

CHRISTOPHER DAVENPORT AND THE PROBLEM OF TRADITION

In 1648 the Franciscan Christopher Davenport (1598–1680), alias Franciscus a Sancta Clara, published his major theological work, *Systema fidei, seu Tractatus de concilio universali*.¹ The explanations following the title assert that, among many other things achieved by the book, “the divine authority of the Scriptures is declared” and “the Council of Trent is vindicated.” It is in many respects a remarkable volume, covering a wide range of topics very thoroughly. Despite his irenic intentions and his attempt to Catholicize the Thirty-nine Articles, Davenport was not inclined to mitigate Catholic doctrine.

His investigation of the authority of councils begins with a study of the concept of infallibility (chaps. 1–2). Next, the theory that definitions result from new revelations is rejected (chap. 3). The bases of faith are defined, and divided into *fundamenta* and *fundamentalia*: doctrines explicitly contained in Scripture and apostolic traditions are *fundamenta*, while those that necessarily follow from them are *fundamentalia* (chaps. 4–5). After a short chapter on whether philosophical doctrines may be defined (chap. 6), Davenport devotes chapters 7 to 13 to Scripture and tradition. Chapters 14 to 34 explain the nature and authority of councils. The rest of the volume, to chapter 48, deals with specific doctrines of faith.

A brief look at any section of the book shows the author arguing from two principles which he nearly always invokes together as though they were one:

¹ The full title is: *Systema fidei, seu Tractatus de concilio universali, ubi tam ex principiis scholasticis quam monumentis veterum, praesertim magni orbis magistri Augustini, quidditas et potestas concilii, cum singulis vel apicibus de hac re desideratis enucleantur; divina auctoritas Scripturarum et traditionum declaratur; fidei structura delineatur; ubi innumera antiqua examinantur; distinctio fundamentalium et non fundamentalium in rebus ad fidem spectantibus discutitur; abstrusiora quaedam ex naturae penetralibus exponuntur, quibus anima humana immortalis asseritur; Sacrum Tridentinum vindicatur* (Liège, 1648). Christopher Davenport was chaplain to Queen Henrietta Maria, the wife of Charles I. There are few studies of Davenport's life or theology. John Berchmans Dockery's *Christopher Davenport, Friar and Diplomat* (London, 1960) is a good, although short, biography. Maurice Nédoncelle's *Trois aspects du problème anglo-catholique au XVIIe siècle* (Paris, 1951) contains an analysis of Davenport's “irenicism” as it appeared in his explanation of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England (*Paraphrastica expositio*, 1634) and a parallel between Davenport's interpretation of the Articles and Newman's in Tract 90. In his biography (p. 100) Fr. Dockery writes: “In a later edition [of *Systema fidei*] he added an appendix on the origin of the papacy. . . .” Actually, the copy of *Systema fidei* in the Union Theological Seminary Library, which I have used, contains the appendix on the origin of the papacy, as chapters 47 and 48; it is the edition of 1648. I cite it hereafter by chapter, number, and edition page.

"ex Sacris Scripturis et Traditionibus" (p. 140), "ex Sacra Scriptura et Patribus" (p. 141), "ex Scripturis vel traditis" (p. 168), "Scripturis et Traditionibus certo positis" (p. 171), "ex revelatis scriptis vel traditis" (p. 176), "cum veritate scripta vel tradita" (p. 187), "scripto vel Traditione" (p. 359), "tam ex Scripturis quam ex Patribus" (p. 418), etc. At first sight, Christopher Davenport therefore echoes the language of the Council of Trent: the Gospel is contained "in libris scriptis et sine scripto traditionibus." But since he claims in his title to vindicate the Council of Trent, let us first see how he quotes and interprets it in the matter of Scripture and the traditions.

I

The Tridentine Decree of April, 1546, on Scripture and the traditions is summed up by Davenport, who obviously sees no essential difference between "quoting the very words" of the Council, as he says he does, and summarizing or paraphrasing them, as he actually does.

The very words of Trent I will quote, whose first decree is thus summarized: Having in view the preservation of the purity of the gospel, which the prophets promised, which Christ Himself promulgated, and which finally the apostles, the source of all saving truth and moral discipline, preached, and at the same time perceiving that this truth and discipline is contained in the written books and the unwritten traditions which, having been received by the apostles from the mouth of Christ Himself and dictated by the Holy Spirit, were transmitted to the Church as though by hand, the Council, according to the orthodox fathers' example, receives all the books of the Old and the New Testament and also the traditions regarding faith as well as morals, which come from Christ's mouth or were dictated by the Holy Spirit and have been preserved in the Church by continuous succession, with an equal attitude of piety and reverence.—Later the fathers added: that this was done so that all would understand which bases the Council would chiefly use to confirm dogmas and restore morals in the Church.²

² *Systema fidei* 14, 5, 154-55: "Ipsa Tridentini verba referam, cujus primi decreti haec summa fuit: Synodum proponentem sibi ante oculos conservationem puritatis Evangelii, quod prophetae promiserint, Christus ipse promulgaverit, apostoli denique, salutaris omnis veritatis morumque disciplinae fons praedicaverint, simulque perspicentes veritatem hanc et disciplinam contineri libris scriptis et sine scripto Traditionibus, quae ab apostolis acceptae, ab ipsius Christi ore, et a Spiritu Sancto dictatae, quasi per manus traditae Ecclesiae sunt: Orthodoxorum Patrum exemplo, omnes libros, tam Veteris quam Novi Testamenti, necnon Traditiones, tam ad fidem quam ad mores spectantes, ab ore Christi profectas, vel a Spiritu Sancto dictatas, et in Ecclesia Catholica continua successione conservatas, pari pietatis affectu et reverentia suscipere. Postea subjecerunt Patres: Id ideo fieri, ut omnes intelligant, quibus praecipue fundamentis in confirmandis dogmatibus et instaurandis in Ecclesia moribus, Synodus sit usura." In his recent volume, *Die heilige*

This is, on the whole, a faithful summary, which keeps close to the text it shortens. Yet the modern reader is struck by one major difference. In the Council of Trent as we read it today, the gospel (*evangelium*) is the source (*fontem*) of all saving truth and moral discipline (*omnis et salutaris veritatis et morum disciplinae*). In Davenport's epitome, however, the apostles constitute the source of all saving truth and moral discipline: *apostoli demique salutaris omnis veritatis morumque disciplinae fons*. Looking at the Tridentine text, we may easily see that both readings are grammatically correct, although there is little doubt, in the light of the history of the Council of Trent, that Davenport's reading is mistaken. It is the gospel which, for the Council, is the source of all saving truth.

Yet Davenport's misreading suggests a remark. Many theologians of the Counter Reformation and not a few still in our time apply the word *fons*, not to the gospel, but to the two vehicles where, according to the Council of Trent, it may be found, namely, the Scriptures and the traditions. There thus appears a theology of "two sources of faith." Modern authors have wondered how the passage from "gospel: one source" to "Scripture and tradition: two sources" occurred.³ The transition is indeed difficult to conceive if *fontem*, in the decree of Trent, is a predicate of *evangelium*. By the same token, it is easy to pass from the concept of "one source," identified with the apostles, to that of "two sources," the two

Schrift und die Tradition (Freiburg, 1962; pp. 166-83, 257-81), Josef Geiselmann endorses the opinion of John L. Murphy (*The Notion of Tradition in John Driedo*, Milwaukee, 1959) that the word *mores* in the text of the Council of Trent about *traditiones ipsas tum ad fidem tum ad mores pertinentes* refers to "customs" and not to "moral behavior". The distinction made both by Murphy and by Geiselmann between "customs" and "moral behavior" seems too sharp to me and, I believe, exaggerates a real difference, which the Fathers of Trent, in my opinion, did not see so clearly cut as it appears in these two authors. The distinction is not clear in Christopher Davenport's interpretation of the Council. St. Francis of Sales' explanation may be quoted here: "Et n'y a pas seulement tradition des cérémonies et de certain ordre extérieur arbitraire et de bienséance, mais, comme dit le saint Concile, en doctrine qui appartient à la foi même et aux moeurs; quoique, quant aux traditions des moeurs, il y en a qui nous obligent très étroitement, et d'autres qui ne nous ont été proposées que par conseil et bienséance, et celles-ci n'étant observées ne nous rendent pas coupables, pourvu qu'elles soient approuvées et prises comme saintes, et ne soient pas méprisées" (*Les controverses*, 1594-95, in *Oeuvres de saint François de Sales* 1 [ed. Annecy, 1902] 145). This seems to me a better rendering of the meaning of *mores* in the decree of 1546.

³ The bibliography of this question keeps increasing. I should mention, among the latest publications, Walter Kasper, *Die Lehre von der Tradition in der römischen Schule* (Freiburg, 1962); Josef Rupert Geiselmann, *op. cit.* (supra n. 2); George H. Tavard, "The Holy Tradition," in Leonard Swidler (ed.), *Dialogue for Reunion* (New York, 1962) pp. 54-88; J. P. Mackey, *The Modern Theology of Tradition* (London, 1962).

apostolic ways of teaching, Scripture and tradition. It is, therefore, possible and perhaps likely that at the basis of the dualistic notion of two sources of faith there lay a reading of the Council of Trent different from ours, the difference bearing not only, or not even mainly, on the meaning of *et*, the copula joining the Scriptures and the traditions, but also or even primarily on the sense of *fontem*, which would qualify *apostolos* rather than *evangelium*.

Admittedly, the text of Trent is quoted literally elsewhere: "Perspicens hanc veritatem et disciplinam contineri in libris scriptis et sine scripto traditionibus, quae ipsius Christi ore ab apostolis acceptae, aut ab ipsis apostolis, Spiritu Sancto dictante, quasi per manus traditae, ad nos usque pervenerunt, etc."⁴ This citation is used to show that the Council of Trent conceived the *adaequatum fidei fontem* to involve *utraque*, the Scriptures and the traditions. *Fons*, here, may refer either to the apostles or to the gospel. Just before the quotation it refers to *verbum Dei*, which does not solve our problem, since the Word of God, which may be identified with the gospel, reaches us also through the apostles. The meaning of *fons* in this passage remains, therefore, ambiguous.

One implication of the Tridentine decree is that the Church does not base its definitions on new revelations:

And thus the Council of Trent, in its first decree, clearly wanted, against the followers of this third opinion, no other bases to be used to confirm dogmas and restore morals in the Church besides the ascertained Scriptures and the true traditions of the ancients. It does not recognize new revelations . . . No other basis is, therefore, to be sought; but one must have recourse to the apostles alone, one must return to the old Church. She has indeed in herself all the necessary traditions of faith received from the apostles, some of which were even committed to writing; and there one must remain.⁵

Without quoting the decree here, Davenport concludes from it that only the Scriptures and the ancient traditions are the ground of definitions, new revelations being totally excluded. To the apostles we must go, to the old Church, custodian of all apostolic traditions, some of which were written.

⁴ *Systema fidei* 11, 13, 109: "Dum vero adaequatum fidei fontem explicant, utraque involvunt, prout etiam Tridentinum, sess. 4 in Decret. de Canon. Scriptur. Perspicens, etc."

⁵ *Ibid.* 3, 7, 17: "Et ideo apertissime voluit Tridentinum in primo decreto, contra hujus tertiae sententiae sequaces, nulla alia usurpanda esse fundamenta in confirmandis dogmatibus, in instaurandis in Ecclesia moribus, quam certas Scripturas et veras veterum traditiones; novas revelationes non agnoscit. . . Non igitur aliud fundamentum quaerendum est: sed ad apostolos recurrendum, ad Ecclesiam veterem redeundum; habet utique illa apud se omnes fidei traditiones necessarias ab ore apostolorum acceptas, et aliquas etiam eorundem scriptis consignatas, et in his immorandum."

This way of speaking may suggest that Scripture contains only a small part of the apostolic traditions. In another chapter, nevertheless, Davenport studies the opposite opinion: "An solae Scripturae sufficient pro fundamentis fidei?"

On this occasion, referring again to the Tridentine decree, he spends considerable time explaining the position of those who believe the Scriptures alone to be the bases of faith: "It seems, however, to some that the Tridentine fathers suggested this way when they exhorted not to teach or condemn easily if the point in question does not appear with certainty from the Scriptures and the testimonies of the Fathers."⁶ The text alluded to is the same as in the above passages, and again Davenport does not so much quote as give the meaning. He then raises the exact question about which much ink has flowed since it was asked in recent years by Edmond Ortigues and Josef Geiselmann: What is the meaning of *et* in the expression "Scriptures and traditions"?⁷

In their opinion, this copula indicates, and not weakly, that nothing should be taught about faith which is not with certainty in the Scriptures according to the old Fathers' explanations. . . . It is, therefore, manifest, in that opinion, that traditions do not rule with certainty unless they convey to us the sense of the Scriptures successively transmitted by the Fathers.⁸

Davenport names and quotes supporters of this opinion and older authors who seem to favor it: Catharinus, Ockham, Henry a Zoemerens, St. Thomas, Cajetan, Egidius, Vincent of Lerins, Dominic Soto, etc. He then cites another passage from the decree of 1546 which may support the same view: "If someone does not receive as sacred and canonical the integral books with all their parts, as it is customary to read them in the Catholic Church, or with knowledge and deliberation despises the above-mentioned traditions, let him be anathema."⁹ The argument is, he explains, that the differ-

⁶ *Ibid.* 7, 11, 65: "Videtur tamen aliquibus quod illi Patres Tridentinae Synodis hanc viam subinsinuarunt, qui admonuerunt: non tam facile debere statui aut damnari, de quo non certo constaret per Scripturas et Patrum testimonia."

⁷ Edmond Ortigues, "Ecriture et traditions apostoliques au Concile de Trente," *Recherches de science religieuse* 36 (1949) 271-99; Josef Geiselmann, "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.

⁸ *Systema fidei* 7, 11, 65: "Locutio illa copulativa, non frigide subindicat in sententia eorum, nihil debere de fide statui, quod non certo haberetur in Scripturis secundum veterum Patrum explicationes. . . . Manifestum proinde est, in hac opinione, Traditiones non esse certas regulas, praeter illas quae sensum Scripturarum a Patribus successive traditum ad nos deferunt."

⁹ *Ibid.* 7, 11, 66-67: "Non leviter etiam juvari putant hanc sententiam a primo Tri-

ent expressions, *pro sacris et canonicis non susceperit*, used for Scripture, and *contempserit*, for the traditions, imply two distinct attitudes, resulting from the differing status of Scripture and tradition.

What this understanding of Scripture and tradition implies is explained at length in chapter 7. Davenport is clearly at pains to show that such a theology does not minimize tradition. *Sufficiencia Scripturae* is given a Catholic sense by those who "have considered fundamental only what is expressly contained in the Sacred Letters or is legitimately deduced therefrom."¹⁰ But Scripture is then taken broadly: "By Scriptures he means every word of God."¹¹ In the same line, "the traditions are placed within the gospel"; "and in this sense," Davenport adds, "even the traditions and what follows from them are included."¹²

Many authors also restrict the meaning of *solum*. They believe, with St. Thomas and Duns Scotus, that "*only* implicitly or remotely all is in the Scriptures."¹³ Or, like William of Ockham, they "at least admit such traditions as deal with and convey the meaning of Scripture."¹⁴ The Fathers who refuted heretics with the Scriptures did so in the sense of St. Athanasius: "The Nicene Fathers received the meaning of Scripture from the Fathers'

dentini decreto, ubi postquam tam Scripturas quam Traditiones a Christo per apostolos ad nos traductas definiuit, in hunc modum concludit: Si quis libros ipsos integros cum omnibus suis partibus, prout in Ecclesia Catholica legi consueverunt, et in veteri vulgata editione habentur, pro sacris et canonicis non susceperit, quive sciens et prudens antedictas Traditiones contempserit, anathema sit. Ubi, ut apparet, Concilium anathematizat simpliciter non suscipientes Sacras Scripturas; quoad Traditiones vero, nempe illas quae non certam connexionem habent cum Scripturis, seu earum sensum non important, solum *scienter et prudenter contempserit*. Non igitur in iudicio horum opinantium usquequaque ejusdem sunt auctoritatis in quaestionibus fidei, cum solum prohibentur *contemnere*. Tenerentur equidem omnes, eas non tantum non contemnere, sed amplecti et venerari, seu *suscipere*, si fidem divinam constituent, prout dixerunt Patres de Scripturis Canonicis."

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 7, 1, 46: "Alii fuerunt, qui dicuntur existimasse illa sola fundamentalia quae expresse in Sacris Litteris continentur, vel inde legitime deducuntur."

¹¹ *Ibid.* 7, 1, 47: "Prima facie videtur in illo Tractatu unice collimare, ut ostendat omnem veritatem, quae est de necessitate fidei, contineri in Scripturis: ubi tam fundamentum quam incrementum et complementum aedificii Christi dicit solis haberi in Scripturis. Sed per Scripturas intelligit omne verbum Dei. . . . Omnis igitur divinus sermo, sive scriptus sive non scriptus fuerit, habet rationem documenti Ecclesiae. . . ."

¹² *Ibid.* 7, 2, 50: "Ad priora responderi potest, Traditiones comprehendi sub Evangelio. . . . Et in hoc sensu etiam Traditiones includuntur, et quae ex illis consequuntur."

¹³ *Ibid.* 7, 1, 43: "Divus Thomas in eodem loco (S.T., prol., q. 2) ab articulo 7 satis explicat seipsum, quia dicit solum omnia implicite seu remote in Scripturis haberi. . . ."

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 7, 1, 49: "Nullo modo tamen intelligit (Ockhamus) id ad quod nequiter aliqui ipsum contorquent, quasi omnes omnino rejiciat Traditiones: nam eas saltem admittit, quae tangunt et vehunt sensum Scripturae."

hands, and they thus showed that it was tradition."¹⁶ Occasionally, against heretics who knew no other rule, they used Scripture only. "It is patent that to various diseases they applied various remedies, now with the Scriptures alone, now with the traditions alone." Davenport concludes: "When they proceed adequately, they require both."¹⁶ Noting that St. Augustine teaches "the all-sufficiency of Scripture, at least for what is necessary to salvation," Davenport adds his interpretation: "This is true formally or reductively, or, as the School says, implicitly or explicitly."¹⁷ For St. Athanasius also, "the integral faith is not in the Scriptures . . . but only, as it were, its premiss."¹⁸

Tradition is not minimized by the sufficiency of Scripture; but its place and function is simply to "open the legitimate and true meaning of Scripture."¹⁹ There is no difficulty in accepting together the necessity of the traditions and the sufficiency of Scripture: "And therefore it remains that the Scriptures are sufficient and the traditions necessary. . . . And in this sense the holy Fathers approve the traditions and think that there is not one faith for the traditions and another for the Scriptures, but the same faith, which is more explicit in the former."²⁰ Traditions are "explanatory of faith."²¹ The mistake lies in arguing from the sufficiency of Scripture to reject tradition. For the two are one: "The traditions that convey the meaning of Scripture are testified to by the Scriptures themselves, as they also testify to the Scriptures."^{21a}

Christopher Davenport knows that some will dismiss such a position:

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 7, 3, 55: "Vult ibi Athanasius Patres Nicaenos sensum Scripturae per manus Patrum accepisse, et sic Traditum demonstrasse."

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 7, 4, 56: "Patet igitur quod pro diversa morborum affectione, diversimoda applicuerunt Patres pharmaca: nunc solis Scripturis, nunc solis Traditionibus; ut res urgebat utebantur, ut sexcenties videre est apud veteres. Quando vero adequate agunt, utrumque requirunt."

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 7, 5, 56: "Haec verba intimare videntur, omnem Scripturae sufficientiam, ad ea quae saltem ad salutem necessaria sunt. Quod etiam verum est *formaliter vel reductive*, vel etiam, ut loquitur Schola, *implicitate vel explicitate*."

¹⁸ *Ibid.* 7, 6, 57: "Non igitur integra fides in Scripturis habetur secundum Athanasium, sed solum primitiae quaedam."

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 7, 8, 60: "Traditiones enim verae legitimum ac verum Scripturae sensum aperiunt."

²⁰ *Ibid.*: "Et proinde stat Scripturas sufficere et Traditiones necessarias esse; et sic facile conciliari possunt haec et alia Doctorum scripta. Et in hoc sensu approbant Sancti Patres Traditiones; nec aliam fidem in Traditionibus, aliam in Scripturis aestimant, sed eandem ibi fusius explicatam."

²¹ *Ibid.* 7, 9, 61: "Authenticas Traditiones Ecclesiae semper, ut fidei explicativas, acceptavit. . . ."

^{21a} *Ibid.* 7, 11, 66: "Traditiones utique quae sensum Scripturae deferunt, ex ipsis Scripturis manifestantur, sicut et ipsae manifestant Scripturas."

"video aliquibus in latitudine data arridere." Yet he wants "faithfully to present and explain it." As for him, his doctrine is well known: "What I think I have declared abundantly, and I shall declare it six hundred times if circumstances require. For I hold that all the traditions universally received must be received according to the rank they obtain in the Church."²² Clearly, Davenport does not endorse the opinion which he has reported, and he is at times embarrassed by some of the formulae he has examined. Yet he does not reject this position, and he has obviously been impressed by the number and weight of the authorities that may be adduced in support of it. Besides those that have already been mentioned, we find, among those he quotes, explains, and discusses, St. Basil, St. Augustine, St. Jerome, St. Cyprian, St. Albert the Great, St. Bonaventure, Duns Scotus, Bradwardine, Peter Soto, Dominic Lopez, and many others.²³

II

Davenport certainly believes that the doctrine he has described is a valid Catholic position. It is, therefore, not correct to consider the interpretation of the Council of Trent proposed in our days by Josef Geiselman and others to be a recent, if not an aberrant, phenomenon: it was already fully developed in the middle of the seventeenth century. The text of *Systema fidei* makes it impossible to attribute the dualistic concept of two sources of faith to "all the theologians for four centuries"²⁴ and to believe that the Council of Trent was universally interpreted in the sense of the dualistic conception until "a few years ago."²⁵

²² *Ibid.* 7, 11, 67: "Hanc sententiam fideliter propono et expono (quia video aliquibus in latitudine data arridere) et in capite sequenti iterum, in fine et in corpore, per transenam tangere oportebit, propter aliquos Patrum textus ibi ponderandos. Ego vero quid sentio luculenter declaravi, et sexcenties pro re nata declarabo. Nam omnes Traditiones universaliter admissas, admittendas esse contendo, secundum illum quem obtinent gradum in Ecclesia, ut opportune expendam. Aliorum vero sententias Canonicis Judicibus remitto, ut debeo."

²³ Some of the authors mentioned by Davenport are quite unknown today. One of those most often quoted is called "dialogista noster" and "amicus meus," the author of a *Dialogus de religionis electione*. This is Thomas White (1593-1676), the controversial leader of the Blackloist faction among English Catholics, who wrote numerous works under numerous pen names: Anglus, Candidus, Albus, Bianchi, Richworth, Blacklow, Vitius. . . .

²⁴ Charles Boyer, "Traditions apostoliques non écrites," *Doctor communis* 15 (1962) 5-21, at p. 7.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 5. Another author whose historical view of our problem ought to be revised in the light of a deeper study of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century theology is Heiko A. Oberman; cf. his "Quo Vadis, Petre? The History of Tradition from Irenaeus to *Humani generis*," *Harvard Divinity School Bulletin*, 1962, pp. 1-25.

When Davenport spoke of *locutio illa copulativa*, he was already questioning the meaning of the Tridentine decree, or at least reporting a question about it, even if this was not his own question. Yet, if the question has been asked again by modern historians, the answer mentioned in *Systema fidei* is not the one that has been advocated in our days. The Tridentine fathers modified their schema on Scriptures and the traditions by replacing *partim partim* with *et*. Geiselmann sees this as a refusal to be committed to any theory on the relationship of Scripture and tradition, while in itself it means "strictly nothing."²⁶ The opinion reported by Christopher Davenport goes further. Far from meaning nothing, *et* implies that "nothing should be taught about faith which is not with certainty in the Scriptures according to the old Fathers' explanations."^{26a} *Et* is not disjunctive but conjunctive. Scripture and the traditions are tied together in such a way that all doctrines are found in Scripture interpreted by the traditions. The *et* of the Council of Trent has an explanatory sense. It unites Scripture and the traditions like a text and its meaning. This comes nearer to the explanation of the Tridentine decree suggested in *Holy Writ or Holy Church*²⁷ than to the neutralization of *et* proposed by Geiselmann.

At the same time, another point needs to be corrected. Josef Geiselmann has wondered who first interpreted the copula placed at Trent between the Scriptures and the traditions in the interpretive rather than the additive sense.²⁸ The problem is to determine who started the gradual supersession of the dualistic interpretation of Trent. Among Catholics, Geiselmann finds Dobmayer-Senestrey,²⁹ in the early nineteenth century, to have come first. He also remarks that the Anglican William Palmer, of Worcester College, Oxford, gave an interpretive explanation of the Tridentine formula even before this had had time to spread among Catholics.³⁰ Yet Palmer presents this without discussing other views, as though it already were an accepted explanation in his time. It is, therefore, likely that he was using older sources, and presumably Catholic ones. That such sources existed as

²⁶ Geiselmann, "Das Konzil von Trient," p. 163; see also his *Die Heilige Schrift und die Tradition*, pp. 154-63.

^{26a} See supra n. 8.

²⁷ G. Tavard, *Holy Writ or Holy Church* (New York, 1959) pp. 195-209.

²⁸ "Das Konzil von Trient," pp. 178-206.

²⁹ Cf. J. Geiselmann, *Die lebendige Überlieferung als Norm des christlichen Glaubens* (Freiburg, 1959) pp. 158-59.

³⁰ Cf. J. Geiselmann, "Scripture, Tradition and the Church," in Daniel Callahan (ed.), *Christianity Divided* (New York, 1961) p. 43 and n. 20.

early as the middle of the seventeenth century is obvious after reading Christopher Davenport. If this is so, we might as well say that the dualistic doctrine of two partial sources of faith, which is thought to have been typical of the Counter Reformation, was never fully accepted.^{30a} Although dominant, the additive concept of tradition did not do away with the interpretive concept; and Trent was understood in the interpretive rather than the additive sense in the middle of the Counter Reformation period, even though it was by a minority.

In this case, the question of who first understood Trent in that sense need not be asked: there had always been some who read the Council that way.

III

Davenport's own doctrine on Scripture and tradition, as distinct from the ones he faithfully reports, appears from his great care to accept all the points of view of the Fathers and to balance them delicately. "I speak thus, and I would give references to nearly all the ancients in favor of the sole precedency and sufficiency of the Scriptures for salvation, if their other writings did not provide abundant evidence of their belief in the necessity of the traditions."³¹ The Church Fathers teach both. They view tradition mainly as the transmission of the meaning of Scripture: "Ecclesiastical traditions in the sense of Vincent of Lerins stand in the line of the interpretation of the Scriptures."³² These are the two basic kinds: "traditions grounded in the Scriptures, or reporting the sense of the Scriptures as transmitted by the apostles, in whom Christ spoke."³³ Between them and Scripture there is no essential difference: "The other traditions, which carry the necessary sense of Scripture to posterity, are authenticated from and with the Scriptures themselves, and were always of faith according to the an-

^{30a} This is confirmed, to some extent, by Geiselman, who sees George Cassander (1513-66) as the "first theologian" who anticipated the interpretive notion of tradition to be later developed by the Tübingen school. This is already a post-Tridentine position, even though Cassander does not present it as the meaning of the Council of Trent. See *Die lebendige Überlieferung*, p. 159, n. 3a.

³¹ *Systema fidei* 8, 3, 72: "Hujusmodi dico et fere omnium veterum adferrem loca pro sola Scripturarum praecedentia et sufficientia in ordine ad salutem, nisi abunde de eorumdem sensu pro Traditionum necessitate ex aliis eorum scriptis constaret."

³² *Ibid.* 8, 4, 76: "Traditiones igitur ecclesiasticae in sensu Lirenensis in linea illa interpretationis Scripturarum consistunt."

³³ *Ibid.* 7, 4, 76: "Traditiones in Scripturis fundatas, vel quae Scripturarum sensum ab apostolis (in quibus Christus loquebatur) traditum deferunt. . . ."

cients."⁸⁴ In this way Davenport believes in the sufficiency of Scripture, yet he also teaches the *principalitas traditionum*.⁸⁵

Davenport's main concern is to receive both Scripture and tradition and to maintain their unity. This is "the style of all the Catholic authors I have seen, although some often grant more to the Scriptures, others more to the traditions. When, however, they explain the adequate source of faith, they involve both."⁸⁶ Significantly, Davenport uses the word *fons* in the singular, in keeping with the language of the Council of Trent, which he quotes at this point, even though he does not make clear who or what the source is: the gospel, as at Trent, the apostles, as in the above version of Trent, or the unity itself of Scripture and tradition. Yet the "only rule," for him, "consists of both."⁸⁷ Once this was granted, it mattered little to Davenport if one insisted on the sufficiency of Scripture and understood the traditions to be simply interpretative, or in hardened language one maintained: "Some points are of faith that are not in Scripture, but are obtained by divine traditions or by a definition of the Church."⁸⁸ He was not concerned with the exact relationship of tradition to Scripture, but with the unity of both in the oneness of the Word of God: "In the written or transmitted Word of God all doctrines to be believed are explained."⁸⁹

From one point of view, therefore, there is only one rule of faith, the Word of God. From another, there are three ways of knowing the Word of God: "Here, indeed, one must remain principally, and in these three, the Scriptures, the traditions, and the councils' definitions, the boundaries of our faith are placed."⁹⁰ The first two constitute the bases of faith, as Davenport

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* 7, 4, 77: "Aliae vero Traditiones, quae sensum Scripturae necessarium posteritati deferunt, ex et cum ipsis Scripturis authenticantur, et semper de fide fuerunt secundum veteres." Some traditions are of a different kind; cf. *ibid.* 7, 4, 76: "quae ideo solum ab apostolis derivari creduntur, quia ab Universali Ecclesia observantur." These need to be confirmed by a universal council, that is, by a living voice of the Church, in order to have the certainty of faith.

⁸⁵ Cf. *ibid.* 9, 4, 85.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.* 11, 13, 109: "Hic stilus omnium quos vidi Catholicorum scriptorum, licet subinde aliqui plus hac in parte tribuant Scripturis, alii plus Traditionibus. Dum vero adaequatam fidei fontem explicant, utraque involvunt."

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* 11, 13, 108: "...Scripturas solas sine Traditionibus non esse unicam regulam fidei, cum quo consistit ex utrisque unam adaequatam bene constitui posse, quae principaliter tribui posse Traditionibus. . . ."

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* 11, 13, 109: "Bene etiam dicit Castillo: . . . aliqua sunt de fide, quae non sunt in Scriptura, sed habentur per Traditiones divinas vel per definitionem Ecclesiae."

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*: "Ut recte Coelotius . . . : In Verbum Dei scriptum vel traditum propositiones omnes credendae resolvuntur."

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*: "Hic utique praecipue immorandum est; et in his tribus, scilicet Scripturis, Traditionibus et Conciliaribus Definitionibus sunt positi termini fidei nostrae. Duo priora sunt fundamenta, tertium continet omnia fundamentalia, ut superius docui."

explained at the beginning of his volume; the third forms the fundamentals, deriving from the bases with certainty and proclaimed by the Church in council.

Shall we say that Christopher Davenport has thus finally endorsed the dualistic or additive concept of partial sources of faith? His position is more subtle than that. "The Church or the councils are not supposed to want to give other answers than what can be obtained from the Sacred Scriptures where it [*sic*] is clear or it interprets itself."⁴¹ All statements of doctrine made by the Church are, in her mind, scriptural, analogical, shall we say, to what Scripture formulates clearly. In case this connection should not appear, recourse must be had to "the constant testimony of solid antiquity," so that nothing be asserted with certainty "unless it came from the hands or writings of the old apostles."⁴² If something is obscure in Scripture and in the Fathers, let it remain so: "The points that have been indeterminately or obscurely formulated, and are not formally or virtually made explicit, orally or in writing, by the apostles, should remain the way they are."⁴³ Yet past conciliar decisions may have sanctioned doctrines that do not seem to be in the Fathers at all. If this has happened, faith in the divine guidance of the Church should carry conviction: "In this case I say that tradition, preserved by the apostles' voice, not written, is to be drawn from the consensus of the churches."⁴⁴

⁴¹ *Ibid.* 19, 1, 194: "Procedendum est consequenter ad priora, ex Patribus et Concilii desumpta fundamenta; Ecclesiam vel Concilia non censi velle alias dare responsiones, quam ex Sacris Scripturis haberi possunt, ubi clara est [*sic*] vel seipsam interpretatur."

⁴² *Ibid.* 19, 2, 195: "Quod si in Scripturis non habeatur, quod controvertitur, restat ut ex certae antiquitatis constanti testimonio certissime erui possit, adeo ut ad exponendos hujusmodi obscuros textus, nisi per manus vel scripta veterum extiterint Apostolorum, nihil videatur infallibiliter certi statui, et propterea alii Patres non velle censi sunt."

⁴³ *Ibid.* 19, 5, 198: "Quae igitur indeterminate vel obscure posita sunt, nec ab Apostolis verbo vel scripto formaliter vel virtualiter explicata, sic manere debent."

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* 19, 5, 199: "In hoc casu dico, quod Traditio apostolica, voce non scripta conservata, ex consensu Ecclesiarum depromenda est." It is interesting to look at Davenport's comments on the Thirty-nine Articles, in his *Paraphrastica expositio*, from the standpoint of his understanding of Scripture and tradition. On Art. 6 (*Of the Sufficiency of Scripture*) Davenport does not touch our problem, but the question of the deuterocanonical books. On Art. 20 (*Of the Authority of the Church*) he comments favorably. The Article says: "The Church has power to decree Rites or Ceremonies, and authority on controversies of faith; and yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain any thing that is contrary to God's Word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another. Wherefore, although the Church be a witness and a keeper of Holy Writ, yet, as it ought not to decree anything against the same, so besides the same it ought not to enforce anything to be believed for necessity of salvation." Davenport finds only the last lines to need correction: the Church must not decree anything which is not, either actually or virtually, in Scripture; but this includes many things, even of a purely rational nature, and Scripture itself implies the Church's authority.

In brief, Christopher Davenport recognizes the possibility of apostolic traditions orally transmitted until a council should define them. But this underlines the infallibility of the Church more than it asserts the existence of totally extrascriptural traditions. For it does not contradict, in Davenport's mind, what he has already said: the Church does not intend to formulate anything other than what may be concluded from Scripture where Scripture is clear.

Christopher Davenport is a link between the patristic-medieval concept and the modern theology of tradition. In the heyday of the Counter Reformation he witnessed to the permanence of the theology which elsewhere I have called "classical," characterized by an organic notion of the relationship between Scripture and tradition, each implying the other in the unity of the Church's living mystery, Scripture containing the revelation in the form of seeds and germs that tradition will bring to full fruition.

This forces us to revise the history of the problem of tradition since the Council of Trent. The Council was not universally interpreted, until sometime in the nineteenth century, in the sense of the dualistic theology of partial sources of faith. On the contrary, some authors, even in the seventeenth century, anticipated the reinterpretation of Trent which is now under way. Reversing our point of view, we may say that they prolonged an older line of thought, rather than anticipated a modern position. This confirms the thesis that post-Tridentine authors did not all believe the Council of Trent to have taught the existence and the necessity of two partial sources of faith.⁴⁵

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⁴⁵ See G. Tavard, "Tradition in Early Post-Tridentine Theology," *THEOLOGICAL STUDIES* 23 (1962) 377-405.



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