

MACOMB, ILL., 1869.

Walking About Zion.

NINTH VISIT.

Brother Bodenhamer:—I have been very solemnly impressed with the things I saw and learned while at the city of the great King the eighth time, and have, therefore, returned to make further discoveries, and to inquire into those things which are written of this remarkable place.

The reader will remember how shamefully and unaccountably the inhabitants of the original city and commonwealth forsook their King and his laws; how they provoked Him to anger by their inventions; how they mixed and married with the enemies of the King, and learned their evil ways; how He had warned them from time to time, through his servants, of their approaching doom if they repented not, saying: "Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place;" "obey my voice and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people." (Jer. 7 : 3, 23.) "But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward and not forward." (verse 24.) And when it is considered that their King had taken them, when but a little nation, from a state of bondage, and had set them on high above all the nations of the earth, and given them such wholesome and righteous laws, it is not strange that, after they had so provoked Him he would cause them to suffer to the uttermost. I was struck with the solemn appeals made to them by their King, reminding them of their blindness and rebellion, and of their impending doom and righteous judgment. Hear his language to the rebellious city and its inhabitants: "Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways!" "Oh that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea." (Psl. 81 : 13; Isa. 48 : 18.) "Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee; lest I make thee desolate, a land not inhabited." (Jer. 6 : 8.) "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes." "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stoned them which are sent

unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." (Luke : 19 : 42; Math. 23 : 37, 38.)

But it should be observed that, while the King of this city and nation, poured out his unmixed wrath and indignation upon this rebellious and ungrateful people, yet there were a few of his subjects who remained true to their King, and faithful to his laws—a *remnant*—who, at different times were exempted from the calamities which fell upon the nation at large. Indeed, I learned that there never was a time, even during the greatest rebellions and insurrections, when there were not a few who stood up for their King. These faithful subjects were always known to the King, and they were often delivered from their enemies, and from the common destruction falling upon the wicked, in the most signal and remarkable manner. See Gen. 7 : 1; and 19 : 15; 1 Kings 17 : 3, 4; and 19 : 18; Dan. 3 : 27; and 6 : 22; Math. 24 : 22; Rom. 9 : 27; Rev. 18 : 4.

The above citations prove conclusively that the King has, in all ages, most wonderfully and mercifully delivered his true and faithful servants who trust in him, and the reader will do well to turn to and read these wonderful records at his leisure. Some of the watchmen on the walls informed me that the former subjects of the King, did not, as a general thing, openly oppose the laws and authority of their Law-giver at the first; but began by little and little to disregard what they termed *non-essentials*, and to make little innovations, and introduce one tradition after another till the whole law was well nigh set aside, and the authority of their King ignored. This was generally done by leading and designing men who caused the multitude to go astray, and thus destroyed the way of their paths and brought them to ruin. But there was a particular violation of their law, which, I was told, was more dangerous to their peace, and more provoking to their King than any thing else; and that was mixing and contracting marriages with other nations, and thus were they ensnared and led to commit many of their abominations, and to forsake their own King. This had been positively forbidden by the King, and the most

sore punishment threatened for its violation; and yet, in defiance of this most solemn prohibition, this rebellious people often formed affinities with the enemies of their King, and paid homage to other princes. After learning all this and beholding the signs of the former glory of this once happy people, and seeing the remains of the ancient city now in rains, I could but adopt the language of another beholder and say: "The Lord hath accomplished his fury; he hath poured out his fierce anger, and hath kindled a fire in Zion, and it hath devoured the foundations thereof." (Sam. 4 : 11.) "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments." (Rev. 16 : 7.)

Profiting by these examples, and being established on better premises, with their city and its charter enlarged, the inhabitants of Zion for a while enjoyed many blessed privileges, and it prospered greatly; and although, as I stated in a former visit, they were surrounded by enemies, yet, as long as the watchmen on the walls, the porters at the gates, and the citizens were vigilant and faithful, they were safe and happy. While in this happy condition they loved their King supremely and one another fervently, and were ready to do all He had commanded them with pleasure. They often consulted His laws, inquired after his will, and spake often one to another of the glory of their King, and of the greatness of his kingdom. The watchmen, too, were all of one mind and one soul, laboring together for the good of the inhabitants, and for the glory of their King. These watchmen often held meetings in the different wards of the city, at which the citizens were wont to gather, at which times the watchmen would instruct, encourage and exhort them to faithfulness in their duties to one another and to their King. At the times of these assemblies, every citizen was ready to drop his daily avocation, and go to the place of meeting at an early hour, to join in celebrating the name of the King, and inquiring after the order and welfare of the city. This he did both from duty and interest. The law of the King says, "For-sake not the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is." "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." I was deeply impressed in beholding the love, peace and order at these meetings. But one would speak at a time, and the rest would

hear; and although several watchmen were present at the same meeting, yet each one seemed to modestly prefer another. No envy, prejudice or malice appeared to have taken root in any of their hearts; but all endeavored to "keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." I heard them frequently sing:

"We have our mutual woes,
Our mutual burdens bear;
And often for each other flows,
The sympathetic tear."

At these meetings many would come and join themselves to the assembly, and take the oath of allegiance to the King of Zion. On such occasions the watchmen were particularly vigilant, and, indeed, all present were on their guard, and required the applicant to produce a certificate of character; the party, if true to the King, always having this in his bosom, in the King's hand writing. (See Heb. 8 : 10.) But for fear of this being counterfeited the party before the council was sometimes required to pronounce, distinctly the watchword "*Shibboleth*." (Judges 12 : 6.) This being done he was bid a hearty welcome to their company, and was ready to obey the laws of the King. Thus the city prospered, and thus they rejoiced while walking in the fear of their King, but I regret to inform the reader that, in my next a cloud will arise upon Zion, and distress will be seen in the city. We postpone this gloomy picture till another time. Till then pray for

A VISITOR.

SPALDING COUNTY, GA., }
October 6th, 1861. }

Dear Aunt:—I feel too unworthy to write any thing, but by your request I will try to give some of my trials and blessings. For of all poor mortals, I think I have the greatest reason to praise God for his wonderful mercy which he has shown unto me.

When I was very young, mother gave me warnings I shall never forget. I often thought of religion, but in this way: "I am too young now; religion is too troublesome; I will attend to it when I get older." I went on in this way until I was fifteen years old. I then had some serious thoughts concerning my soul's welfare; so I said to myself that I would wait till I got married, and then I will have a better chance—being then engaged. But after I was married I found no time to fulfill my promise. Thus I made and broke promises for six months. One day