

report though faith" (Heb. 11:38,39), nevertheless, figuratively, they had been slaughtered by the sword of doctrinal corruption, silenced from speaking God's Word in the Land, and entirely hidden from view, as if without trace.

Obadiah not only hid his fellow brethren, but also cared for them, tending to their natural and pressing needs, and placing them before himself (Phil. 2:3). Like Christ, he was totally responsive to the "feeling of [their] infirmities" (Heb. 4:15) and fed "his flock like a shepherd" (Isa. 40:11), for he "fed them with bread and water" (1 Kgs. 18:4).

These hundred prophets, though preserved by the special providence of God, were nonetheless maintained through much human intervention and effort. Such an undertaking would have required great resourcefulness, remarkable skill and ingenuity. Here we observe the practical teachings of Christ in the undertakings of this faithful servant: "be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" (Mt. 10:16).

Caring for the brethren

What a powerful illustration we have here of the spirit of Christ! For it was the Lord Jesus himself who said that the faithful, those who will receive

the joyous news at the judgement seat, will be those who have actually fed, watered, housed, clothed and visited his brethren down the ages (Mt. 25:34-40).

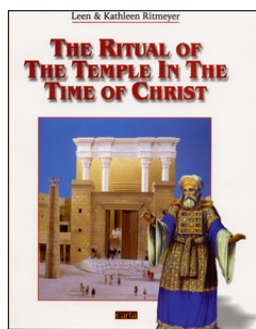
Obadiah had done just that; he had housed, fed and watered his brethren and had performed all this as "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God" (Rom. 12:1). He had executed such a fearful task with "a willing heart" (Ex. 35:5), spontaneously, without any hesitation, knowing that he was not to use "liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another" (Gal. 5:13).

This is the spirit of Christ, that "by love [we] serve one another". What a sobering exhortation, particularly when we consider the level of hospitality we extend to our brethren and sisters compared with that which we have been called upon to provide. We are not only to be "given to hospitality" (Rom. 12:13; 1 Tim. 3:2) but also to be "lover[s] of hospitality" (Tit. 1:8), and to perform such "without grudging" (1 Pet. 4:9). What kind of welcome, or level of generosity and kindness, do we ourselves shower upon our brethren? As so often is the case, are we merely left digesting yet another poignant lesson from the life of one of God's faithful servants?

(To be continued)

The temple worship in the time of Christ

John Nicholls



The Ritual of the Temple in the Time of Christ.

Leen and Kathleen Ritmeyer, Carta, Jerusalem, 2002, 80 large pages.

Available from The Christadelphian.*

Price: £12.50 plus postage.

BROTHER LEEN and Sister Kathleen Ritmeyer have written a companion volume to the book about the journeys of the ark, reviewed last month.¹ This one, about the ritual of the temple in the time of Christ, centres around two models and a nineteenth-century book.

The first model is a scale model of the Temple Mount and all its buildings, and it was formerly located in a farmer's barn in East Anglia.² It has been painstakingly built by Mr Alec Garrard, and includes figures all made to scale and painted. The reviewer and his wife and two of their sons were privileged to be able to see it in 1996. The book is dominated by many colour photographs and close-ups of scenes from the model, taken by Brother Philip Evans. The second model is of the temple itself. (The authors were involved in the archaeological excavations

* 404 Shaftmoor Lane, Birmingham, B28 8SZ; 0121 777 6328; email: orders@thechristadelphian.com.

1. "Following the travels of the ark", Dec. 2004, p. 467.

2. In recent years it has been relocated elsewhere in East Anglia, where I know not. If any reader knows the precise location I will publish the details.—T.B.

in the area to the south of the Temple Mount, started after the Six-Day War of 1967.) The nineteenth-century book is Alfred Edersheim's *The Temple, its Ministry and Services as They Were at the Time of Christ*, first published in 1874.

The book that has resulted from the marriage of these three sources is a lavishly illustrated (in colour) work about the temple in Jesus's time, supported by the best available information. The book is published by the same publisher as published the book about the wanderings of the ark, the Jerusalem-based company Carta, who are well known for high-quality maps and guides of Israel.

The buildings

The book begins with an overview of the Temple Mount and a plan of the temple courts. The reviewer found himself constantly referring to this plan, which is very useful. The Treasury where Jesus saw the widow offer her mite was located in the Court of the Women. This led to the Court of the Israelites, which then led to the Court of the Priests, which was the site of the altar. There is a lovely scene showing the offering of the sacrifices and the burnt offerings. These courts could be accessed by the Eastern Gate, called the Beautiful Gate in Acts 3:2. This is where the lame man was healed by Peter and John.

The entrance to the temple itself was by means of a porch of five oak beams overlaid with gold. The entire house was overlaid with gold, and a description by Josephus, the first-century Jewish historian, is given as follows:

"The exterior of the building wanted nothing that could astound either mind or eye. For being covered on all sides with massive plates of gold, the sun was no sooner up than it radiated so fiery a flash that persons straining to look at it were compelled to avert their eyes, as from the solar rays. To approaching strangers it appeared from a distance like a snow-clad mountain; for all that was not overlaid with gold was of purest white" (p. 22).

No wonder the disciples were amazed when Jesus prophesied the complete destruction of the temple!

The Temple Porch was decorated with a golden vine, which both Josephus and the *Middot* (part of the Jewish Talmud) comment upon. The Ritmeyers' book has a lovely illustration of the vine surrounding the porch and some priests standing in front reciting the priestly blessing of

Numbers 6:24-26. The Holy Place and the Most Holy Place are both described and illustrated, and intriguing details are given of how the latter was maintained without the workmen (priests) being able to see into the whole area.

The duties of the priests

The garments of the high priest and the work of the priests in their courses (and also the courses of the Levites) are discussed in some detail. The particular duties they were to carry out were determined by lot. The altar of burnt offering, the lampstand and the incense altar all required daily attention. On the sabbath, the loaves on the table of shewbread were changed. Singing in the Levitical choir, founded by David, and the blowing of the trumpets were other duties of the Levites.

There were several special days and feast days when the normal rhythm of the services was changed, and the details are found in the latter part of the book. The authors include a useful calendar, which correlates the rather confusing synonyms of the Hebrew months. The first of the feasts was Passover. Some detail is given of the activities of the Passover feast, of Jesus's involvement with it, and of the psalms that would have been sung. There is an interesting digression on how the present-day Jewish observance of the Passover differs from what was done in the time of Christ. The *Seder*³ plate is illustrated and explained, and Christadelphians will find this of interest. The authors link the practices followed at Passover with the Breaking of Bread instituted by our Lord at the Passover shortly before his crucifixion.

Pentecost followed fifty days after Passover, and then the Feast of Tabernacles (*Succoth*) fell in the seventh month. This is when the Israelites dwelt in booths (leafy bowers). In addition to



The Seder plate illustrated in the book

3. The Hebrew word for the Passover meal.

this practice, at Succoth further sacrifices were offered and water was drawn from the pool of Siloam. Jesus used this in his teaching in John 7:37,38 when he said: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water". This section has some excellent illustrations, perhaps the best, in the reviewer's opinion, in the book.

The New Year, called *Rosh ha-Shanah*, was marked by the blowing of *shofars* (ram's horns). Then came the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*). These special days are the next to be dealt with in the book. The authors describe the latter quite vividly. The Feast of Hanukkah, mentioned in the Gospel of John as the Feast of the Dedication (10:22,23), is celebrated in December, and the Lord was in the temple at the time. It is a feast set up to remember a miracle at the time of the Maccabean uprising against the Greeks. There is a short piece on the Feast of Purim, the establishment of which we read about in the lovely book of Esther.

Purifications and vows

Finally, a group of purifications and vows are considered, all of which involved ceremonies at the temple, and which impinged on the teaching of the Lord Jesus. The purification from leprosy elicited the following comment from the authors:

"Jesus must have seen many lepers in his lifetime. The first part of the ceremony, with the bird being set free in the open field, could

be performed anywhere. The part which took place after the interval of seven days must have been a regular occurrence in the Temple. The poignant picture of the leper longingly putting his hand into the Temple Court from which he was still barred must have stayed in the mind of Christ, with the knowledge that the bird that was killed and the bird that was set free, both pointed toward himself" (p. 74).

The book has a memorable illustration of a woman suspected of adultery undergoing purification at the Nicanor Gate, reminding us of the woman who was bought before the Lord. The Nazarite vow was observed in the time of the Apostle Paul (Acts 21:23-26), and, as we know from that incident, involved sacrifice offered in the temple.

This is a book worth having for the colour photos and the succinct and informed comments of the authors. All can profit from it. Young and old will find treasures in it, for in our minds we are enabled to stand in the very temple walked in and known so well by our Saviour.

In the mercy of our God we shall see a greater temple even than this in the Kingdom, for does not our God say: "The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of My sanctuary; and I will make the place of My feet glorious" (Isa. 60: 13)? This book is warmly commended to the Brotherhood and all who wish to know more of God's purpose through His Son.

Moses' last words to Israel

8. Blessings for Gad and Dan

David Green

GAD

Deuteronomy 33

- v. 20. Blessed is he who enlarges Gad;
He dwells as a lion,
And tears the arm and the crown of his head.
- v. 21. He provided the first part for himself,
Because a lawgiver's portion was reserved there.
He came with the heads of the people;
He administered the justice of the LORD,
And His judgments with Israel.*

He who enlarges Gad

ACCORDING to Strong, the Hebrew verb translated "enlarge" here means 'to broaden'. Moses uses it of borders (Ex. 34:24; Deut. 12:20) and territory (19:8). It is also used by David of relief when in distress (Ps. 4:1, AV). In the absolute sense, God is the One Who "enlarges" the territory of Gad. We think of David's prophetic words of praise: "Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, Who only does wondrous things!" (72:18).

* Quotations from the NKJV unless stated otherwise.