

## Brief Notices

*The Dead Sea Scrolls: Questions and Responses for Latter-day Saints*, by Donald W. Parry and Stephen D. Ricks (The Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 2000)

To call the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls the archaeological find of the twentieth century is an understatement. The world's understanding of Judaism and early Christianity has been increased to such a degree that I would not hesitate to call it the greatest contribution to non-LDS biblical studies since the Reformation.

This handy volume by Donald W. Parry and Stephen D. Ricks answers seventy basic questions for Latter-day Saints, whetting the appetite for anyone interested in Dead Sea Scroll research. These answers are divided into eight parts, ranging from a description of the discovery to specific texts and insights.

Twenty photographs and illustrations accompany the text, including a map of the Qumran community, a photo of the Copper Scroll, and the locations of the various caves where the scrolls were discovered. A bibliography of Dead Sea Scroll articles written by LDS authors is appended, as well as lists of English translations and general studies on the scrolls.

The good news for Latter-day Saints is that the eminently qualified authors of this little book offer a succinct alternative to wading through scholarly sources that are far beyond the needs of many general readers. As far as this reviewer is aware, no other up-to-date summary of the Dead Sea Scrolls exists that offers in such an excellent manner the important facts concerning this momentous discovery.

—Gary P. Gillum

*A Call to Russia: Glimpses of Missionary Life*, by Thomas F. Rogers (BYU Studies, 1999)

Rather than using a traditional straight narrative, Tom Rogers, Professor Emeritus of German and Slavic Languages at BYU, effectively tells the story of his term as mission president in St. Petersburg, Russia, through a roughly chronological collection of short reflections and anecdotes. Many passages found in this account are taken from his own journal, with additional stories and observations contributed by his family and by the missionaries themselves. In these short passages, Rogers gives penetrating insights into his own soul, the strengths and failings in Russian society, the attributes of a good missionary, and the qualities that make Church organizations work. He writes with brutal honesty about his own failings, especially in the first section covering the beginning of his mission. It is revealing to see that the early months of a mission are full of many small embarrassments, foolish mistakes, and a general lack of comfort and that incidents such as those portrayed here can be and are experienced as much by the mission president as by the young missionary.

Rogers does not fail to mention the drudgery and disappointments of missionary work, including the guilt he and his missionaries felt because of their inability to help most of the numerous people they found drowning in alcoholism. Such discussion makes the joy over the miracles of the work, which he also details, that much stronger. Most satisfying are the discussions of how Russian districts and branches work. Rogers's loving descriptions of the wisdom and foolishness of his local leaders are masterfully portrayed. And in that portrayal, important lessons can be drawn that are applicable even to readers in large, stable wards in the United States.