

CATHOLICITY

I

NAMES of people or places or parties have seldom much importance in themselves. They start as nicknames or by peradventure more often than as a result of any formal decision. A name may prove a strength or a weakness; but it often becomes a mere label, and the original implication of the precise word may be quite forgotten. The Christians accepted the appellation first bestowed at Antioch. The Methodists have become accustomed to being thus described. It is a matter of historical accident that those of the Calvinist tradition are called Reformed on the Continent and Presbyterians in English-speaking lands. And if people are anxious for some special title, such as Christian Scientists, we worry very little as to its appropriateness: the aim is identification rather than accurate definition.

Thus we readily accord to our Christian brethren in Eastern Europe a monopoly in the name "Orthodox," and we are not conscious that in doing so we make any admission about the soundness of our own theology. It is perhaps a little different with the claims to the attribute "Catholic." This word occurs in the Creeds which all accept, and therefore to claim it exclusively for any section of professing Christians is to make a serious charge against others, and to oblige them to open the question of the obviously different meanings that are being read into the word.

The Council of Trent did not take the view that the Catholic Church had divided, but regarded non-Romanists as schismatics.¹ A protest by certain secular authorities in 1529 appears to have been the origin of the name "Protestant,"² in which Reformed as well as Lutherans came to acquiesce as distinguishing them from those whom they termed Papists or Romanists, but without at any time resiling from the claim to be Catholics. In England at the beginning of the seventeenth century we find the word "Protestant" applied to the Church of England in

contrast to Puritans and sectarians; and in 1622 the Protestant is the typical English churchman, Erastian, out for comfortable living:

*“An indifferent man,
That with all faiths or none, hold quarter can,
So moderate and temperate his passion
As he to all times can his conscience fashion.”*³

The Church of England was in close touch with Continental religious bodies, and was officially represented at the intensely Protestant Synod of Dort. English interests were those of the Protestant side in the Thirty Years' War, and they remained strongly anti-papal, the century being characterised in England, as in Scotland, by exaggerated horror of Rome and dread of popish intrigue. Kings were ceremoniously pledged to uphold the Protestant Reformed religion. Laud⁴ on the scaffold declared himself a Protestant. Hooker and Jeremy Taylor speak of “the Church of Rome,” and when they use the word “Catholic” are referring to the Church of the Fathers; but “papist,” “popish,” “Roman Catholic,” and “Catholic” are all terms which were applied to Romanists in the seventeenth century. The eighteenth century may not have been very religious, but it was stoutly Protestant, and the word “Catholic,” when it did occur, was associated with Rome. Queen Elizabeth was proclaimed “Defender of the True, Ancient Catholic Faith” which indicates an attempt to retain the word in its widest sense, and the Act of 1593 against popish recusants denounces persons “terming themselves Catholics”; but the title of the Most Catholic King, and the consistent use of the word by Romanists themselves and its common employment abroad, narrowed the application. It was the Oxford Movement that changed matters again. The adoption of the name “Anglo-Catholic” seems to date from 1841 when the Library of Anglo-Catholic Fathers began to be published.

Early nineteenth-century Protestantism in England had been reduced to bored respectability. There had been Evangelical outbursts, such as Methodism, but by the 1830's religion was singularly apathetic and ineffectual, and rationalism and infidelity seemed triumphant, with the natural consequence that

the ecclesiastical pendulum swung, and we have Newman and his friends strongly denouncing that imbecile, inconsistent thing called Protestantism and declaring that they hated the Reformation more and more, some of them ultimately deciding that the only alternative to atheism was Rome.⁵ To what an extent the new emphasis will in the long view of history prove to have been a mere temporary retreat may be inferred from a sentence of Newman, in which, after remarking on the fact that Anglo-Catholics had suddenly become a power, he concluded that his friends put forth their principles "as if they were obliged to say them," and were surprised at themselves and at the favourable reception given them, the explanation being that "these doctrines were in the air."⁶ There is in fact a curious resemblance to the circumstances which produced that very different movement which we call Barthianism, for that is likewise a retreat to authority, induced by similar distress due to the chaos produced in this case by humanistic thought, and the apparent complete helplessness of the Churches to deal with the situation. Newman himself picked out as the nondescript placebo that was causing all the trouble, the safe churchman "who holds that Scripture is the only authority, yet the Church is to be deferred to; that faith only justifies, yet that it does not justify without works; that grace does not depend on the sacraments, yet is not given without them; that bishops are a divine ordinance, yet those who have them not are in the same religious condition as those who have."⁷ The Tractarian retreat to antiquity has certainly proved strategically successful so far, for a century later we have the Anglo-Catholics leading the Church of England, and not only ranging themselves with the Romanists and Orthodox under the banner of "Catholicism," but so parading before the ecclesiastical world and so ably supporting their case that all the other Churches have been obliged to give them a major place in their attention. At Amsterdam in 1948 the section on the Nature of the Church concentrated almost entirely upon the situation caused by this development of "Catholic" claims.

In Scotland in 1560 the *Scots Confession*⁸ was in the title declared to be that of the "Protestants of the realm of Scotland," and the word "protesting" occurs in the Preface in the sense of making a solemn declaration; but in the text belief is expressed

in the one Church of the Creeds, and it is described as "Catholic, that is, universal, because it contains the elect of all ages, of all realms, nations and tongues, be they of the Jews or be they of the Gentiles, who have communion and society with God the Father and with His Son Christ Jesus, through the sanctification of His Holy Spirit," while particular visible churches are also mentioned, such as those in Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, which Paul calls churches of God, and with which the town churches that had been reformed in Scotland are classed.

Before the establishment of the Reformation, Scots Protestants had entitled themselves "the congregation of Christ," as English and Continental Protestants had adopted phrases like "the true religion," "the professors of godliness," "the Church of Christ," and had spoken of the "re-establishment of the Christian religion."⁹ In the early controversies the enemy were described as "papists," if not in less dignified terms; "papists" and "popery" are the words that appear in ecclesiastical documents till the nineteenth century. Presbyteries in the eighteenth century made returns of the numbers of "papists" within their bounds, and the General Assembly in 1834 exhorted ministers to preach occasionally on the errors of "popery." John Menzeis,¹⁰ in his violent polemics, had contrasted Protestants and Romanists, and when he used the word "Catholic," it was of the universal Church to which all belong "who own the fundamentals, and superadd nothing destructive thereunto." The Romanists, he said, constitute "a particular Church." John Welch, in *Popery Anatomized* (1602), had spoken of the Roman Church as part of the Catholic Church, which "comprehends all the particular Churches and all the elect."¹¹ Later writers refer ordinarily to "the Church of Rome" and to "Romanists"; the Oxford Movement was popularly described as "Romish" rather than "Catholic," and so was any attempt at liturgical innovation in Scotland, such as that of Robert Lee. "Catholic" and "Roman Catholic" were terms sometimes applied, and they gradually became usual; but the claim of Romanists to be exclusively the Catholic Church was never at any time admitted, nor was the claim of the Church of Scotland to be part of the Catholic Church ever out of sight. And though the Church of Scotland was in practice engaged for the most part with domestic rather

than world problems, and did not raise its eyes very often or very much above these, or look at them in a world setting or deal with them in a broad ecumenical spirit, Professor George Hill's statement about the Church (1821) would have been generally accepted, that "the first thing which enters into our conception of the society is the whole, while the circumstances which rendered it necessary for this whole to be divided, are a matter only of secondary consideration."¹² Writers such as Rutherford¹³ were not at all shy of the word "Catholic," and discussed the "Catholic visible Church" especially in controversy with English Independents, who seemed to them to "dote on the particular." Bannerman¹⁴ writes of the visible Catholic Church as "made up of all Christians who, visibly professing the faith of Christ, are constituted by that profession into one corporate body, and stand in one outward covenant relationship to Christ." But at the present time the word "Catholic" in ordinary conversation would normally mean Roman Catholic, and Scottish documents are therefore careful to speak of the "Catholic or Universal Church" to make clear to the ordinary member that the wider use of the term is intended.¹⁵

II

Among Protestants different aspects of Catholicity have been stressed. Thus Calvin¹⁶ says that the Church is called "Catholic" because there cannot be several without dividing Christ, and he believes it constituted by all the elect compacted into one body under one Head; and again he speaks of it as the totality which gives to particular Churches "the name and authority of the Church," and as the multitude, "who, though dispersed and far distant from each other, agree in one truth of divine doctrine, and are bound together by the tie of a common religion." Scots and Swiss reformers asserted that their trinitarian orthodoxy entitled them to be regarded as Catholics under the *cunctos populos* of the Emperor Theodosius in 380.¹⁷ Knox's *Book of Common Order* stresses the quality of universality: "It consisteth and standeth of all tongues and nations; yea, of all estates and conditions of men and women, whom of His mercy God calleth from darkness to light, and from the bondage and

thralldom of sin to His spiritual service and purity of life.”¹⁸ As typical of a widespread acceptance of the word a statement of F. D. Maurice may be quoted: “A body acknowledging itself connected with the Church in all previous ages by the bond of sacraments, of creeds, of worship, of ministerial succession, has the *primâ facie* marks of Catholicity.”¹⁹ But the most famous definition is the “*quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus*” of Vincent of Lerins (434), resting Catholicity upon universality, antiquity and consent, which, if freed from the narrow interpretation placed upon it by Rome, everyone would agree, represents a wonderful if unattainable ideal.

Lightfoot,²⁰ in his study of Ignatius, traced the word “Catholic” from its Scriptural use as referring to all the Church as distinct from local Churches to its later use as distinguishing the true, orthodox and conforming Church from heretical and schismatic rivals. John Stuart Mill, in his *Logic*, has a chapter on the variations in the meaning of terms, and gives examples of words whose meaning has changed owing to altered associations, words such as “pagan” and “villain,” words such as “author” and “poet,” words such as “*ecclesia*,” “bishop,” “sacrament.” In many cases we can see that the original significance is of little consequence: “parliament,” “war,” “Communist,” “chemistry” must be allowed the meaning which experience has forced into them. The word “Christian” to-day has a content that has undergone modification in the course of the centuries; the word “Catholic” has been affected also, and different claimants to the title may be said scarcely to be dealing with the same word at all.

The credal adjectives One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic, should not be regarded as intrinsically exclusive, but rather as together attempting to express a general quality, scarcely capable of exact analysis such as the four words seem to require. The imagination has to be applied and the terms have to be synthesised. It appears, indeed, that One, Catholic and Apostolic are constantly permitted to overlap in studies on the nature of the Church; the Geneva Catechism of 1545²¹ gives a definition of Catholicity which lays emphasis on Unity, and D. T. Jenkins says: “Apostolicity is the mark of Catholicity.”²² It seems important to keep clear that “Catholic,” and “Catholic” alone, will include the

message that the barrier is down, and that the conception of the chosen people has lost its narrow nationalism—Jew and Greek, bond and free, male and female; a point noted in the *Westminster Confession* in defining the visible Catholic Church. But generally speaking there should be only advantage in accepting the word "Catholic" with as rich a content as history will allow. Lightfoot²³ noted the tendency in Cyril of Jerusalem to find more in the word than it had once signified, making it include not only world-wideness, but also comprehensiveness in doctrine, and applicability to all need. He urges that the emphasis upon universality must be maintained, whatever "secondary glosses" are introduced, and he quotes in support a well-known letter of Augustine to Vincentius. Pearson²⁴ and, recently, Hebert²⁵ have used the admirable statement of Cyril as providing four pillars to uphold catholicity, and they do thereby give the word a fullness that makes it at least much more realistic than mere abstract universality, which is in any case not of itself a virtue, being indeed, as John Knox²⁶ pointed out, truer of sin than of anything else. "Catholic" may thus be taken to carry with it suggestions of wholeness, the real Church, in the true tradition, worthy of its origins, capable of its task, with the full Christian doctrine, the gospel message that may bring salvation to men's souls, the remedy for all spiritual need.

But, as Mill noticed, a word may alter its meaning, not by a process of enrichment, but by loss of range and character, becoming a mere ghost of its old self. Does not the word "Catholic" degenerate sadly when taken, as by a Romanist catechism, to signify "one who is in union and communion with the Bishop of Rome," and is it not also denigrated when applied, in an exclusive sense that is contrary to its very nature, to what is plainly not an ecumenical body, but merely a large, or very large, denomination? And when the Oxford Movement adopted the name "Catholic," did the word not appeal chiefly because as Newman said, catholicity is not only one of the notes of the Church, but "one of its securities"?²⁷ It was the safety, the certainty, of the authoritative that made them look back, though it seems unfortunate that one who had played such an important part as pioneer in the study of development of dogma, and who therefore accepted the results of past revolutions, showed only

alarm with regard to "the spirit of lawlessness"²⁸ that came in with the Reformation, rejecting the attitude of modern science which is constantly challenging its latest hypotheses, shrinking back from liberty of experiment and adaptation, reformation and development.

*"God's gift was that man should conceive of truth
And yearn to gain it, catching at mistake,
As midway help till he reach fact indeed."*²⁹

"Catholic" means "universal." Harnack³⁰ gives example after example from early Christian writers of the rhetorical claim that Christianity was spread over the whole earth, and Christianity to-day, as Latourette³¹ has shown, is universal in a numerical and geographical sense that puts the old claims completely to shame; but, if we are to give real content to the word "Catholicity," it must not be merely a matter of numbers, a Church for all. We must likewise allow generously for comprehensiveness in doctrine and applicability of the offered redemption for God's chosen. Protestantism had no hesitation in accepting the Creeds: these were the Catholic Creeds; but at the same time it did not hesitate to restate them in what to it were modern terms, taking into consideration important changes in human interests and circumstances. The rediscovery of the individual naturally required that Jesus Christ be exhibited as a Saviour for each to an extent not previously imperative, and this meant explicit statements, for instance, about the Atonement, which had not been a living issue with those responsible for the Creeds. Some confessions may appear to us musty museum pieces, but we have to recognise that they were gloriously alive and up-to-date when they were accepted; and Protestants to-day would for the most part agree that theological reconsideration of this sort should be regarded as a permanent obligation, though experience has shown that modern conceptions as to the nature of truth make restatement an extremely difficult task. The Reformation Churches sank rapidly into a reformed scholasticism; but it must not be forgotten, for example, that the Westminster documents were received in Scotland with a view to unity, and some compromise was made in that interest. The *Shorter*

Catechism, generally regarded as Scotland's most characteristic utterance, the General Assembly shook its head over when it arrived from England, as "too long, and too high for our common people and children."³² The Scots were deceived as to the conditions of the times; but even that much maligned document, the *Solemn League and Covenant* (1643), was an endeavour "to bring the Churches of God in the three Kingdoms to the nearest conjunction and uniformity in religion, confession of faith, form of church government, directory for worship and catechising, that we, and our posterity after us, may, as brethren, live in faith and love, and the Lord may delight to dwell in the midst of us."³³ Liberty of thought became normal once again under the influence of the nineteenth-century renaissance, and wide difference of opinion, the result of consecrated scholarship and sincere religion, would be regarded as simply belonging to that comprehensiveness of doctrine which Cyril desiderated as an element in Catholicity. Nor may we overlook the fact that all truth is of God, and that apart from religion and ethics and theology, all researches into truth should be brought under the light of His Spirit. Not that we wish ministers to talk *ex cathedra* on things which they do not understand or understand only as amateurs, posing as authorities on science or economics or psychology or anything; but no enquiry will be complete until its results are submitted to this final inspection. We realise this to-day more than ever in connection with the advances and possibilities of research in such departments.

Fullness of religious life and activity must likewise be included, for the Catholic Church is simply the world Church, and must be completely the Church that the world has need of to bring it the redemption which God wills for it; and this implies, not only the hallowing of community experience but the salvation of each person: a Church for all is a Church for each. Fullness here, like comprehensiveness in theology, brings the denominations to our notice, for they represent, just as individuals may do, the burgeoning of the true vine and the varied functioning of the members of the body.

No doubt there are well-meaning groups of earnest people, not all of them in America, who are merely ignorant and stupid in their sectarian peculiarities, obscurantist or fanatical:

pathological conditions are present here and there. Biology reveals nature working by methods of trial and error, making constant mistakes as it gropes about among the possibilities, reaching dead ends in pterodactyl and dodo; and those whose world is that of religious experience have in like fashion produced some amazing systems even within the environs of Christianity. The situation was not so difficult to regulate in authoritarian days, when the adventurous had plainly before them the possibility of being burnt alive; but, when Protestantism gave its blessing to Renaissance liberty of thought and expression, it took a tremendous risk, and licence was to some extent inevitable. In this connection, one can at the same time agree with Oliver Quick that "individualism is not necessarily associated with liberty";³⁴ for some denominations have been far from venturesome. Denominations are in many cases phenomena of local history, and history is troublesome to undo, so that causes remain extant after their usefulness is exhausted, and corpses may be propped up for quite a long time, like dead Hun chieftains at the feast. One thinks of Scottish Burghers and Antiburghers who actually transplanted their petty animosities to Nova Scotia;³⁵ differences with more survival power than survival value. It would seem imperative that the worries of the past should not obsess us and render us blind to the worries of the future: imitative memory must not hamper creative imagination. There are to-day Germans who, though by no means admirers of Nietzsche, think that history is distracting, cramping, and retarding the Church at the present moment, and there are people in the Younger Churches who agree with this, and feel that some denominations at least are hypnotised by the past.

R. H. Story³⁶ in Scotland spoke of "the Catholic interests of Christianity" as "dearer than the traditions or dogmas of any one communion," and this broader attitude is a rebuke to our customary parochialism, our tendency to believe our immediate neighbourhood to be the Happy Valley and to ignore or despise the rest of the universe. Most Christians in our day seem to have in practice little interest in, or concern for, the Church of Christ throughout all the world; that, like humanity, is too vague and general to become excited about: enthusiasm needs to be caught by definite landmarks. But this fact that we incline to be intent

on the immediate may not appear so serious if we reflect how seldom we think of ourselves as men, and how habitually as scholars, butchers or housewives, as Scots, Frenchmen or Americans. This is surely all that can be implied by W. K. Jordan when he remarks on this universal Church that "the Protestant communions could claim that title only in the rhetorical flourishes which headed their formal confessions of faith."³⁷ It is true that they talked little about the Universal Church, but it was a basic and primary assumption with them, and that is precisely why it comes out with a flourish on an official occasion.

III

Denominations on the whole have contributed enormously to the process of unfolding and exhibiting the fullness of the truth and value in Christianity, and there is much to be said for Coleridge's dictum that "the intensity of private attachments encourages, not prevents, universal benevolence."³⁸ Through the denominations may be the shortest way to Catholicity. One can feel this possibility in the modern application of the word "Catholic" to what is broad and comprehensive and not exclusive. Thus we have the biographer of Dr. Alexander Whyte of Edinburgh repeatedly calling attention to his "catholicity of thought and outlook";³⁹ and Dr. Norman Macleod pleading in the General Assembly (1865) for "a little more catholic feeling towards other Churches."⁴⁰ We notice also the readiness of members of various denominations to co-operate and to have intercommunion, which implies recognition that, while the differences are important enough to require separate organisations for their expression and protection, there is a profound sense of common loyalty and common aim. John Forbes of Corse,⁴¹ when he exiled himself from Aberdeen to Holland to escape the Covenants, took Communion indiscriminately with French, Dutch and Scots congregations; and the Church of Scotland Communion table, as has already been stated, is open to-day to members of any part of the Church of God. Dr. David Welsh (1843) strongly maintained the compatibility of diversities of opinion and practice with a firm adherence to the fundamental principles of the Gospel.⁴² Even the many Confessions

of the Reformation period which so horrified Bossuet were not fortresses erected against one another: each was a characteristic local utterance. One may not pretend that all the denominations loved one another; there are perhaps no antipathies so intense as those which to-day exist between closely related sects. But Hugh Binning gives expression to what has always been a widely recognised feeling when he writes: "It is a sweet meditation to think . . . that though we understand not one another, yet we have one loving and living Father that understands all our meanings; and so the different languages and dialects of the members of this body make no confusion in Heaven, but meet together in his heart and affection, and are one perfume, one incense, sent up from the whole Catholic Church which here is scattered on the earth."⁴³

Many denominations do in fact declare themselves part of the Catholic Church. The Church of England does so, though Rome rejects its claim. The Church of Scotland, from the days of the *Scots Confession* to the Act of Union of 1707 and present-day declarations at ordinations, has continued to call itself a branch of the One Holy Catholic or Universal Church. John Knox described it as "a part of that holy Kirk universal, which is grounded upon the doctrine of the prophets and apostles, having the same antiquity that the Kirk of the Apostles has as concerning doctrine, prayers, administration of sacraments and all things requisite to a particular Kirk."⁴⁴ Reformed Churches abroad make this same claim, as do also Lutherans, Methodists, Congregationalists, Baptists and many other bodies. The position to which they believe themselves entitled they gladly allow to one another. Some Independents did speak and act in a different spirit and in ways that were exclusive of nearly everybody, and the posterity of Aesius⁴⁵ of the "private ladder" has persisted; but in recent times we find commonly the attitude which is clearly stated by D. T. Jenkins,⁴⁶ that a Church meeting of a particular Church is as Catholic as any synod; and Thomas McCrie who was brought up in one of the small dissenting bodies in Scotland, reminds us: "Our stately holding communion with a particular Church is the ordinary way of manifesting our communion with the Catholic Church."⁴⁷ The smallest gathering of Christians may thus regard itself as a local

manifestation of the whole Church. Catholicity is a spiritual characteristic, and where Christ is, there is the Church.

It must be emphasised again in this connection that the Church of Scotland baptises into the membership of the Catholic visible Church; that its ministers are ordained to the ministry of that Church; and that its excommunication is from the membership of that Church. This is clear from recent documents, and was well stated long ago by John Brown of Wamphray in the preface of his Latin attack on Wolzogius (1670).

Church in the sense of denomination is, of course, totally unknown to Scripture; but the principle which applied the same word *ecclesia* to the whole and to particular Churches geographically separate, must cover other types of separation, racial, liturgical, theological, administrative. A national Church is as "particular" as the smallest sect. Differences in theological outlook and religious practice do not necessarily involve departure from the truth as it is in Christ, but may represent different capacities due to different experience, and corresponding to what Clement of Alexandria⁴⁸ called the "many tones of voice" in which the divine revelation is made.

At the same time Hebert⁴⁹ is very right when he reminds us that "The Catholic faith is not merely the sum total of beliefs held by all Christians everywhere and always." All conceivable opinions and ways of regulating Church life, and manners of offering worship are not to be collected according to some scheme of Leibnizian compossibility to constitute Catholicity. It is obviously easier to enlarge on the ideals of comprehensiveness than to deal with the matter within the region of the practical and the practicable, and in real life the man who is zealous for all-inclusiveness is apt to be zealous for nothing else, so that we have a kind of toleration that is hard to distinguish from indifference. Christianity, ever since its combined Jewish, Greek and Roman beginning, has shown itself amazingly eclectic, capable of appreciating, absorbing and digesting. It is prepared to laud above all other liberties "the liberty to know, to utter and to argue freely according to conscience."⁵⁰ And it has kept on renewing its effectiveness from age to age because constantly able to pass over to, and settle down into, its stable institutionalism, fresh and living discoveries of the Spirit. But it is not

simply a curiosity shop, and cannot make its witnesses out of people who dabble distractedly in fancy religions, and fitfully flutter about among the faiths of the world. It is not Hinduism; it is not Islam; it is not anthroposophy; it is not spiritualism: it remains an integrated unity, one Spirit in one Body. To speak of "Catholic" sympathies may be little more than to say "unprincipled." So thought such men as Robert Baillie and Samuel Rutherford in Scotland,⁵¹ and a New England puritan wrote; "He that is willing to tolerate any discrepant way of religion besides his own, doubts of his own, or is not sincere in it."⁵²

Hebert's⁵³ discussion of, and general agreement with, Father Congar's assault upon comprehensiveness merits notice. He mentions the parties which exist side by side in the Church of England, and suggests that a united Church might display no deeper unity, and that indeed the denominational separation would simply remain. There would, however, seem to be no doubt that the relations between the Churches are more satisfactory than they used to be. Something has been learned through closer intercourse. In certain cases discussion only confirms differences: men have committed themselves in argument, and regard themselves as champions of some cause, which tends to strengthen them in their accepted beliefs. But the normal result of improved contacts has been a better sense of proportion, increase of charity, reduced suspiciousness, diminished arrogance. It may take a very long time for German-thinking and American-practising contingents to find common ground, or for the gap between Catholic and Protestant to look anything less than an abyss; but the fact remains that in a lifetime the situation has actually been revolutionised. Even the Romanists who seem so aloof have patently benefited in several spheres from Protestant experience. The process is worth encouraging. Real comprehensiveness would ensure the balance of unity and truth.

Perhaps the way in which things will have to develop might be illustrated from the conditions in the United States of to-day, where many states, differing widely in interests, climate and almost everything else, live together within a union that is more than formal; where one comes across the eighteenth century side by side with what one might call the twenty-first; where one

discovers racial and cultural pockets all but completely isolated; where people travel by the same Underground or 'plane, but appear to belong to different worlds; where one wonders whether there is such a thing as public opinion or whether at any time almost anything might not pass as such; yet where one realises that with increasing rapidity a *totum integrale*, as distinct from a *genus* with *species*, is in process of creation. This is the desideratum with regard to the Churches: not a federation of entities, but an integrated whole characterised by variety in unity, by law and liberty alike, by both authority and independence. One may guess that the Churches, though anxious, and even alarmed at existing spiritual conditions, are not yet in that state of crisis which seems often necessary to produce incorporating unity. The Bible says: "Where there is no vision the people perish"; the people have sometimes pretty nearly to **perish before they** become capable of vision.

When we think along such lines, we are not classing Catholics and Protestants as opposites. "Catholic" is serving as a comprehensive term, including not only what the so-called Catholic section of the Churches to-day identify with the whole gospel, but, along with that, features supplied by Protestantism, especially of an individualistic type, without which there cannot be Catholicity. The word "Catholic" is unfairly appropriated by anyone who proclaims that he hates the Reformation. This only escapes the apprehension of such as fail to grasp what D. T. Jenkins⁶⁴ has so admirably expressed in these sentences: "The Protestant 'rediscovery of the individual' was not the assertion of mere sinful egotism, disrupting the organic unity of Christ's body. It was the rediscovery of true humanity, the reclamation of our true heritage as sons of God and brethren of each other." It is absurd to speak of wholeness and universality and simply miss out millions who accept Christ and the creeds, and whose experience has under the undeniable leading of the Holy Spirit released so much light and life. Let people call themselves Traditionalists, or Authoritarians, or employ some name that will do justice to the important emphasis which they represent; and let them take their place beside the others within a real Catholicism. No doubt the last word is with F. D. Maurice: "What is the Catholic Church? If you mean by that question,

What are its limits? Who have the right to say that they belong to it? I cannot answer the question; I believe only One can answer it; and I am content to leave it with Him."⁵⁵

IV

Catholicity, if we give the word anything like the richness of content set forth by Cyril, would appear to sum up very adequately that Reformation of Judaism which constitutes Christianity. The most obvious "fulfilment" is the expansion of a national into a universal religion. But if we consider also "secondary glosses," and think of *the* Church, commissioned to provide the way, the truth and the life for all God's chosen, the instrument of the continued ministry of Christ, not only the Church available for each and all, but the church fully adequate for the needs of each and all, then we shall recognise that Judaism, as national and racial, had naturally been external, formal, legalistic, ritualistic; but that when religion escaped from this provincialism, it inevitably became personal, inward, following the line of the more spiritual prophets. The law was not abolished, but it received its necessary complement and fulfilling in the Gospel; institutional religion remained, but due place was found for that worship which is neither in this mountain nor at Jerusalem; God's Providence was reasserted, but new meaning came to it by emphasis upon spiritual blessings, for, as Samuel Rutherford⁵⁶ impressively wrote: "The Cross of Jesus Christ is rather a 'mark' of the Catholic visible Church" than the "prosperous condition" included in Bellarmine's fifteen notes, and associated with the Old Covenant.

Calvinism has at times been criticised for the special interest which it seemed to take in the Old Testament. The facts are assembled by W. B. Selbie in a chapter of *The Legacy of Israel*. Scots theologians wrote of the Jewish Church⁵⁷ and traced it from Abel and Noah; John Weemse produced his quaint and erudite *Christian Synagogue* in 1623; John Forbes of Corse⁵⁸ at that same period recited the Psalms in George Buchanan's Latin as he strolled on the Aberdeen links; interest in the controversy between Voetians and Cocceians, the study of Marckius and Witsius, and the popularity of the writings of

Vitringa were symptomatic;⁵⁹ Thomas Boston's *Tractatus Stigmologicus Hebraeo-Biblicus* (1738) was a pathetic witness; John Erskine⁶⁰ in 1750 was calling the Jewish dispensation "the flesh and the letter" typifying the succeeding "more spiritual dispensation"; and William Robertson Smith's application of the critical method to the Old Testament proved epoch-making in Scottish ecclesiastical history.

Modern scholarship has "rediscovered" the Old Testament. Some of the new interest is perhaps due to the realisation that unexpectedly useful arguments for certain party purposes are here to be found; but the Greek emphasis had in any case exhausted its credit. Carlyle objected to "Hebrew old-clothes";⁶¹ but it is now well understood to what an extent the Church had an Israelitish ancestry, and to what an extent the Bible is a unity. Bishop A. C. Headlam wrote strongly on the Christian Church's debt to Judaism, and Vernon Bartlett likewise, and more recently we have Goudge, Phythian-Adams, Hebert, Rowley, Wand, and *The Apostolic Ministry*, while at conferences the "remnant" and the "new Israel," "shaliach" and the "Aaronic priesthood" have become commonplace.

The matter is important in connection with the question as to whether Jesus founded or wished to found the Church. Dr. R. Newton Flew has dealt patiently with this problem in his *Jesus and His Church* (1938), and his general conclusions appear to be acceptable, confirming the belief that Jesus did take action with a view to "a new religious community, with a new way of life, a fresh and startling message, and an unparalleled consciousness of inheriting the divine promises made to Israel." The moral teaching of Jesus is no *interimsethik*; the way of life which he expounded was for people in organised society; promises of divine support were given. And very clear is the continuity with all that had gone before, so that one might think, not of the foundation of a Church so much as of the regeneration of a Church that had always been there. The Christian community was originally the product of Jewish history, and had behind it Jewish tradition, which thought of Jehovah as having separated out a chosen people, an elect nation, called both to be blessed and to serve, a conception spiritualised by the prophets, so that the Israel of God could be interpreted more widely and a

universal Church envisaged. The originality of Christianity is self-evident: even the preference for the word *ecclesia* is symbolic of change; what we have, however, is not only a *new* Israel, but a new *Israel*.

When one starts to erect a building, a system, an institution, one is guided, consciously or otherwise, by one's purpose, the available material and the experience of the past. The purpose of Jesus is plain from his frequent mention of the Kingdom; the material consisted of the disciples whom he sent forth and the *dramatis personæ* of the Gospels; the experience was that of his people, recorded in Scripture and modified by the facts of Alexander the Great and the later Roman Empire. Revolutions are by nature charismatic: other credentials are not an issue; and so there is no apostolic succession from the Jewish priesthood, but a process comparable with the relatively minor break which constituted the Reformation. And yet, though what was started was essentially a spiritual movement, as Troeltsch⁶² seeks to demonstrate, the element of continuity is of palmary importance, and there is little difficulty in seeing that an institutional Church was inevitable. This conclusion may be reached without worrying overmuch about the authenticity or interpretation of Matt. xvi. 18, or about the arguments of Schweitzer and the earlier eschatologists.

At the same time, the evidence does not entitle us to infer that Jesus planned the organisation of the Church in any detail. Much of the Jewish machinery was automatically adopted or adapted: in history one must allow considerable scope for the power of unconscious assumptions and not fall into the mistake of forcing participants always to act either wisely or consistently, and of forgetting the extent to which matters were settled one step at a time without careful reference to any distant scene. Neither should we allow ourselves to come too much under the influence of any one metaphor which Scripture applies to the Church when we are thinking of the development of its organisation. Professor De Zwaan⁶³ of Leiden has clearly shown the dangers. We might rather view the movement in the light of the early treks to the west in American history, wherein strong traditions persisted, while at the same time new conditions imperatively dictated what at the moment required to be done.

V

John A. Möhler,⁶⁴ a Romanist writer, in 1832 asserted that the visible Church was the permanent incarnation of Christ, and this view has lately been much discussed. Bishop Gore⁶⁵ wrote: "The Church is naturally of a piece with the Incarnation, the fruits of which it perpetuates"; R. C. Moberly⁶⁶ has said of the Church: "It is the perpetuity of the Presence; it is the living Temple of God Incarnate"; and Archbishop Gregg of Armagh began his address at Amsterdam, 1948, with the words: "The Church is the extension in time and place of the Incarnate Word of God, crucified, ascended, glorified, operating among men through the indwelling in them of His Holy Spirit, who mediates to it His Victorious Life."⁶⁷ Oliver Quick⁶⁸ mentions that Catholics speak of the Eucharist as an extension of the Incarnation. Representatives of other Churches have made use of the expression or something like it. Thus Bishop Nygren⁶⁹ asserts: "The Church is Christ as He after His Resurrection is present with us and meets us here on earth." Dr. Parkes Cadman,⁷⁰ a Congregationalist, employed the phrase at Lausanne in 1927.

Nor is it unknown in Scotland, for Wotherspoon and Kirkpatrick⁷¹ speak of the Church as "an extension of the Incarnation," and Dr. Charles Warr⁷² describes it as "the extension in the world of the Word made flesh, which was the Incarnation of Jesus Christ." The expression is noted in the Assembly Commission's Report in *God's Will for Church and Nation*.⁷³

For some reason a reference to this conception appeared in the questionnaire on *The Nature of the Church* issued in 1945 by the American Theological Committee in connection with Faith and Order, and many Churches consequently felt obliged to ask themselves what, if anything, it meant to them. A Lutheran reply regards the phrase as possible, but unfamiliar and equivocal; a Congregational-Christian reply accepts both "continuation of the Incarnation," and "a voluntary society," the two contrasted expressions; the reply of the Disciples is that, if the phrase were to be used at all, it would be understood as a figure of speech; the Baptist answer is to the effect that they do not think of the Church in that way, but that the expression attracts some of them; the Brethren say that it is not a familiar phrase and does

not appeal to them; the Presbyterian reply calls the expression "vague," and acceptable at most as a figurative statement that the Church makes known the redemptive significance of the Incarnation; the Methodists answer that the Church is a continuing incarnation so far as it realises and expresses the Spirit that was in Christ.

It is obvious that the expression means little to Evangelicals, but attracts Catholics. T. W. Manson⁷⁴ characterises it as "more awe-inspiring than illuminating," and suggests a modification, saying that the life of the Church is the continuation by the Messiah of His Messianic ministry. Bishop Lesslie Newbigin⁷⁵ of the South India Church has devoted careful attention to the expression, and comes to the conclusion that "The relation between the human and the divine in the Church is thus not clarified, but profoundly obscured by calling the Church the extension of the Incarnation."

The Church of Scotland as a whole would probably wish to go back to the words of the Free-churchman James Walker⁷⁶ in 1872, and be content to call the Church "an instrument by which He wrought His gracious work"; "the region or sphere of the ordinary supernatural action of the ascended Saviour." More recently much the same conception was expressed by H. R. Mackintosh when he wrote of the Church as "the fellowship which perpetuates the revealing influence of Christ, and, through which, in the power of the Spirit, the assurance of God's forgiving love is conveyed to the world."⁷⁷ But the decisive objection to the expression, "an extension of the Incarnation," would appear to be that it in fact embodies in an alluring form precisely the ideas which led to the Protestant rejection of the Mass. To describe the Church as in the Catholic sense an extension of the Incarnation is to make the Church a kind of substitute for Christ in His redeeming work, to detract from the once-for-all sacrifice, and to pass over to the Church the authority that belongs to Christ alone. Harnack pointed out, and Karl Barth notes how significant it is, that Innocent III at his consecration preached—about himself.⁷⁸

VI

Both inherited and original features of the Church are subsumed under the idea of Catholicity, which represents the result of their conjunction; but this must be examined further in the light of our Lord's purpose expressed in the teaching with regard to the Kingdom, the old conception plainly decisive, but as plainly sublimated. The notion of a Kingdom was taken over from the Jewish Messianic hopes, and the superscription under which Jesus died upon the Cross proclaimed Him a King. What then is the relation between the Catholic Church and the Kingdom?

According to one view, they are identical, as the parable of the Dragnet seems to indicate and as Augustine, for instance, appears to have held.⁷⁹ Both F. D. Maurice and Archbishop Whately used the expression "Kingdom of Christ" in the titles of their books on the Church. On the other hand, the Ritschlians⁸⁰ spoke of the Kingdom of God as the universal moral community, distinguishing it from the Church, which they described as the Christian community at worship: but this is not one of their most helpful suggestions. James Denney⁸¹ noted "the displacement of Kingdom by Church as we pass from the Gospels to the Epistles," which hints that the spiritual passes into the institutional as a practical historical stage in its establishment, the original transcendent ideal remaining. Vincent Taylor⁸² finds the Kingdom synonymous with the Rule of God, justifying this theory by a detailed examination of many passages in the Gospels, while Aulén likewise speaks of "the dominion of Christ on earth."⁸³ Dr. T. O. Wedel describes the Church as "the Kingdom in history."⁸⁴

Barthians would sharply distinguish Church and Kingdom as belonging to different spheres, the Kingdom being essentially of the eternal, not just gradually emerging out of the Church of this temporal world, but here now already, while in another sense still to come. Brunner⁸⁵ indicated the relationship when he wrote of the breaking through of the Kingdom into the historical process of the world at the Incarnation, the Kingdom present meanwhile incognito, though believers, through faith, have, are and live in it. Along with this may be studied the "realised

eschatology" associated, for example, with the name of C. H. Dodds, and particularly the final chapter of his *History and the Gospel*, where "the end" in Christianity is represented as "given in an event which entered into the course of history once for all, while the process still went on," and where we have the analogy of the content of history being taken up into the fullness of the Kingdom "as Christ is believed to have carried up His humanity to the 'right hand of God.'" Quite as interesting are Oscar Cullman's reflections in his *Christus und die Zeit*, where Cross and Resurrection are described as "*die schon geschlagene Entscheidungsschlacht*," but where once again due emphasis is placed upon the future with its conclusive triumph.⁸⁶

We may not overlook the fact that there are many to-day, as in previous difficult periods, whose interest lies in a catastrophic Second Coming, a tendency which must be regarded as for the most part escapist in origin. Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses and all who delight to speculate on the basis of Daniel and Revelation comfort themselves with an apparently simple explanation of our desperate world conditions which provides an easy way out from the overwhelming responsibilities which these might be held to impose. When civilisation crashes, as it will presently do, the small company of the faithful will inherit all things. Common opinion, however, moves rather in another direction, and will no longer view this present life as a mere preparatory incident and therefore be content to concentrate upon the hereafter. The modern world in spite of its obvious failures has developed a proud sense of security here below, a feeling of power due to scientific advance, technical development, a consciousness of having improved the amenities of ordinary existence almost beyond recognition; and so attention has tended to centre upon building Jerusalem in England's green and pleasant land, and the Church, despite its unhappy record in this respect, is set to bring in the Kingdom by a process of social amelioration. To the establishment of such a view, evolutionary conceptions during several generations have contributed, Hegel and Marx and Darwin and Tennyson helping to implant very deeply in the popular mind an idea of inevitable and continuous progress. This notion Dean Inge outspokenly challenged,⁸⁷ and the whole question has been recently reviewed

in Principal John Baillie's *The Belief in Progress*. Alternative interpretations of history by Spengler, Toynbee, Collingwood, McMurray and other able thinkers do little more than establish the complexity of the problem: the philosophy of history has not even yet advanced beyond the alchemy and astrology stage.

The Church in Scotland, acknowledging the sovereignty of God, has naturally thought of history as an expression of His purpose, and in the light of this has both connected and separated Church and Kingdom. A. M. Fairbairn,⁸⁸ a Scot whose chief work was done in England, related and distinguished them by referring to the Kingdom as the immanent Church, and the Church as the explicated Kingdom, and P. T. Forsyth,⁸⁹ another Scot in exile, regarded the Church as not the means to the Kingdom, but the Kingdom in the making, while John Dickie,⁹⁰ a Scot who taught in New Zealand, thought of the Kingdom as God's absolute purpose and the Church as the scene of its actualisation. Scottish representatives at Lausanne in 1927 agreed to the statement: "The Church is God's chosen instrument by which Christ, through the Holy Spirit, reconciles men to God through faith, bringing their wills into subjection to His sovereignty, sanctifying them through the means of grace, and uniting them in love and service to be His witnesses and fellow workers in the extension of His rule on earth until His Kingdom come in glory."⁹¹

Generally speaking, Scottish doctrine has remained true to Calvin, who, though he concerned himself mainly with the visible Church, an organisation under discipline, and so might be regarded as, like Augustine, identifying Church and Kingdom, was led by various considerations to the conception of the Church Invisible, though in a different sense from that which suggested itself to Augustine, and could thus both associate the Church Invisible with the Kingdom, remembering how Jesus said, "My Kingdom is not of this world," and also, on the other hand, could recognise that God has always been King and rules now, and that accordingly the Kingdom is already here in the visible Church. Thus he writes: "The Kingdom will properly come when it will be completed"; and also: "Those who in a manner have the Kingdom of God within them . . . begin to be

in the Kingdom of God"; "it does not follow that there is no Kingdom because there is not a perfect one; on the contrary, we maintain that that which has already begun is then to be perfected."⁹² The Geneva Catechism (1545) says: "The Kingdom of God may be said to be commenced."⁹³ Thus we may think of the Church as the community which has the promises and where already some of the privileges of the Kingdom are enjoyed and some of its obligations accepted, but where imperfection and incompleteness are still outstanding features. The Kingdom has both come and is to come. We celebrate the anniversary of a great man's birthday, but old ecclesiastical custom remembered rather the day of the saint's passing into glory. From the day of our birth we are distinctively ourselves, and yet it may be long enough before we attain to what we have it in us to be, when it might be said that we had "come to ourselves." But perhaps a more helpful analogy may be found in A. N. Whitehead's remark that "the good of the universe cannot lie in indefinite postponement. The Day of Judgment is an important notion: but that Day is always with us."⁹⁴ Christ has come; but in and through the Church He continues His work by the power of the Holy Spirit until God's will is done and the divine purpose is achieved, and the Kingdom has come.

Some sentences written by David Dickson⁹⁵ in 1647 seem to do justice alike to Church and Kingdom: "The external visible Church is worthy to be called and counted the Kingdom of Heaven, even in regard of the external constitution of it in this world, notwithstanding of the mixture of wicked hypocrites in it; because therein Christ rules as King, and hath His subjects, all professing Him to be King of Saints, but especially in respect of His own elect therein, who honour Him in Spirit, in whom He doth begin eternal life, and draweth it on unto perfection." "The Gospel is the Word of the Kingdom of Heaven . . . this Word sheweth the way, and giveth right unto the Kingdom, giveth earnest, and a beginning of the Kingdom of Heaven." "The grace of God offered in the Gospel is in effect the Kingdom of Heaven, for it opens the way unto it, and entereth the man not only in the right, but also in the begun possession of the Kingdom of Heaven." "This Kingdom of grace is so come already, as it shall be still coming more and more. . . . God will have all

His disciples drawing at His royal and triumphing chariot by their prayers.”

We may conclude that Catholicity, like unity and holiness, would seem to be a quality which the Church will only be able to claim in the highest sense when the Kingdom has finally come. As Bishop Wand⁹⁶ has put it: “While the Church is truly Catholic in its potentiality, it cannot be fully Catholic until we know even as we are known.”