

Short Notices

M. François Picavet, well known as a learned and zealous investigator of the history of medieval thought, has published in the *Annuaire* of the Section des Sciences religieuses of the École pratique des Hautes Études for the year 1917-18 an essay of some fifty pages on the influence exerted by the philosophy of Plotinus on Christian theology, and especially by his teaching concerning the *τρεῖς ἀρχαὶ ὑποστάσεις* upon the development of the doctrine of the Trinity (*Hypostases Plotiniennes et Trinité Chrétienne*, Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1917). In it he has called attention to the importance of the subject, and collected a number of interesting quotations in illustration of it; but neither the philosophical discussion of the significance of the theology which issued from the reaction of Neo-Platonism upon Christianity nor the exhibition of the links in the chain of tradition which connects the speculations of the great schoolmen of Latin Christendom with those of Plotinus is carried very far. It would no doubt be unreasonable to expect a fuller treatment of the theme within so small a compass; but M. Picavet might perhaps, by more precisely indicating the purpose and scope of his essay, have avoided seeming to promise something more than he can be said to have performed. C. C. J. W.

Of late years fresh and more intelligent interest has been taken in Christian missions: their whole history along with problems of methods past and present has come under more careful study. The work on *The Conversion of Europe*, by Dr. Charles Henry Robinson, Hon. Canon of Ripon and editorial secretary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (London: Longmans, 1917) is one more sign of this new interest. The name of the Society to which the writer belongs, and of the periodical (*East and West*) in which some parts of the book appeared, show this to be the case. Much missionary literature in the past has not aimed at historical completeness or accuracy, and some important fields of investigation have been quite neglected. Dr. Robinson has chosen a good subject, which has great interest in itself: in treating it he has the advantage of many special studies of which the student of missions should be made aware. A good choice of guides for the various parts of such a book is essential; in most cases Dr. Robinson has chosen wisely: the purely missionary student will have a chance of learning much from him even if the historical student might desire to learn even more. But the subject has many difficulties. The Balkan Peninsula, for instance, abounds in traps for the historian as for the politician, and it would be too much to say that the author has avoided them all. A more serious defect is that the bibliographies are not as complete or as much up to date as might be: the student is too often referred to Migne when far better texts should be used. This is the case, for instance, with the Lives and the