

The King's Highway

An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness

And an Highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The Way of Holiness—Isa. 35-8

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THE MAN WHO LOST HIS BIG TOE

By Rev. Jack Ford

"And they found Adoni-bezek in Bezek; and they fought against him, and they slew the Canaanites and the Perizzites. But Adoni-Bezek fled; and they pursued after him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes." Judges i. 5 & 6.

Those of us who believe in the full inspiration of the Bible acquire the habit of looking for the lessons behind every incident recorded therein. There is nothing superfluous in the Word of God; nothing has strayed into its pages by chance. It was edited by the Lord Himself, and its writers wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. In the incident quoted above there is a lesson, and a lesson of first importance to every child of God.

The story briefly is this: The Israelites were enlarging their borders in the land of Canaan, and this involved the extermination or subjection of the Canaanites. Tribes of Judah and Simeon go up to fight against the Canaanites and the Perizzites. A desperate conflict takes place at Bezek, and the enemy, led by King Adoni-bezek, are defeated by the Israelites with a great slaughter. Adoni-bezek flees for his life, but is overtaken and captured.

His captors cut off his thumbs and his big toes, and bring him to Jerusalem where he dies.

I first read this story when I was a boy in my early teens. It amused and interested me, but I couldn't see the point of cutting off old Adoni-bezek's thumbs and toes. Of course, he admitted that he himself had done the same to seventy other kings, and so I had no doubt that he deserved it, but it seemed to me rather an unnecessarily cruel way of treating prisoners of war. Why slice off a fellow's thumbs and toes? Why not chop off his head and make a good job of it?

Now I understand.

Have you ever had hold of a sword, or pretended to fence with a walking stick? If you have, you will have noticed that all four fingers grasp the hilt on the same side; there is only the thumb to give support to the other side. Lose your thumb and as a swordsman you are useless. Your opponent can easily knock your sword out of your hand. Strike a blow, and your sword falls with a clatter to the ground.

Your Power to Strike Has Gone

You see now why they cut off Adoni-bezek's thumbs. They made up their minds while they had him in their power that never again would he wield an effective sword against their armies.

They had just as good a reason for cutting off his big toes. Our big toes are very useful members. I know they are apt to get in the way of someone else's feet, and they make us hop when we catch them against the bedroom chair, but actually we should be in a queer fix without them. I remember a friend of mine having his big toe amputated for some medical reason. I was talking to him some weeks after the operation, and after he had bidden me farewell, I was surprised to see him limp out of the room! It is

well-nigh impossible to run and to walk properly minus your big toes.

What a warning there is to every Christian in the fate of Adoni-bezek. At one time he was a mighty warrior, seventy vanquished kings gathered their food under his table, but when he was defeated, he became

A Liming, Helpless Cripple

Brethren, beware! We cannot afford to be defeated. Our foe, the Devil, is cruel and merciless; fall into his power, and he will do his best to cripple you for life.

There are many Adoni-bezeks in the Christian world. I remember a man of outstanding power and brightness; a witness for Christ with a radiant testimony and countenance. He was a man of prayer and action; his zeal was an inspiration to many. The devil set his ambush. The soldier of Christ was warned by his companions, but in spite of their admonition he tarried on forbidden territory. He was taken captive by the enemy. After some months he struggled back to the Cross, but, oh, what a change! Where was now that powerful testimony, that radiant countenance and that steadfast onward march that led so many to battle?

The Devil had robbed him of his thumbs and big toes!

Oh, I know there is mercy and hope for the backslider. We are told that God "will restore the years that the locust has eaten," and we are reminded of the case of Peter, who became the great Apostle of the Circumcision after he had backslidden and returned to the Lord. All this is true. Backslider, don't despair! But Christian, beware! My experience in Christian service is that there are far more Adoni-bezeks among restored backsliders than there are Peters. Many, many Christians of my acquaintance have talked sadly of the past years of apostasy, and with tears in their eyes have told me that now their lives will never be what they might have been. If only they had been true to God they would have been missionaries on the foreign field or leaders in the fight in the homeland: instead, they are limping a sad course to Heaven, saddled with the effects of the past years of disobedience.

We cannot afford to take chances. Overhaul your consecration. Make certain every part of you is on the altar. Be sure the cleansing fire of the Holy Ghost has cleansed and purged your heart from the last remains of sin.

Remember Adoni-bezek. Watch and pray. Lift up the shield of faith and grasp the sword of the Spirit. Steady, now, steady. By God's grace keep on the victory side.

A NOTABLE ANNIVERSARY

During the first three days of the month of July there was held on the grounds of the battlefield of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, the celebration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of that great battle. During the afternoon of July 3 there was dedicated a rectangular monument fifty-five feet high on Oak Hill, on the top of which an ever burning beacon light fed by natural gas sends out its beam visible for many

miles. The monument is called the "Eternal Light Peace Memorial."

The battle of Gettysburg was fought on the three days of July one to three, 1863, between the forces of the Confederacy under General Robert E. Lee and the Union armies led by General George G. Meade. It ranks as one of the sixteen decisive battles of the world. It was General Lee's plan to invade the north, capture the city of Harrisburgh, an important railway center, then take Philadelphia and New York City and levy on these great centers a demand for ransom that would break the defense and dictate a peace on the terms of the perpetuation of slavery. This ambitious military plan fell to pieces on the afternoon of the third day at Gettysburg, when the historical charge of Pickett's Virginia troops failed to break the defense of cemetery ridge. That night the remnants of the army of General Lee broke camp and returned to defend Richmond and a cause that was destined to be defeated. Captain James T. Long, for many years a guide at Gettysburg says: "There was dead at one time on this battlefield, 10,000 soldiers . . . while thousands more were lying mangled and wounded, strewn all over the bloody field, groaning, moaning and dying every minute."

In the year 1913, fifty years after the battle, there was held at Gettysburg a celebration in which both Union and Confederate soldiers took part, when 54,000 men gathered in a great reunion of "the Blue and the Gray." Twenty-five years later a thin line of survivors numbering some three thousand made their way back to the historical field of battle. They have met in the last reunion of such a character on this earth.

With the passing of the years it becomes clear that there are better ways for nations to dispose of their differences than on the field of battle. Slavery in the light of the awakening of the nations of the world could have been disposed of by some means other than war, but when passions arise reason often fails to be heard. The wounds of war are slow in healing, yet time does this also as is proved by the meeting of the Blue and the Gray at Gettysburg.—Wesleyan Methodist.

WHAT ONE GIFT DID

A Scotch woman, Mrs. MacRobert, who had saved up one hundred and fifty dollars, gave this amount to the missionary, saying: "When you go to Africa, I want you to spare yourself exposure and needless toil by hiring a competent body-servant who will go with you wherever you go and share your sacrifices and exposures." With this money Sebalwe was hired. A lion threw Livingstone down, crushing the bones of his left arm, and was in the act of killing him when Sebalwe called the attention of the lion to himself. The lion made a spring for Sebalwe, but the weapons of Livingstone's companions laid it low. Thus, through a gift, a Scotch woman saved the life of the prince of missionaries. How little we know what may be the results to the whole church and the world when we do the little we can.—The King's Business.

Mrs. Geo. Tealie, Feb 38