

priest is lectured on how to exercise the pastoral care, the religious community on running its finances. The book claims to be an application of the whole of theology to the world, but the attempt to do so will make anyone trained in theology wonder continually whether this statement or that is to be taken in the sense it has for a theologian or in a vaguer sense less questionable. The book covers a wide territory: sex, workers, intellectuals, citizens, relaxation, religion, and even a plea for the introduction of yoga into Christianity.

STANISLAUS PARKER, O.P.

**CATHOLIC DOCUMENTS.** Published for the Pontifical Court Club. (Salesian Press, Surrey Lane, S.W. 11; 2s. 6d. each issue).

The variety and importance of papal pronouncements in recent years have made such a publication as *Catholic Documents* most valuable. Thus the latest issue (No. XVI) contains accurate and readable translations of such notable documents as the Pope's encyclical letter on the twelfth centenary of the death of St Boniface, the Christmas broadcast of 1953 on 'The Technological Conception of Life' and the discourse for the fourth centenary of the Gregorian University. The authority of the Pope's teaching demands the widest circulation, so alive as it is to the complex needs of our own time, and *Catholic Documents* (which presents all its material in full without commentary) is performing a most useful function. The only qualification one has relates to the chronology of its documents. Thus the issue for September 1954 (No. XV) in fact contains some addresses delivered later than those included in the December issue, and the immensely important broadcast of Easter 1954 has yet to appear.

**ORAL TRADITION.** Studies in Biblical Theology No. 11. By Eduard Nielsen. (S.C.M. Press; 7s.)

The purpose of this short but important book is to prove that the recent Scandinavian school of 'traditio-historical' criticism, the rise of which is traced in the introductory chapter, can provide more satisfactory answers to certain Old Testament problems than the earlier and still prevailing school of 'literary criticism'. It can be shown from parallels in other Near Eastern cultures (ch. 2) and from scattered indications in the Old Testament itself (ch. 3) that oral tradition was valued highly, quite other than in our times, that oral tradition and writing were equally the business of specialists, i.e. reciters and scribes, that oral tradition was committed to writing only for special reasons, for example at a time of crisis, and that a considerable amount of composition of different oral traditions took place before they were

written down. We arrive at the fundamental principle of the school: 'The written Old Testament is a creation of the post-exilic Jewish community; of what existed earlier undoubtedly only a small part was in a fixed written form.' (p. 39, quoting H. S. Nyberg.)

It must be admitted that some incidental features of this theory are convincing and many are attractive. The question, however, of the parallels from other cultures, on which the theory leans heavily, is uncertain and still disputed. The use of writing in the Old Testament can be established in general for law codes, correspondence and annals. In regard to the first, the interesting point is made that the role of the written code was to control the oral tradition (pp. 46f.), but was this an oral tradition in the sense intended, or just the general knowledge of the law that all would have? In regard to the last, the formula of the writers of the books of Kings, e.g. 4 Kings 24, 5, surely shows the annals to have covered more ground than those writers did in their compilation. Certain texts of a sapiential character, which are used to support a particular conception of the fostering of oral tradition, in reality say no more than that teaching was by word of mouth and included a certain amount of learning by heart, as much does even today. Psalms and songs, it can be admitted, lived long in the mouths of men before being fixed on paper. The real crux is the nature of the books of the pre-exilic prophets, and here the reader is referred to works by Birkeland, Mowinckel and Engnell which are not available in English. In Chapter 4, however, in which three examples of 'tradition-historical' exegesis are given, two are concerned with prophetic literature. In expounding Jeremiah 36 the Hebrew narrative style is vindicated against critics who wish to remodel the chapter, and the exegesis aims at showing that the circumstances in which Jeremiah's oracles were written down were so exceptional that the chapter cannot be used as evidence for the procedure of other prophets. Even this original 'book' grew not by literary additions but by oral, for, among other things, we have only a prose text of the Temple speech (Jer. 7), the original metrical version of which must have been included in the 'book' and would have been preserved in it if it had been handed down from the first in written form. As we have it the book is the product of deuteronomistic oral tradition. Here the author, incidentally, makes a strong point; two scenes are clearly linked and contrasted, the finding of the roll in the Temple—the original Deuteronomy—and its reception by Josias (4 Kings, 22), against the presentation of Jeremiah's roll to Josias' son Joakim and its destruction by him. The other examples, the complex of oracles in Micheas 4 and 5 and the account of the Flood, are equally interesting.

It is admitted by the school that the 'question of the existence and

significance of oral tradition demands different answers for different kinds of literature', but the evidence of the use of writing in the time of the monarchy, whether it was principally the business of specialist or not, is weighty enough to make the principle of the school too extreme.

BENET WEATHERHEAD, O.P.

THE CHURCH OF THE WORD INCARNATE. Vol. I: THE APOSTOLIC HIERARCHY. By Charles Journet. Translated by A. H. C. Downes. (Sheed and Ward; 45s.)

'If St Thomas could come back to earth', wrote Père Gardeil, 'and could see the dogma of the Church at the point of development it has attained in our day, I do not doubt that he would give it generous space in the third part of the *Summa* between the treatise on the Incarnation and the Sacraments.' One may say that the subject of the Church has become in our day the focus of all theology, just as in the early days it was the subject of the Incarnation and in later days the subject of grace and the sacraments. This work of Mgr Journet (the first of four volumes to be translated into English) is therefore a work of major importance; it marks a definite stage in the evolution of theology, which is of vital interest at the present time. One may add that it is of interest to the layman no less than to the priest; one might say that it is indispensable to the formation of a serious theological mind.

There are two subjects in regard to the Church which are crucial to most thinking people at the present time. The first is the relation of non-Christians, Hindu, Buddhist, Moslem, Jew and simple pagan to the Church, and how this relation can be reconciled with the dictum, *Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus*. The answer to this question which is now generally accepted is that non-Christians, who are in good faith, are related to the Church by their unconscious 'desire', that is by the fundamental orientation of their will, and that this makes them really though invisibly members of the Church. Mgr Journet not only expresses this view with great precision, but, what is more important, he habitually takes into consideration this vast 'membership' of the Church outside her visible communion.

The other problem which is even more serious to the average Christian is the question of 'scandals' in Church history, especially the use of force by the Church in the Crusades, the repression of heresy and the wars of religion. Mgr Journet discusses this problem at great length and it is impossible to summarize his view adequately. But briefly it may be said that he distinguishes between the action of the Church as such, that is her own proper canonical power given her by Christ, and the action of the Church in combination with the State in a variety of