

Mussolini. While no doubt the ex-Minister of Food and former Minister of War will be duly flattered, and we are too close yet to the death of Harold Laski to estimate his influence, there does seem to be a certain lack of balance in devoting more space to Laski and Strachey than to the whole of the Middle Ages. In fact the weakest part of the book is this chapter on Laski and Strachey, with its interminable analyses of books by the latter which may have seemed important in the 'thirties, but which are now forgotten and best forgotten. The promise of fuller treatment, for example, of Richard Hooker in another book is no excuse for dismissing him in a page while allowing this prolixity on the vagaries of the Left Book Club in pre-war days.

The style is not easy, which will make the book difficult reading for the student and general reader for whom it is intended, but this may be due to compression, for a great deal of information and comment is packed into a small compass. The comment is never trite, but at times is likely to cause raised eyebrows. Thus, others besides Dominicans will be interested to learn that the *Summa* 'has remained the intellectual backbone of all subsequent Catholicism, although reset in some vertebrae by the Jesuits' (p. 169).

Inevitably Mr Catlin's work recalls the encyclopædic work on *Political Thought: The European Tradition*, edited by Dr J. P. Mayer and published in England about the same time that the present work was published in America. While Dr Mayer's work was more limited in scope, on balance it shows a better sense of proportion and without overstraining brings home the continuity of political thought better than Mr Catlin, while Mr Catlin's work gradually leads the reader to the realisation that in practice the theme of one world is becoming ever more insistent.

JOHN FITZSIMONS

THE CHURCH IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE. Vol. 1. By J. R. Palanque, G. Bardy, P. de Labriolle. Translated by Ernest C. Messenger, PH.D. (Burns Oates; 25s.)

This is the fifth volume of Dr Messenger's translations of Fliche and Martin's *Histoire de l'Eglise*. The first four volumes, corresponding to the first two volumes of the French text, appeared under the title of *The History of the Primitive Church* and have been reviewed in BLACKFRIARS. Dr Messenger's competence as a translator is well known and is shown again in the present work. The authors are on the whole less successful than were their predecessors, in striking a balance between the general manual and the specialised study. This is perhaps most obvious in Professor Palanque's sections on Constantine; too elaborate and confusing for the general reader, and with nothing to attract the attention of the specialist.