

handiwork of God, and not Baal. And they were to recognise this solemn fact.

Four rows of stones

It is significant that the four barrels were thrice emptied. Does this not remind us of a set of four rows in three columns, the order of the stones in the high priest's breastplate, upon which were "the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names" (Ex. 28:21)? This priestly article was "foursquare" (v. 16) and would have vividly reminded the people of the camp of Israel and its arrangement (Num. 2).

The high priest wore the breastplate as he entered into the holy place, and was commanded that this was "for a memorial before the LORD continually" (Ex. 28:29). The breastplate hung down upon the high priest's heart, and so he

stood as a representative of the twelve tribes of Israel. Significantly, this ornament was also referred to as "the breastplate of judgment" (vv. 15,29,30) since it was also used as the means for conveying God's decisions on matters pertaining to their spiritual walk.

Hence during this day on Carmel the twelve tribes of Israel were much in view as the twelve barrels of water came into contact with the burnt offering. These twelve barrels were "for a memorial", to remember the mediatorial role of the high priest, his Divine counsel and atoning work for the children of Israel. They were also to identify this redeeming work with that of the genuine efforts of Elijah. But, if they were not prepared to commit themselves in total dedication to God, then He would wreak sore judgement upon them. The decision on this day of reckoning was theirs.

(To be continued)

Two short reviews

John Nicholls

TWO NEW PAMPHLETS have been published recently by brethren on quite different subjects, and this review is a brief look at them both.

The role of sisters*

THIS pamphlet sadly comes without our recommendation. Brother Davison considers the question of elders in the ecclesia and concludes that there is no indication in Scripture of the exclusion of women. This, however, is not the conclusion of Brother Michael Lewis in his book *Man and Woman* (pp. 86-89),¹ who says there are no passages which suggest that sisters can be elders.

Brother Davison disputes that 1 Timothy 2:8-15 and 1 Corinthians 14:34,35 mean that women should keep silent in the ecclesia, but rather says that it is permissible for women to pray, read the Scriptures in public when there are brethren also present and serve the emblems. He considers that we are bound by Victorian traditions in refusing to allow sisters to do these things. To the reviewer and to Brother Lewis (pp. 63-78), the fact that Paul's argument is based on the events in Eden shows that the Christadelphian practice of not allowing women to do these things is based on God's enduring principle for all ages, not the social whims of the Victorians.

Brother Davison's conclusion about women wearing a head-covering in meetings, namely that "pressure should not be applied on those sisters who, in all conscience, can worship without wearing a hat", is again contrary to fundamental teaching based on the events in Eden. There is nothing ephemeral about Paul's reasoning in 1 Corinthians 11:1-16. Again, Brother Lewis provides an excellent exposition in the chapter "The head covering" in *Man and Woman*.

Brother Davison says: "We, in our beloved Christadelphia, have a huge source of untapped talent, namely our sisters in Christ". However, it is simply not true that sisters' talents are untapped; their talents are used for the benefit of the Brotherhood as a whole in countless unseen and unheard acts of service. Brother Lewis gives a list of the kinds of things that are done (p. 91). By submitting to the commandments of Christ given through

* *The Role of Women in the Church*, Bill Davison, 26 Winster Avenue, Ravenshead, Nottingham, NG15 9DD. 12 pages. Cost £2. Proceeds to assist poor immigrant Russian-Jewish families in Israel.

1. Based on articles originally published in *The Testimony*. See inside front cover for details.

his apostles, now, in our short mortal probation, women show their faith, by keeping silent in the ecclesia and covering their heads. They prepare for service under Christ in the Kingdom, when the sexual distinctions will cease.

What will happen to our children when Jesus returns?#

INSTEAD of trying to undermine our foundations, Brother Davison could perhaps direct our minds to the things of the Kingdom which Jesus said we should seek. This is what Brother Mike Page has done in the second pamphlet under review. It is mainly directed at our young people, but all who wonder just what will happen when Jesus returns and how our families will be cared for will find it an interesting read.

In his preface Brother Page writes: "As a CYC leader and Sunday School teacher I have constantly been asked two questions, 'What will happen to us kids if Jesus returns before we're old enough to be baptised?' and 'If the kingdom is all about sitting under a vine or fig tree all day, it sounds pretty boring; why should I want to be there?' This story tries to suggest a possible answer to both questions".

He goes on to say that the story put over in *Camp Sinai* is one possible way in which events

could work out. Not everyone might agree with Brother Page, but he is to be thanked for telling a story about a family—Mum, Dad, James, Matthew and little sister Hannah—and what happens when the angel comes to tell them that Jesus has come, how they are taken to Sinai and the camp that is established there by the angels to care for families while their parents go before the judgement seat of Christ. It is written in fictional style with plenty of action and narrative, and young and old alike will find it readable. James, who is the narrator in the story, describes life in the camp and how the news about their parents came after they had been before Christ. James makes a big mistake, but how he is rescued from it will be left for readers to discover.

At the end of the story there is a list of supporting Scriptural quotations for each of the eleven chapters. This pamphlet is warmly recommended to the children and young people amongst us, and of course to the Brotherhood worldwide who love the appearing of our Saviour upon the earth.

Camp Sinai, Mike Page, 54 pages. 5 Hillview Lane, Twyning, Tewkesbury, GL20 6JW. Email michael.page@onetel.net. Cost £2 inclusive of postage. Any surplus to the Christadelphian Save the Children Fund.

Out of the earth

News from the world of archaeology

Tony Benson

"Bethabara beyond Jordan": the place where John baptized

IN AUGUST 2004 there was quite a stir at the announcement of the discovery of a cave to the west of Jerusalem where, it was alleged, John the Baptist carried out his ministry. As I pointed out at the time (Sept. 2004, p. 373), there seemed to be nothing about this find to link it with what Scripture records of John's ministry, which is associated with the Jordan valley. A site with much better claims to authenticity is that dealt with in a recent article in *Biblical Archaeology Review*. This site, situated on the east side of the River Jordan, in the modern country of Jordan,

seems to be the place referred to in John 1:28 as "Bethabara *beyond* Jordan, where John was baptizing", and also in John 10:40: "[Jesus] went away again *beyond* Jordan into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode". The word 'beyond' indicates the east side of Jordan, from the vantage point of Judea.

The name Bethabara means 'Place of the Crossing', referring to the crossing of the Jordan by Israel as recorded in Joshua 3 and 4. Matthew 3, Mark 1 and Luke 3 also deal with the ministry of John, and refer to him baptizing in Jordan but without naming the place. Later on John baptized at a place called "Aenon near to Salim" (Jno. 3:23), situated further north in the Jordan valley; but Bethabara, as its name indicates, would have been