

The King's Highway.

And an Highway shall be made a way, and it shall be called The Way of Holiness

The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein

VOL. XXII. (New Series)

WOODSTOCK, N. B., APRIL 30, 1911

(Semi-Monthly) No. 8

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES.

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses.—Heb. 12:1.

By L. Milton Williams.

The above words are well known to bible readers and especially to those who attend holiness camp-meetings and conventions. However, the holy Spirit has a peculiarity of imparting different shades of truth to individual minds from the same scriptures, so we may find some new thoughts in our study of these words. If the reader will open his bible at the beginning of the tenth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, he will learn, that the Apostle draws a comparison between the Old Testament order of things, and the new. He mentions the old tabernacle, and of how the priests would offer sacrifices for the people, from year to year, showing the imperfection of that kind of worship. It could not make the "comers thereunto perfect," as it had to be repeated year after year. In the eleventh verse, he says, "and every priest standeth daily ministering and offering the same sacrifices which can never take away sin, but this man (Christ) after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever sat down on the right hand of God." Again, beginning with the eighteenth verse he says, "Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin," showing that Jesus offered Himself "once and for all" to take away sin, and then the apostle breaks out into an exhortation and says, "Therefore Brethren having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say His flesh, and having a high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith" and the exhortation continues on to the thirty-eighth verse, where he swings over on to faith. Beginning with the first verse of the eleventh chapter he tells us what faith is, and then follows up by telling us what mighty things were accomplished by persons, that had faith. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews is strictly in the Old Testament period, but the Apostle swings back to his exhortation again and to the present order of things with the first verse of the twelfth chapter. When we remember that, what is written in the eleventh chapter, was accomplished under the old dispensation, under the law, and then remember the first verse of the tenth chapter, that says, it was but a "shadow of the good things to come," under the reign of grace, or under the New Testament order of things, it is time we were looking about us to see what was the matter. We expect a better order of things under grace than under the Law, but if we take the eleventh chapter of Hebrews as a standard of the lives and spiritual power of those who make a profession of religion and start to find those whose lives and spiritual power will measure up to those in that chapter, we will look a long time to find very many of them. We have not yet heard of many "Kingdoms subdued" nor the "mouths of lions stopped"; nor many "armies turned to flight" nor the "dead raised to life again." On entering into the service of the average church, either morn or night, instead of a resurrection of life, one has the impression, that he is in a

grave-yard. We have heard the tongue movement commented on much of late, both verbally and in print but one has only to listen to the average choir of today and the unknown tongue can be heard. Now and then, there is a two weeks protracted effort with announcements duly made, in the secular press, that the service will be void of undue excitement or excessive demonstration that would disturb anyone, and the effort takes place, and the devil goes off to sleep, or leaves the field knowing that no one will be aroused or be resurrected. The dead continue to be dead, and when the effort is over, a few join the ranks of the sleepers and are placed in the cemetery in fancied security. Even on many popular Holiness (?) camp-grounds, where once a rugged gospel was preached, and the plow was put in deep, with Gabriel on the beam, the thing has cooled off until the old-time power is a thing of the past. Holiness (?) has become popular and the preacher who dares to put in the knife and cut open the cancer is not wanted. The plain straight gospel that ferrets out and exposes the whiskey-voting, lodge-joining worldly bedecked professor, is not wanted there, any more than that which exposes the card-playing, tobacco-using, theater-going church-member in a dead cold church. A dead, dry, useless, powerless profession is made of a "second blessing" by a worldly-minded and worldly-adorned crowd, and the preacher who exposes the soul-damning farce, is not wanted. Such a preacher would arouse the lions and awake the dead and stir hell, but not very much of it is going on. The daily bill-of-fare is about as follows: The theory of a "second work" of grace, is taught in the morning, the theory that it is received subsequent to regeneration is proclaimed in the afternoon, and the theory of a "second blessing" is proved to be taught in the bible at night, and many who have never been regenerated, or, if they have been, have backslidden, are invited to the altar to seek the second blessing, and told to only believe and the work is done. But the dead are not brought back to life again, and not many are ready to join the sheepskin and goatskin crowd. We would not have the reader understand that we think the preaching of the theory of a second work of grace was not needed. It would be difficult to preach a full salvation, a freedom from sin whether by act or inheritance without proclaiming the theory of a second work of grace wrought instantaneously in the heart by the Holy Spirit, but the preaching of the theory alone seldom brings many men and women to their knees, begging and pleading for God to have mercy on them. The preaching of the theory of a second blessing seldom digs up the carnal church member, backslidden professors or the great multitude of Worldly members who were never regenerated. Such people will sit comfortable during a whole ten days camp under that sort of preaching, and will fawn and flatter the preacher, and tell him how much they enjoyed the sermon and how greatly they were benefited, and return to their homes the same careless worldly professor they were when the camp opened. The camp may close on Sunday night, and before the following week is past, they will have entered one or more secret lodge rooms mingling in a common brotherhood with God-haters and Christ-rejecters. Their persons are adorned* with that

which the bible forbids and, in numerous ways, their lives prove that they are as void of the graces and fruits of full salvation as though Jesus had never suffered and died. Those willing to forsake all and place themselves along side that lone suffering figure on the cross, are but few. No wonder Jesus said, "straight is the gate and narrow the way which leadeth unto life and few there be that find it. Matt 7-13." How straight the way, may be seen in an examination of our text. A CLOUD OF WITNESSES. Countless numbers have read of, and looked back on those spoken of in that 11th chapter, and our text says, "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses let us lay aside every weight," every thing that would hinder us making the greatest speed possible and "run with patience the race that is set before us." Paul, like Jesus, was always drawing his illustrations from life. Here he gets an illustration from the Olympic games. The Greeks were fond of sport as well as war. Those pastimes known as the Olympic games came every four years, and took on a national character. We have read that the participants in those races were taken from the cleanest people in the land. No one who had been a criminal, or in whose family there had been a criminal could take part in the race. They were forced to undergo long hard training and during that time wore weights on their persons. They must be able to make certain speed with the weights on, before they were eligible for the race. During their long tedious training they would become accustomed to the weights which were not removed until the hour to go in the race. There was much honor in winning one of those races which took place in the Stadium, which would accommodate one hundred thousand persons, and it was so situated that many thousands more could gather on the adjacent hillsides and look down upon the race track. The winner was crowned with a laurel wreath and led about the stadium and introduced to the Emperor and to the nobility that would be there. He would be presented to that vast assembly, as a hero, and if any of the members of his family were present, he would be introduced to them. If he lived in a distant city, on his home-coming a new entry through the walls would be made and he would be feted and honored like the home-coming of a conqueror. Imagine that great crowd of people with strain ing eye, following the runners and with abated breath, or shouts of victory watch them as they strained every nerve to win. The weights that they had worn so long, now off, they would go with the fleetness of the wind. Now let us turn again to the text; "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about," surrounded with such a great cloud of witnesses. Brother, Sister, do you know that the very hour you made known your desire to be a Christian, that very hour THREE WORLDS turned their microscopic gaze upon you and that they have been watching you ever since? I do not know what method you pursued, whether you rose for prayer, came forward to the altar or expressed a desire to join the church No matter, but at that hour you brought the gaze of three worlds upon you, and they have been watching you ever since to see what sort of a race you would run.

THE FIRST WORLD that we would

call your attention to, are those who have made their abode in that "bright realm beyond." Think of Abraham and Isaac, Moses and Elijah, the old patriarchs and the prophets of the old testament, down to John the Baptist, and on down through the new testament, with all the redeemed from those days until now, looking down upon you to see what sort of a race you would run. Think of that aged white-haired father or that sainted Mother, gone on before, looking down on you, watching your life as you live it day by day, to see what kind of speed you were making in the christian race, watching how you live.

Sometime ago a very fashionable dressed young woman came up to the platform where we had been speaking and said, "Mr. Williams I do not like the idea of my mother looking down upon my life." "Then live so that you are not ashamed to have her see your life," we replied. But, said she, "you have no scripture to warrant you making such a statement." "You certainly do not study your bible very closely," we replied, "or you would know better. If you will turn to Luke the sixteenth chapter, beginning at the nineteenth verse you will read of a certain man, whom Jesus said, died and went to hell. Some have said that this was only a parable, but Jesus said it, took place. That there was a certain rich man that died and went to hell. A beggar who had laid at his gate, also died but was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man was tormented in the flame and called to Abraham to send the beggar Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool his tongue. The twenty-fifth verse says that Abraham said, "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime received thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things." Abraham seemed to know all about both of them and exactly how they had lived, while on earth. If your Mother has gone where Abraham is, she knows as much about you as Abraham does and she sees and knows exactly how you are living." We learned that her Mother had lived "a saintly life but the young woman was living in a whirl of high-toned godless society, so we did not wonder that she did not relish the idea of her Mother looking down upon her. Reader, how about your life and what sort of a race are you running? Are you happy in the thought that there are a cloud of witnesses from above, including your loved ones who died happy in Jesus looking down upon you? Watching your progress and your life as you lived it. What sort of a race are you making?

But there is ANOTHER WORLD watching your progress, and that is the world beneath. Stop and think again of the countless numbers that have died and gone to hell, that world of night and gloom; from murderous Cain down to that Christless funeral that went past your door, but a few days ago. Statistics tell us that thirty-two million people die every year. Think of the uncounted multitudes of blaspheming God-defying Christ-rejecting masses that have lived without God, died without God and Godless have gone to spend their eternity in that black darkness of eternal damnation; all of them now knowing your life and how you are living it. What a "cloud of witnesses" they are. You ask me for my bible proof and I cite you to the same scriptures of that rich

man in hell. When he found his first petition could not be granted, he had another; have you read it? Then he said "I pray thee therefore father that thou wouldest send him to my father's house; for I have five brethren that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment." He KNEW how many were living and that they were headed for the same place, and the bare thought of every lost soul in hell knowing how you are living ought to so burn itself into your brain, that you could neither eat, drink nor sleep until you found perfect freedom from every thing that had any tendency to drag your soul hellward, and set you running with the fleetness of time, heavenward. Oh what a "cloud of witnesses" are watching you and the race you are running.

A THIRD WORLD that has been watching you, is composed of those surrounding you; who knew of your profession of religion, your neighbors, acquaintances and in fact everybody who heard that you professed religion or now profess it, form and make up a large company. They have watched your actions and have taken note of how you have gone in and out before them and they have been watching you closely to see whether it made any change in your life; to see how you have run. They will form an opinion of Jesus Christ and his power to save, by the way you live. The only bible the sinners in your locality have, are the folks in your locality, that profess to be Christians. The sinner may read the bible but generally it is a cold useless uninteresting book to him. He is void of the Holy Spirit and does not understand it, and seldom has any relish for it. You make a profession of religion and while he does not understand the bible, he does understand much in your life. He knows of the things in your life that are so contrary to his conception of right, and he will form an opinion of Jesus and the salvation he shed his blood to bring to lost humanity, by the lives and associations with those who make a profession of that salvation. Can you say with the apostle Paul; "be ye followers of me even as I am also of Christ." (1 Cor. 11:1.) "Wherefore I beseech you to be ye followers of me." (1 Cor. 4:16.) How are you running? But we will discard all three of those great companies, leaving them out or forgetting that they exist, for if those above could not look down, and those beneath could not know and those of your neighborhood know nothing of your profession of salvation, yet there are a "Cloud of witnesses" inside your home circle. You will not deny, neither will you argue with me that they do not know of your profession, nor know how you live. They see your actions, listen to your words, whether they be good, bad or indifferent, and they too, will form an opinion of the Savior, by the life you set before them. If your salvation will not bear the scrutiny of the home circle it is a snare and a delusion; a delusion to you and a snare to those about you. Many a boy or girl has been all but damned inside the family circle. These words are not the product of some vivid imagination, but cold hard facts coming from personal observation through the experience of years. Many a husband has been turned against God by the life of a wife, who made great profession in public and failed to live it in her home, and exactly the same thing

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