

## THE ROPE OF FAITH.

Billy Dawson was one of the quaintest and mightiest evangelists British Methodism ever had. Here is a specimen of his style:

"Brethren, I am now going to show you how a poor sinner is saved by grace; and I am sure many of you have been so saved. Let us take the case of a miserable man in the pains of conviction. He is, we will suppose, down at the bottom of the pit of despair. Now, let us ask him how he got there, and how he means to get up." Then, leaning over the pulpit to the right hand, the preacher curved and hollowed his hand, and applying his mouth to it, spoke aloud this imaginary colloquy, as if from the surface down through the pit-shaft, after the manner of the "banksman" at colliery:

"Hallo! hallo! who's down here?"

"Oh, minister! a poor sinner; a miserable sinner."

"How came you there, my poor brother? how came you there?"

"My load of sin weighed me down, and I fell deeper and deeper."

"Oh wretched man that you are; how do you mean to get up?"

"I shall never get up. I am lost! lost for ever! I've been trying ever so long, to climb up by the side of the shaft, but I cannot; I fall down again."

"You cannot succeed of yourself. I'll send you down the rope of faith. Lay hold of that, and you will be got out. Cling to it; cling to it; here it is!" (imitating the paying out of a rope). "Now then, it must be down to you. Lay hold of the 'only hope set before you.' Have you got hold now?"

"I'm so feeble, I can hardly grasp it; but I think I have got a good grip now."

"Then pull-hoy, lads! Let us help this poor sinner up. Oh, how heavy he is. Why, what have you got besides yourself hanging on the rope?"

"Only a few good works of my own."

"Good works! good works! Throw them down. Down with them, or they'll break the rope."

"Well, if I must, I must, but sure they would do me some good."

The preacher continued to represent the lifting, but suddenly he stopped, as if his arms had received a check, exclaiming to the imaginary ascendant:

"Why, what is the matter now? What are you struggling with?"

"Doubts and fears, sir. I am afraid I cannot hold on."

"Lay firmer hold of the rope. Doubts and fears are nothing to strong faith. But what now? Trembling again. What is it now?"

"A great fight of afflictions, master; and I cannot hold on."

"Hold on, sinner; hold on, you'll come out of the afflictions. But what is this? shaking again? What can be the matter now?"

"Strong temptation, master. Oh, I shall fall! I'm falling! Oh, help me! Oh, help me!"

"So we will, but, ah, what dreadful thing has happened now, the weight is three times as great. What a horrible noise. What have you got there?"

"It's the devil himself has gripped me.

He is gripping me hard. Oh, minister, I'm lost; I'm lost!"

Hereupon the excitement in the congregation became intense. Women wept, men rose up, and the minister, seizing his opportunity, continued:

"Now, lads, let us all pray and pull together. This poor sinner is in great danger. But Satan cannot long buffet him. The great Captain is with us, and He is too strong for demon or devil."

Straining at, and lifting the imaginary load, the preacher greatly excited himself, as well as his hearers. Finally he appeared to succeed in bringing the imperiled and hard-gripped penitent to the surface. Then with great effect he uttered the words: "Lads, he is safe! There he is! The rope of faith never broke yet. I knew it wouldn't break now!"—Sel.

## MISSIONARY CORRESPONDENCE.

Hartland, Paulpietersburg, Natal.

Dear Highway:

In my last letter I spoke of an anticipated visit to our farthest outpost, that conducted by Timoti, brother of Aloni Mkonza.

Mrs. Sanders accompanied me in our single horse trap. Two or four horses are the rule in this country of rough roads and steep mountainous hills.

Our journey covered about one hundred miles and gave us a view of the country called "high veldt."

We found the highest hills still showing patches of snow from a recent storm.

Native kraals are few and far between, I suppose on account of the cold climate, and yet when we saw the heathen natives, these were clothed very scantily, like ours of the hotter, low veldt.

To say that Timoti and his little flock were glad to see us is putting it mildly. They were excited and greatly delighted.

There were two women and sixteen children asking to be baptized while two infants had been brought for dedication.

Only four, however, were baptized, while the others were persuaded to wait until they knew more certainly that they were born from above.

A Communion Service was held, a church organized, consisting of thirteen charter members.

Four years ago Timoti left Balmoral for his present home near the "Pivaan's Water-fall." There he found two of our church members and started Sunday services and several times during these years they have visited the mother church at Balmoral for Communion, Baptism, Christmas and seeing their friends.

Always they refused to join any other nearby church because, I suppose, no European missionary visited their district oftener than once a year.

They say they now feel that they are alive and really have a missionary, though for so long they did not see him but only heard of him.

Thus we left them happy and much encouraged in the Lord and looking forward to our next visit to the church at Pivaan's Water-falls.

Trusting you will remember this, our third church in Africa, in your prayers, I am,

Yours in Him,

H. C. SANDERS.

## INTERCESSION.

Intercession reaches everywhere. Neither time nor place bound it. Wherever grace can come prayer can reach. We hear of some land where God's glory is endangered; or, again, we read with burning eyes and heart of the spiritual destitution of the slaves or aborigines in certain countries. We may be the weakest and most obscure among God's children, yet we can reach all this by intercession, and reach it, too, with efficacy and power. We may work for it without interruption; our ordinary actions may go to it; we may do more than all the ambassadors and legates that ever were, and yet not for an hour be distracted from our profession or our trade. We shall never know, till it meets us at the judgment—a goodly show, a beautiful vision—how much glory we have thus gained for God, without cost, without toil, almost without advertence, yet with such infinite and eternal recompense. Do at least as much as this: Intercede for those who are being tempted with the same temptation as yourself. If we can do such an immense work for Jesus, with scarcely any trouble to ourselves, can we think to love Him if we are not doing it?—Faber.

## SIGNS OF SPIRITUAL DECLINE.

The great danger that constantly besets the Christian is the loss of spirituality and power. Everything in this old world as it is naturally tends towards spiritual decline. The elements that produce spirituality and power have been introduced from another sphere. They are directly antagonistic to the spirit of this age and the wicked spirits who rule the moral darkness of this world. It is essential that we preserve a constant watch against spiritual loss and decline. Careful self-examination is a valuable aid in determining one's spiritual state. Here are some signs of spiritual declension which it will be well to think about. Now is a good time to "take stock."

1. When you are averse to religious conversation and the company of heavenly-minded Christians.
2. When it is easy to find reasons for absenting yourself from religious services.
3. When you are more concerned about pacifying your own conscience than about honoring Christ.
5. When you are more afraid of being counted over-religious than you are of dishonoring Christ.
6. When you trifle with temptation or think lightly of sin.
7. When you are impatient or unforgiving toward others.
8. When you confess but do not forsake sin; when you acknowledge but still neglect duty.
9. When your cheerfulness has more the levity of the unregenerate than the holy joy of the children of God.
10. When you shrink from self-examination.
11. When you become careless how you spend the Sabbath day.
12. When you are easily prevailed upon to let your duty as a Christian yield to your worldly interests, or to your desire for pleasure, or to the opinions of your neighbors.
13. When you associate with the people of the world without deep solicitude for their salvation, or fear of having your own spiritual life injured.
14. When you have little relish for Bible reading and prayer.—Wesleyan Methodist.