

Book Reviews

The Dead Sea Scrolls and Original Christianity. By O. Preston Robinson. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1958. 123 pp., \$2.00.

The historical connection between the Dead Sea community and original Christianity has been the subject of controversy for more than a decade. In spite of this present book, the problem of the relationship of the early Christian Church to the Qumran order still remains. However, this volume is important in that it represents one of the first attempts by a Mormon writer to inform L.D.S. Church members concerning the Scrolls and the sect which preserved them.

In the first four chapters of his book, Dr. Robinson reviews the historical data related to the actual discovery of the Scrolls in 1947, and he sketches the intriguing story of their recognition as one of the monumental archaeological discoveries of the century. The author describes the major manuscripts. In addition, he discusses briefly their significance and the problems of date. The above material is interestingly and effectively presented. It is written in a scholarly fashion, yet avoids the difficulties of technical terminology and controversial detail. An asset to the book is the excellent photographs of the Dead Sea area, of the caves from which scrolls and fragments were taken, and of jars in which the Scrolls had been preserved.

The chief weakness of this volume stems from the author's intention to establish the Dead Sea Scrolls as "another witness to the antiquity of the gospel." For example, Robinson finds L.D.S. Church organization, doctrine, and practice almost everywhere in the *Manual of Discipline*. The twelve laymen and three priests who governed the sect are, without qualification, referred to as "General Authorities," and from Robinson's point of view, the emphasis on priesthood in the Qumran order justifies his claim that here we have a "regular system of bishops, priests, teachers and deacons." The author draws further parallels between the communal-type meal of the Covenanters and the

Christian sacrament, between the stress placed on the term *knowledge* by the teachers of the sect and the L.D.S. concern for intelligence and wisdom, and between the order of precedence among members of the order and present-day ecclesiastical proprieties in matters of seating at meetings, taking the sacrament, etc. Moreover, Robinson maintains that the Covenanters "had a clear idea of the concept of grace and works" and, he continues, "no misunderstanding about the purpose of baptism." It may be admitted that there are some interesting parallels between the early Christian Church and the Qumran sect, but in most of the cases cited above the evidence is clearly forced. The terms "sacrament," "general authorities," etc., are implicates which seem to be based upon the author's desire to *prove* his theology rather than upon any substantial evidence derived from the manuscripts themselves.

In the opinion of this reviewer, the author's preoccupation with theology detracts from his book. Had he been content to follow through with his report on the Scrolls as a journalist rather than as an apologist for modern theology, his book might have been far more effective and informative.

Lewis M. Rogers

The Mormons. By Thomas F. O'Dea. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957. 289 pp., \$5.00.

This book is a refreshing and provocative variation from most books on Mormonism because it neither attempts to prove the ultimate truth or falsity of the religion nor is it devoted to the sensational aspects of it. It is not a monumental work devoted to a meticulous study of Mormon history, organization, or theology *per se*, but to an analysis of these areas as a means of understanding Mormonism as a social and religious movement. It is a naturalistic, rather than a religious, attempt to explore the conditions and events that gave rise to Mormonism, the factors which have influenced its growth, and the dilemmas with which it is faced at the present time.

The book would seem to have something of interest for al-