

REVIEWS

Oxyrhynchus fragments (*Theol. Studies*, xx (1959), 505 ff.). Garitte (*Le Muséon*, LXXXIII (1960), 151 ff.) has argued that these fragments were translated from the Coptic, not (as has been generally assumed) *vice versa*; which in conjunction with Guillaumont's observation that some of the Semitisms preclude a Greek intermediary (*op. cit.* p. 123, note 20) prompts to speculation. But this must be examined. If Garitte is right, and all the dates are correct, the Coptic from which the fragments were translated must have been among the earliest documents in the language; but some parts of our present text appear to go back to a Greek original. All this but indicates the complexity of the problems raised by the new gospel, and the pace at which things are now moving. Many will be grateful for this book as an introduction not only to Thomas but to a whole field of study, and the publishers are to be congratulated on their decision to include it at once in the Fontana series.

R. MCL. WILSON

MALCOLM L. DIAMOND, *Martin Buber: Jewish Existentialist*. 1960. Pp. ix+240. (Oxford University Press, London. Price: 21s.)

An enthusiastic but somewhat naive account of the thought of the well-known theologian and social thinker, preceded by a brief introductory life and an admirable frontispiece.

LEON ROTH

F. F. BRUCE, *Biblical Exegesis in the Qumran Texts*. 1960. Pp. 88. (Tyndale Press, London and Eerdmans Publishing Co., U.S.A. (1959). Price: 5s.)

This monograph is a slightly revised version of the paper originally published in *Exegetica*. Dr Bruce, Rylands Professor of Biblical Criticism and Exegesis in the University of Manchester, is well known for his studies in the New Testament and the Scrolls, and particularly for his monograph *The Teacher of Righteousness in the Qumran Texts* (Tyndale Press, 1957) and his widely read book *Second Thoughts on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids, 1956). The present work deals with the biblical commentaries, or *pešarim* as they have been called, found in the literature from the Qumran caves.

The *pešer* is the inspired solution to a divine mystery, or *raz*. Both *raz* and *pešer* are transmitted through heavenly inspiration, and only when they are brought together by one possessing in a special way the spirit of understanding can the divine communication be understood. This is the principle which underlies the Qumran biblical exegesis. The biblical prophet received the *raz* from God; the Teacher of Righteousness, leader of the Qumran community, interpreted it. The prophecies were torn from their historical context, atomized, and textual variants selected as best fitted the process of applying them to the Teacher's own age. Only in the "latter days", in which the Qumran community believed itself to be living, had the biblical passages any relevance, and it was to this period that the prophet had directed his words, whose real meaning could only be unlocked by the interpreter to whom had been vouchsafed the *raz*.

The claim to be this interpreter is repeated often in the Hymns of Thanksgiving, although it is uncertain whether the Teacher himself is their author or whether they should be ascribed to other members of the community who believed themselves, through him, recipients of this gift of interpretation.