

Contemporary Mystic Christianity

Bible Self-Study Supplement

Tests of Courage

Nehemiah 6:10-13

Afterward I came unto the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah the son of Mehetabeel, who was shut up; and he said, Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple: and let us shut the doors of the temple: for they will come to slay thee.

And I said, Should such a man as I left and who is there, that, being as I am, would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in.

And, lo, I perceived that God had not sent him; but that he pronounced this prophecy against me: for Tobiah and Sandballat had hired him.

Therefore was he hired, that I should be afraid, and do so, and sin, and that they might have matter for an evil report, and they might reproach me.

Discrimination is, perhaps, the most important quality that a neophyte must cultivate. Without this faculty he can never hope to pass the many subtle tests besetting the path of high attainment. Due to his power of discrimination, Nehemiah was able to meet and overcome the enmity of his opponents.

Sanballat and his followers spread reports that Nehemiah was rebuilding the Temple and restoring the city in order to have himself crowned king. They threatened to report this to the king of Persia, hoping thus to so intimidate the prophet that he would bring his building activity to an end. But they did not reckon with his unfailing spiritual guidance. For Nehemiah lived in, intimate touch with those on the inner planes, and such an one is not easily intimidated. He remained calm and unmoved by threats. "Should such a man as I flee?" he demanded.

The wall was finished in the twentieth and fifth day of the month Abul, in fifty and two days. This refers to the cypher seven ($2+0+5=7$) which means fulfillment and attainment.

The whole congregation of the Israelites was forty and two thousand, three hundred and threescore. Nehemiah kept a register of all who had come up from Babylon at the first call for workers in restoring Jerusalem. When interpreted kabbalistically, the number of the congregation gives us the number six ($4+2+3+6+0=15=6$), which is the number of Solomon and of resurrection into a new life. They represent pioneers of a New Age, those ready to answer the call for service anywhere at any time. They know a state of detachment from personality, place and things which enables them to say, "The world is my home and to do good is my religion." About ninety percent of all

who had gone into captivity in Babylon remained there, preferring a life of worldly comfort to facing the hardships of a new-old life in barren Palestine.

Dedication of the Walls

Nehemiah devotes much of chapter twelve to describing the ceremonies for dedicating the walls; his discipline begins with verse twenty-seven: "And at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought the Levites out of all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem, to keep the dedication with gladness, both with thanksgivings, and with singing, with cymbals, psalteries, and with harps." Esoterically, the walls represent an aura of protection built by man, while the gates are centers of force in the aura. Through development of these centers one learns to contact spiritual planes. The gates also represent Degrees of Initiation in various Mystery Schools frequently spoken of throughout these pages.

The paths traversed by the occultist and the mystic are closely depicted in Nehemiah's account of the dedicatory ceremonies

Nehemiah 12:37-40

And at the fountain gate, which was over against them, they went up by the stairs of the city of David, at the going up of the wall, above the house of David, even

unto the water gate eastward.

And the other company of them ... and I after them, and half of the people upon the wall, from beyond the tower of the furnaces even unto the broad wall;

And from above the gate of Ephraim, and above the old gate, and above the first gate, and the tower of Hananeel, and the tower of Meah, even unto the sheep gate; and they stood still in the prison gate.

So stood the two companies of them ...

The stairs of the city of David refer to the way of the heart that leads to the Illumination of the Water Gate, eastward. Nehemiah names himself among the other company, the occultists who follow the path of knowledge and works from beyond the tower of furnaces. The mystic travels toward the Water Gate while the occultist travels toward the Tower of Fire. The two companies, the two lines of spiritual development, stand still in the Prison Gate. The body is ever the prison house of the spirit until the grand achievement related in Revelation is realized by an incarnating ego. There, as in the ceremonies of dedicating the walls, the two paths meet and blend their forces in the Great Liberation.

Both companies pass around the newly built walls and by the recently repaired gates, each with its great lock and key (each Degree of Initiation has a golden key and an iron bar.

One-half of the divided company went out by the pool of Gihon in the west, and then toward the north where they could overlook the tents of the Samaritans. This is the occult path. The other half traversed the south side of the Valley of Hinnom and toward the front of the Temple. This is the mystic path.

After completing their journey, the two companies met on the ramparts of the Temple opposite the Mount of Olives (the high and sacred area of Initiation). Here all were united: governor, priests, princes and people. "Also that day they offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced: for God had made them rejoice with great joy ... so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard afar off. (Nehemiah 12:43)

"And all Israel in the days of Zerubbabel, and in the days of Nehemiah, gave the portions of the singers and the porters, every day his portion: and they sanctified holy things unto the Levites; and the Levites sanctified them unto the children of Aaron." (Nehemiah 12:47)

The porters of the Temple Service are analogous to the Tylers of the, Masonic Lodge.

It will by now have become very plain to the reader how, in laying out the Holy City, and in rebuilding the walls and the Temple, every effort was made, as in the original Temple, to reveal the correspondences between the starry

hosts and man. We cannot emphasize too strongly that correlations are found in the Bible, however strange this may seem to the orthodox who have failed to consider the astrological beliefs of the Hebrews and are therefore unable to recognize their influence upon the Bible record. We must repeat that the reason the esotericist is able to derive such hidden meanings from the Old Testament documents is that they were written into them by Seers and Initiates with clear intent and forethought, and therefore anyone having the key can unlock the treasure chest and avail himself of the divine treasures.

Thus, in the restoration of the Second Temple, that of Zerubbabel, the ideal of King Solomon was consummated; not, however, in a manner wholly consonant with the original. There were significant changes, including subordination of the local priesthoods, the Levites, to the Aaronite priesthood at Jerusalem. This was Ezekiel's plan, though it was first inaugurated by King Josiah at the time Deuteronomy was discovered. Jerusalem became the religious and political capital of the land.

While Deuteronomy gave supreme political control to the king, Ezekiel reduced the king to a figurehead, giving all real power into the hands of the priesthood. Zechariah believed that priest and king should be equal in the House of the Lord — he compares them to two olive trees — but

the ecclesiastical party won out. The real ruler of the nation was the high priest, and Palestine became a church-state. Death of the high priest, not of the king, marked the conclusion of a national era. The former was anointed with oil, was clad in the white garments of royalty, and wore the royal insignia. He received all dues formerly belonging to the king. The Sanhedrin of New Testament times had its origin in this ecclesiastical government.

Though following Ezekiel's plan, Ezra and Nehemiah also brought about changes, some in the nature of religious reforms and others of political import — as in the question of relative powers delegated to king and priest. One religious reform was restoring strict observance of the Sabbath. Tyrian and Hebrew traders were accustomed to engage in merchandising on the Sabbath as on any other day, and to this Nehemiah objected. Also, offerings to the Temple had been so neglected the Levites were forced to leave Jerusalem and return to their local shrines. As a result of Nehemiah's reforms they were once more recalled to service in the Jerusalem Temple: "They sought the Levites out of all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem, to keep the dedication with gladness."

Yet these innovations are important only in the light of the Ideal which animated the new state: preparation for the Messiah who should be Priest-King after the Order of

Melchizedek to all the world. That Ezra's work was misunderstood and allowed to degenerate into narrow nationalism is one of the tragedies of history. Despite this partial failure, however, the Great Work was accomplished, for the Messiah did come.

— ***Corinne Heline***