

BISHOP BERRY'S STORY  
OF ANOTHER DYING THIEF

I was traveling through the southern end of New Mexico, when our train stopped at a little station below Deming. Several men came into our coach. One of them sat down beside me.

He was an athletic young fellow, rather good looking, and his dress belonged to the frontier region through which we were passing.

I greeted the young man as he sat down, and we began to talk. While we were chatting I noticed that he was looking at me closely. Presently he turned sharply upon me and asked:

"Is your name, Berry?"

"It is," I replied.

"I know you," was his hearty rejoinder, as he put out his big, brown hand. "You were at our house when I was a kid, and I have never forgotten you," he went on. "Don't you remember when you visited our house at Adrian?"

Then I knew that the young fellow was from Michigan, and that his father was an old friend. It dawned upon me, also, that I had heard my friend's laddie had become wayward and had gone west.

Then sitting by my side as the train rumbled along he told me a remarkable story, told with a kind of realism that made it very vivid and clothed with dramatic power:

"A little while after you were at our house," began young Bickel—Joe Bickel was his name—"father and I had a difference one day. I became angry and said some things I ought not to have said.

"That night I ran away from home.

"A week later I was in the Sherman House at Chicago, and met a young fellow from northwestern Ohio, who had also had trouble at home and had left abruptly. We struck up an acquaintance which ripened into a warm friendship.

"There was something in the circumstances so similar, which caused us to run away from home, that drew us together and made a common bond.

"We each got a job and saved our change, and finally came to Denver.

"In Denver we went bad," he confessed. "We learned to drink and gamble and went into sins that should have made us shudder. After a few months we drifted into New Mexico.

"One afternoon," continued Bickel, "my friend Clark and myself were in the back room of a saloon playing cards with two Mexicans. A dispute arose over the game and angry words were spoken.

"Without warning, one of the Mexicans pulled his gun from his belt and shot Clark through the body.

"The poor fellow's face turned white, and he rolled off his chair to the mud floor of the room. I was too horrified to speak or act, but I heard Clark say: 'I guess I'm done for, Joe, but I can't die here. For my mother's sake, take me out of this place.'

"With the help of an attendant, I lifted my chum and carried him out of the saloon, across the narrow street, and to the shade of a tree on a little hill. Then I took off my coat, made it into a pillow, and laid the poor fellow down upon the rocky ground.

"He was quiet for a few moments and seemed to be scarcely breathing, but then he opened his eyes and whispered pathetically: 'Joe, I can't go this way. Both of us were taught to believe in God, and that Christ is merciful. Maybe he would be merciful to me if I ask him. Won't you pray a little for me? I've tried, but this pain hurts me so I can't keep my mind on the prayer.'

"I wondered for just a moment whether I could venture to pray, but I had gone so far from God and had been so reckless and wicked, that I dared not try to pray, so I shook my head. Excepting for the low moaning that escaped his lips involuntarily, Clark was very still for a time.

"In a few minutes, however, he looked straight at me and said: 'Old man, I've been trying to remember some of the words of the Bible that tell of God's mercy to sinners, but I can't get any of them. Won't you get some of those words for me?'

"I reached back through the years and tried to compel my memory to reproduce some of the promises I had learned when a boy. Soon I got hold of one word that suggested another. Then a verse came to me, and another and another.

"He asked to be lifted to a sitting posture. Then, after steadying himself he said slowly: 'You will never know how much those words from the Bible mean to me. How beautiful! I never saw them so wonderful before. They seem to be just for me. Now, my chum, do one thing more. Sing one of the songs we used to know back home, something about his mercy.' I tried to remember some gospel song. At first the silly ditties I learned on the frontier came to my mind. I could also recall snatches of college songs. But for anything serious my mind seemed to be a blank. Suddenly, like a flash, there came out of the rubbish of memory a line of an old hymn. That line suggested the stanza and other stanzas. With my arm around my dying chum I began to sing in a low voice:

'Rock of ages, cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in Thee.'

"The eyes of my friend were fixed upon me as I sang the first stanzas. Then I began the second:

'Could my zeal no respite know,  
Could my tears forever flow,  
All for sin could not atone:  
Thou must save, and Thou alone.'

"Before the next line was reached I saw that Clark was trying to lift his right hand. He got it partly up and it fell by his side. Then he tried again. He seemed to be reaching for something he clearly saw. Just as I was singing.

'Nothing in my hand I bring;  
Simply to thy cross I cling,

he pushed his hand a little higher, clutching at something above him. He seemed to grasp it. Then, turning a radiant face to me, he said: 'It's all right, Joe, it's the cross. I've got hold of it, and I'll never let go!'

"In a moment his hand dropped, and he leaned heavily upon me. I was startled, and looked down into his face. Clark was gone—to be with his Savior."—Pentecostal Herald.

TWENTY-THIRD PSALM

*The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.*

I shall not want rest:

"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures."

I shall not want drink:

"He leadeth me beside the still waters."

I shall not want forgiveness:

"He restoreth my soul."

I shall not want guidance:

"He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake."

I shall not want companionship:

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil, for Thou art with me."

I shall not want comfort:

"Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me."

I shall not want food:

"Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies".

I shall not want joy:

"Thou anointest my head with oil".

I shall not want anything:

"My cup runneth over."

I shall not want anything in this life:

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life."

I shall not want anything in eternity:

"And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

This is what David wrote of the Good Shepherd. The fulfillment of his Psalm has been reconstructed from Christ's own words: I am the Good Shepherd.

Thou shalt not want rest:

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest".

Thou shalt not want drink:

"If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink".

Thou shalt not want forgiveness:

"The Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins".

Thou shalt not want guidance:

"I am the way, the truth, and the life".

Thou shalt not want companionship:

"Lo, I am with you always".

Thou shalt not want comfort:

"I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter".

Thou shalt not want food:

"I am the Bread of Life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger".

Thou shalt not want joy:

"That my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full".

Thou shalt not want anything:

"Whatever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, He will give it you".

Thou shalt not want anything in this life:

"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you".

Thou shalt not want anything in eternity:

"I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, there ye may be also".

Sent in by Mrs. Diadma McLeod, from Long Beach, California.

WE ARE TOLD

Ole Bull was making his way through a great American forest, and he came upon a hut in which dwelt a hermit who had left his home in the city in bitterness. An old violin helped him to while away the tedious hours. At night he took down the old violin and played some simple airs. Ole said, "Do you think I might play a bit?"

"I hardly think it possible; it took me years to learn. You might try, though." So the great master took the instrument, drew his bow across the strings and instantly the room was filled with harmony. He then played "Home, Sweet Home," "Nearer, My God, to Thee," and other simple songs until the old hermit sobbed like a child. What a difference between the violin in the hands of the hermit, and in the hands of the master!

Let the idea of God take possession of a man and he will rise to heights undreamed of before.

"There's a wideness in God's mercy,

Like the wideness of the sea;

There's a kindness in His justice,

Which is more than liberty."

—Selected.