

Reviews

The Symbols of Religious Faith, by Ben Kimpel. (Philosophical Library, New York, \$3.75.)

This volume by the Professor of Philosophy at Drew University in New Jersey is sub-titled, "A Preface to an Understanding of the Nature of Religion." As his contribution toward such an understanding the author undertakes an examination of religious symbols, i.e. those man-made devices which direct attention to a reality other than themselves. Professor Kimpel defines religion as dependence upon an ultimate transcendent reality and he points out that the tendency to devise means by which men are referred to this reality is universal. Of this fact he gives a wealth of illustration drawn from the religions of the world and of the ages. He comments upon the weakness of men in so often trusting the symbol rather than the reality to which it refers and shows that one test of a true religious faith is whether it trusts in the reality rather than the symbol. One interesting passage is devoted to expressing and explaining disagreement with Otto. This is a book for the student of philosophy and comparative religion, and he will find it a wide-ranging, informative and useful analysis of what is a significant, universal phenomenon.

Manners and Morals of the 1920's, by Mary P. Thaman. (Bookman Associates, New York, \$3.75.)

Here is a highly interesting and informative study of the reaction of religious journals and magazines in the U.S.A. to the social phenomena of a decade which was characterised by new technical developments, material prosperity, moral decline and intellectual confusion. What Dr. Thaman has done is to collect and arrange the opinions of the American religious press on a wide variety of that decade's features—from bobbed hair to suicides and from smoking by women to the breakdown of home and marriage. Baptist periodicals occupy a prominent place. Sometimes, on reading some of the quotations from editorial thunderings one feels a certain sympathy with the Jewish paper which ironically commented, "With the ultimate abolition of Dancing, the Movies, the Theatre, and Baseball, we shall reach Nirvana. Maybe, however, we shall be permitted, if we do it very gently, to tweedle our thumbs." Nevertheless, by this study Dr. Thaman has made a useful contribution to the social history of her country, showing that in the 1920's manners and morals were in a state of

flux, that religious opinion was alert to what was happening and, in their journals, gave a picture of their day to future generations. One feels the book would have gained in value had the final chapter, "Concluding Comments," been extended to draw out more in the way of general conclusions. All the same this is an enjoyable, instructive and significant piece of work.

GRAHAM W. HUGHES.

William Roby, 1766-1830, by W. Gordon Robinson. (Independent Press, 8s. 6d.)

"And who," enquired a former Patriarch of Constantinople, "is the Archbishop of Canterbury?" A Baptist might with more justification ask, "Who was William Roby?" He was born near Wigan in 1766, became a leading figure in the Nonconformist life of Lancashire, and took a considerable part in its recovery from the decay which afflicted religion in England in the early part of the eighteenth century. He was a minister of versatile gifts, of inexhaustible energy, and was interested in everything that concerned human life. In addition to building a strong church in Manchester, and inspiring the formation of others and of Sunday schools, he was a pioneer in ministerial education in the county, a founder member of the London Missionary Society, the editor of a widely used hymn-book, and the promoter of Association life in Lancashire. It is certainly time that the story of William Roby's achievements was told, and Dr. Robinson, Principal of the Lancashire Independent College, has told it well in this readable book, part of the fruit of scholarly researches which brought him a Ph.D.

JOHN O. BARRETT.

The Servant of Jehovah, by David Baron. (Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 8s. 6d.)

The publishers have issued a new edition of this book first published in 1922. It is a review of some of the ancient and modern Jewish and Christian interpretations of Isaiah 53, followed by an exposition of the text of the chapter. Every book which helps the Christian public to understand something of the meaning and the mystery of the Servant of Second Isaiah is to be welcomed, especially when it is written so reverently as this work. Nevertheless the book now appears as it did in 1922, and so takes no account of the vast work which has been done and published on *The Servant* since then. The publishers have not been well advised in issuing without revision what could have been so useful a book.

G. HENTON DAVIES.