum. . . ."

Also in 1549, Cochlaeus touched on our topic in his *De septem sacramentis ecclesiae*. A chapter *De non scriptis traditionibus ecclesiae* begins with a long quotation from Dionysius' *De ecclesiastica hierarchia*, chap. 1, the very passage to which Geiselman has traced the origin of the dualistic conception of partial sources of faith. Yet, Cochlaeus' comment, like that of Perez de Ayala, does not allude to that conception. It simply concludes, first, that the institution of sacraments was necessary; second, that Dionysius received his sacramental doctrine from the apostles; third, that in sacramental matters we must believe later doctors when they agree with the ancients. Nothing here evokes tradition as a separate source of revelation.

IV

In 1549 also, the Augustinian Aurelius Sanutus published in Paris his *Recens Lutheranarum assertionum oppugnatio*. The first chapter, of some sixteen folios, is entitled *De divinae Scripturae intelligentia*. This does not lead to a complete study of tradition. But the question of the interpretation of Scripture is close enough to that of tradition to point out Aurelius Sanutus' approach to the latter.

Like Cochlaeus and Perez de Ayala, Sanutus does not allude to the Council of Trent. Unlike them, he does not use the expression *partim partim*. His approach shows, however, that he did not interpret the decree of the fourth session of the Council of Trent as condemning the primacy of Scripture such as this was defended by several pre-Tridentine polemicists, like Kaspar Schatzgeyer, John Dietenberger, Ambrose Catarinus, or the authors of the Regensburg Book. For his own view is identical with theirs.

If Scripture is the work of the Holy Spirit, its interpretation must also come from Him. This is the core of Sanutus' argument. "The Holy Spirit is present in His Sacred Letters."¹¹⁸ As the law of Scripture is spiritual, it can be understood only by divine illumination. Study does not suffice. "Since the law is spiritual, assiduous study is not enough to obtain its understanding or the spiritual splendor of its meaning; one needs divine revelation to be able to perceive it."¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ *De divinae Scripturae intelligentia*, fol. 5v: "Praesens utique est in suis sacris litteris Spiritus Sanctus."

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, fol. 6r: "Quum enim lex spiritualis est, assidui studii usus ad illius intelligentiam, sive spiritualem intellectus splendorem acquirendum, non sufficit, sed revelatione divina opus est ut percipi possit."

We must be led by "Scripturarum Spiritu," who interprets both Scripture and the Fathers.¹²⁰ The key to Holy Writ lies, therefore, in holiness and internal purification. "We pitch the sacred tent of spiritual knowledge in our heart when, once liberated from all stain of vice, we throw out the cares of the outside world and, these being cast off from the eye of our heart, the veil of passions raised, the obscure mysteries of the Scriptures suddenly illuminate us."¹²¹ Thanks to God, interpreters with insight into the meaning of Scripture have never been wanting in the Church.¹²² The Holy Spirit "has spoken through the mouth of the saints to explain the Divine Letters."¹²³

As it is the very word of the Spirit, Scripture enjoys a primacy over all other truths. It is first "in the order of perfection, and truth is ascribed to it as to the first of all other doctrines."¹²⁴ "The divine words are more certain and more enlightening than any words of man."¹²⁵ Scripture is, therefore, the norm of doctrine: "Neque prius sanctorum patrum dogmata ab Ecclesia fuere approbata quam sacris litteris consona viderentur" (*ibid.*).

Yet, Scripture takes second place "in the order of study,"¹²⁶ for "the explanations of the Fathers are better known to us."¹²⁷ It is easier to grasp the Fathers' and doctors' explanations. The right way to Scripture goes through its commentators. Once we have begun, with their help, to understand, we can go on by ourselves with the Spirit's guidance. "When some holy interpreter opens to us a door, that is, an access or an opening toward the divine words, when these are made clear or are announced to us, then this Scripture or this interpretation of the words of God enlightens us to understand everything else; for one point of divine Scripture which is well known gives

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, fol. 4r.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, fol. 4v: "Tunc quidem sacrum spiritualis scientiae tabernaculum in corde nostro erigimus, quum nos ab omni vitiorum sorde purgatos, exterius saeculi curis exuere nitimur, quibus sane evulsis e cordis nostri oculo, passionum velamine sublato, obscura scripturarum sacramenta nobis illico illucescunt."

¹²² *Ibid.*, fol. 7r.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, fol. 11r: "sanctorum ore in divinis litteris exponendis locutus est."

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, fol. 8r: "perfectionis ordine, cui tanquam capiti omnium aliorum sermonum veritas ascribatur."

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, fol. 15r: "Sunt divina verba certiora in se atque illustriora quibusque hominum verbis."

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, fol. 8r: "addiscendi ordine."

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, fol. 10v: "nobis sanctorum expositiones sunt magis notae."

light to grasp the rest."¹²⁸ The Fathers' exegeses need not be final, they are "illustrationes ac expositiones" rather than "conclusiones."¹²⁹ To interpret Scripture does not consist in gathering "the sayings of the Fathers," but "to draw the same understanding out of Scripture which these holy Fathers, taught by the Holy Spirit, retained from it and wanted everyone to draw."¹³⁰ In a correct approach to Scripture, "after we have learnt the divine words in the books of the Fathers, [we should] draw conclusions coming, as it were, from us. . . ."¹³¹

Aurelius Sanutus thus maintains the priority of Scripture over tradition. Whether some sacramental or other doctrines are explicit or not in Scripture is a question he neither raises nor answers here. But the main point is clear: four years after the decree of the Council of Trent on Scripture and the traditions, the primacy of Scripture understood in the Holy Spirit, of "Scriptura per interpretes sane intelligenda,"¹³² could be presented as the Catholic doctrine against Lutheran accusations of neglecting the written Word.

V

As a conclusion I would indicate two points that now seem to be patent. First, the interpretation of the decree of April 8, 1546, which has been defended by Edmond Ortigues, Josef Geiselmann, Yves Congar, Henri Holstein, myself, and others,¹³³ is supported by these works published in 1549, four years after the decree. The Council

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, fol. 9v: "Quum nobis ab interprete aliquo sancto datur ostium, id est, aditus vel apertio ad divina verba, quum scilicet ea nobis patefiunt aut declarantur, tum ejusmodi scriptura ceu verborum Dei interpretatio nos quippe illuminat, ut et reliqua intelligamus, quoniam ex uno divinae Scripturae recte cognito ad cetera capescenda illustramur."

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, fol. 9v-10r.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, fol. 14r: "sed eam e Scriptura intelligentiam reportare, quam et ipsi patres Spiritu Sancto edocti ex ea retulerunt atque a cunctis reportandam fore monuerunt."

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, fol. 10r: "postquam sanctorum editionibus divina verba didicerimus, quasdam inde conclusiones veluti a nobis in secundo progressu notioribus educere, sicque omnium verba judicare probareque."

¹³² *Ibid.*, fol. 16v.

¹³³ Edmond Ortigues, "Ecriture et traditions apostoliques au Concile de Trente," *Recherches de science religieuse* 36 (1949) 271-99; Josef Geiselmann, *art. cit.* (supra n. 1) and *Die lebendige Überlieferung als Norm des christlichen Glaubens* (Freiburg, 1959); Yves Congar, *La tradition et les traditions* (Paris, 1960); Henri Holstein, *La tradition dans l'église* (Paris, 1960). The Anglican historian Norman Sykes has reformed this interpretation of the Council of Trent: "Scripture and Tradition at the Reformation and Since," a chapter in *Man As Churchman* (Cambridge, 1960) pp. 69-116.

neither canonized the theology of partial sources of faith nor ruled out a Catholic understanding of the primacy of Scripture. This reading of the decree has already been established in the light of the debates that took place at Trent. It also agrees with the fact that theologians who wrote before the end of the Council did not, as shown above, endorse the theory of two partial sources of faith. They did not explain the Tridentine formula in the sense of *partim partim*. In differing ways they maintained the primacy of the gospel enshrined in the heart of believers (the *evangelium* of the Tridentine decree), and some (Aurelius Sanutus and, to a lesser degree, Perez de Ayala) fully asserted the priority of Scripture over other formulations of revealed truth. They would not have done this, had they considered this point of view incompatible with the Council of Trent. This is a valid conclusion, whether, like Melchior Cano, they quote the Council, or, like Perez, John Cochlaeus, or Aurelius Sanutus, they do not mention it.

Second, Geiselmann's contention, that the misreading, by which the Council of Trent will later be understood to teach the existence of two partial "sources" of faith, was initiated by Melchior Cano, seems to me impossible to maintain. Cano did not quote the Tridentine decree properly; but he did not use his version of it to support the doctrine of partial sources. Cano certainly believed tradition to form an extrascriptural storehouse of apostolic doctrine. Yet his theology remained better balanced than his successors'. It still made room for what had hitherto been a hinge of Catholic doctrine: the gospel entrusted to the heart of believers. The passage from the older problematic to the Counter Reformation rationale was not made by Melchior Cano.

The preceding study hardly warrants a more inclusive conclusion than the above. Yet, it is permissible to relate it to other studies.¹²⁴ The "classical" doctrine, which was universal until the waning of the Middle Ages, sees Scripture and tradition as dovetailing into one organic whole. Neither exists or can be grasped alone. Yet, each is the

¹²⁴ G. H. Tavard, "Scripture, Tradition and History," *Downside Review* 72 (1954) 232-44; "Holy Writ or Holy Church: The Recovery of an Organic Notion of Tradition," in *The Liturgy and Unity in Christ*, 21st North American Liturgical Week, 1960 (Elsberry, Mo., 1961) pp. 122-29; "Is Tradition a Problem for Catholics?" *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 16 (1960-61) 375-84; "The Authority of Scripture and Tradition," in John Todd (ed.), *Problems of Authority* (Baltimore, 1962) pp. 27-42.

whole. Scripture infolds tradition, and tradition embraces Scripture. One cannot sever their unity and ask which lords it over the other. Their oneness is the gospel. The Church and each Christian have the gospel in their heart.

In contradiction to this, later medieval theologians drove a wedge into this unity, which finally cracked up with the idea that revelation is given in two independent sources, each of which contains separate chapters of it.

A choice has to be made between these approaches; for the gospel cannot be divided into two separate sources if it has been imparted to the soul as one organic whole. In the spiritual, eschatological realm of the soul, institutional compartments do not exist: it is the whole gospel, or nothing, which has been entrusted to the soul. If the whole gospel has been given to those who, through grace, hold the keys to the kingdom of heaven, it has been given to them as one; at this level the distinction of two sources is nullified. Since the weight of Catholic tradition from the early Church onward favored the gospel in the soul, the more recent notion could not last as a Catholic doctrine. The controversies of the sixteenth century did not provide the best possible setting for a settlement of the matter. Controversies are seldom conducive to serenity. And serenity is needed before any theological point can be soundly assessed. As long as theology remains primarily polemical or apologetical, it is slanted by the doctrine it opposes. A theology constructed against the principle of *Scriptura sola* must necessarily miss the element of Catholic fulness which *Scriptura sola* attempts to safeguard. Behind the Protestant doctrine lies a Catholic doctrine. Taken outside of the Catholic synthesis, it becomes one-sided. Restored to its due place, it finds its true meaning. But a Catholic theology built for contradiction cannot restore Catholic principles to their fulness. Thus, the controversialists of the sixteenth century are not the best guides for an appreciation of the full Catholic notion.

Be that as it may, Counter Reformation theology eventually made its choice: the idea of two partial sources of faith overwhelmed the notion of the gospel in the heart, which Melchior Cano still accepted. Yet, that idea was doomed from the start, because it contradicted an older theology, the "classical" doctrine that Scripture and tradition as one whole express the gospel and that this gospel has been communicated to the soul of the faithful at baptism.

From the beginning there were, therefore, tokens of decay in the dualistic theory of Scripture and tradition. The first element that made this theology show signs of fading at its very birth was that an older, more balanced theology understood the source of faith to be the gospel entrusted to the heart of all the faithful at baptism. The second fatal element was that the concept of two partial sources was the outcome of a late medieval decadence; it was likely to be found at fault as soon as a richer theological movement would awaken. Third, this hypothesis concerning the nature of tradition found its most definite form in anti-Protestant polemics; as soon as the polemics would abate, it would lose most of its strength.

If I may now anticipate on the later history of the notion, I will add other reasons. Fourth, some of its most able exponents, like Bossuet in the seventeenth century, confidently appealed to history to prove that all Catholic doctrines are found explicitly at all periods in either Scripture or the traditions; and history has simply disproved it.¹⁸⁵ Fifth, some of its least competent defenders, like Orestes Brownson¹⁸⁶ in the nineteenth century, stoutly asserted that recourse to history to establish any point of faith implicitly denies the authority of the Church: the two "sources" must be taken on faith at the word of the Church. But the Church had never spoken such a word. Sixth, "traditionalism" in the nineteenth century tended to assert that tradition was the source, not only of dogmas, but even of the natural knowledge of God. Far from helping the Counter Reformation view of tradition, this offshoot weakened the conception from which it came. Seventh, the first half of the nineteenth century tolled the bell for the partial "sources" of faith by recovering a more organic theology, through Newman in England and through the school of Tübingen in Germany.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁵ Owen Chadwick, *From Bossuet to Newman* (Cambridge, 1957).

¹⁸⁶ Orestes Brownson, "Newman's Theology of Christian Doctrine," in *The Works of O. Brownson* 14 (Detroit, 1884) 74.

¹⁸⁷ Heinrich Fries, "J. H. Newmans Beitrag zum Verständnis der Tradition," in Michael Schmaus (ed.), *Die mündliche Überlieferung*, pp. 63-122; Günter Biemer, *Überlieferung und Offenbarung: Die Lehre von der Tradition nach John Henry Newman* (Freiburg, 1960).