

THE SAVED BOOK.

FROM the Cape of Good Hope there shoots out into the sea a sandbank, forty or fifty miles in length, making the sea shallower and more dangerous, and along which a tremendous current swirls.

In the year 1830, an East Indiaman, called the *Lady Holland*, was making the then tedious and difficult passage to Hindustan. For a whole week the clouds had hidden the sun; accurate knowledge of the position of the ship had been impossible; the winds had blown fitfully and boisterously; three times the vessel had been beaten off her course, but by soundings on Saturday, the 13th of February, the captain knew that he had entered on this shoal.

It was hazardous to go on far in such doubt of his whereabouts in such rough water, and in the grasp of such a current. He would turn the vessel back to sea by eight o'clock that evening, the captain said; then, having taken further soundings, he thought he might safely go on till ten o'clock, when he would surely turn back or heave to till morning. But when four bells sounded—ten o'clock—and the captain was just about to give the order to turn back, with a tremendous concussion the ship struck upon rocks—a jagged, cruel reef of them, over which the waves dashed so savagely, that wave and rock together broke the vessel's back at once, and the forepart of her sank amid the breakers. The passengers, however, all escaped and at last, were landed upon a bit of sandy beach.

One of the passengers on board the wrecked ship was a young man, Alexander Duff. He was on his way to what proved to be such magnificent missionary service in India; and while the wrecked passengers were huddled in a hovel erected by searchers for penguins eggs amid these rocks and sands, a sailor, walking along the little beach, noticed something cast up high and dry. Going to it, he found it to be a quarto copy of *Bagster's Bible*, and a Scotch Psalm book, scarcely shattered, and with Mr. Duff's name written on both distinctly. That Bible and that edition of the Psalms were about the only books, out of a library of more than eight hundred volumes which this young missionary was taking with him to India, which were not swallowed up in the shipwreck or reduced to pulp. And—what is still more singular—this copy of the Bible had not been in daily use, but wrapped in chamois leather, had been packed in the boxes with the other books. They had been dashed to pieces or wetted into pulp. Here, in the poor hovel, he held the uninjured Bible in his hands, and read out of it to the drenched, chilled, but saved, passengers the 107th Psalm.

The experience made a profound impression upon Mr. Duff. It ruled his life. It was to him, the voice of Providence declaring that, compared with all other books, the Bible was the supreme, supremely necessary book for India—for man.

And what a most real picture of the history of the Bible—this incident? To wreck the Bible, to make it pulp, though men have affirmed it done a thousand times, has been impossible. Out of every storm of higher criticism, so called, like Kuenen's and his school; or of lower criticism, like Tom Paine's or Voltaire's; or of scientific skepticism and denial like Haeckel's and much of our modern so-called advanced materialistic thought, or of ecclesiastical proscription, like that of Rome; or of a fashionable and sensual neglect, like that of the upper classes in England in the eighteenth century—somehow, the Bible is surely seen to be the victor and not the victim of the storm.—*Dr. Hoyt.*

THE GENESIS OF A SERMON.

SOMETHING FOR MINISTERS (AND PEOPLE.)

AT the opening of the present session of the English Presbyterian College, Rev. John Watson, Convener of the College Committee, gave a short address on "The Genesis of a Sermon," of which the following summary appears in *The Presbyterian*: He said that most people who listened to a sermon had no conception whatever of what lay behind it. They thought that the minister simply opened his mouth and the sermon flowed forth. But such extempore sermons were ex-trumpety sermons. A sermon to be good must be the outcome of a week's work. There were six things wanted to make a sermon good:

(1) *Selection.* A man who could preach on any text could never preach anything worth hearing. But it was not the man that selected the text, but the text that selected the man. As he was going quietly along his path of study the text came upon him and seized him and constrained him to preach from it. He had to mark it down in his note-book at least with a view to bringing it forth in a sermon.

(2) There was *Separation.* When the time came to preach on that text, he had to separate the idea it contained from the nine hundred and ninety-nine other ideas with which it was more or less associated. That gave him the one theme which it was his duty to deal with on that occasion. After this came

(3) *Illumination.* The idea having been secured, it had to be held up in the light and looked at from every side. An idea could receive illumination from everything in a man's past experience, from the countries where he had travelled, the picture galleries he had visited, the poetry he had read, the people he had met, the things he had suffered. Some men's skies were always dull and grey because they did not open their minds to varied lights. But in dealing with an idea shade was needed as well as light, just as an artist had to close a window or two to gain the proper effect. After all this had been settled, then there was need for

(4) *Meditation* to impress the idea deeply on the heart and conscience. A sermon preached from the mind alone could not produce much effect. To reach the souls of others a sermon must be preached from the soul. Then came

(5) *Elaboration.* It was needful to arrange in proper order what was to be said. There was an alphabet to be followed. A. was to come first, not B., and the others had to follow in their proper order. Then after A. was arranged something would have to be struck out. There was the introduction that came before A. and the first that came after Z. The minister had to write them because they were in his mind, but not to preach them, because the people wanted to begin at A. and finish at Z. Things also here and there that he had put down would have to be put out this passage because it might be misunderstood, that passage because it looked personal. When all was ready their came finally

(6) the *Application* in the actual delivery of the sermon. If they thought they were going to be a Dr. Marcus Dods or a Dr. Dykes they might read in the pulpit, but most preachers had to deliver. To commit the words to memory was a slavish task, but the paragraphs ought to be carefully read over so as to leave the impression fresh and powerful on the mind. Such was the preacher's task, and when it was considered how much a sermon cost him it was surely not too much to ask his hearers to bring to his aid their sympathetic hearing, and above all their prayers.