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BY I. E. BILL,

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth Peace, good will toward Men."

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RUSSIA.

BY A. H. MUNRO.

[CONTINUED.]

Peter's moral character no one has attempted to clear from the charges brought against it, for his cruelty to his son and his extreme sensuality were facts known to all Europe. Respecting the latter, many of his eulogists say, that it was to be attributed to the temptations purposely placed in his way in early life by his sister Sophia, who did all she could to allure his mind from the pursuit of knowledge. This may have been the case, we have no proof of the contrary. Let it be observed, however, that the offering of such a plea is the strongest evidence of the excessive character of that licentiousness for which no other defence could be found. But it is also said in favour of Peter that he was strictly impartial. Well, it does appear to have been to him a matter of total indifference in his fits of passion, whether he knocked down a prince or a peasant, kicked a man or a woman, or made his own child or another man's his victim. In estimating the man, many have been blinded by the renown of deeds which owed their fame more to the novel circumstances under which they were performed, than to their intrinsic merits, or the mental powers required for their accomplishment. What Peter designed to do for Russia, has often been misunderstood, and what he actually did has been still more frequently misrepresented. When he attained the power of a Russian Czar, he found himself the sole ruler of countless hordes of barbarians, sunk in ignorance and its attendant vices and misery, groaning beneath the cruel oppressions of a nobility scarcely less debased. Did he seek to bless those down-trodden millions with liberty, justice and the incentives to individual exertion and social elevations? Did he make one honest effort to raise his people intellectually and morally? No, but he gave them fleets and armies, and made himself Admiral of the fleets, and General of the armies. He also made his people build him a City, where a City never should have been, and where he determined to have one simply to increase his revenue, and to add to his political importance. Great is the egotism of Kings, especially despotic ones. "I am the Government" said Louis the 14th. "I am the Empire" said Napoleon. Was Peter more modest than these, and did he seek his people's prosperity more sincerely and disinterestedly? If so it is unfortunate that all his so called improvements centered in himself, and tended more to promote the aggrandisement of himself and his successors, than to advance the real interests of the nation. Milton represents his fallen angels busily engaged in erecting and adorning their pandemonium, but he does not laud the presiding genius of the work. He tells us of an arch-fiend pursuing a long and perilous voyage of discovery, but he sounds no note in praise of this proof of a love of knowledge. Why? Because there was a diabolical selfishness at the bottom of the whole of it. Either Peter did not comprehend the essential principles of civilization, and the causes of a people's greatness, or he totally neglected them. If it be asserted that he did know and wisely sought to apply these principles, then it must be admitted that he failed. For what change has taken place in the Russians AS A PEOPLE since he ascended the throne? Leaving out of consideration for a moment the inhabitants, the capital, and a few cities in which foreign influences are strongly felt, and in which foreign manners are therefore imitated by the upper classes, while the lower classes are compelled to live according to the modified barbarism of the government regulations, by the fear of the knout being kept before their eyes. We do

not hesitate to say, that the great body of the people are much the same as were their ancestors of a hundred and fifty years since. That they are as ignorant, rude, and filthy as their forefathers. The most important change that has taken place in their condition, is not that their dwellings are more fit for the occupancy of human beings, their food less repulsive, their persons less disgusting or their minds more enlightened and less superstitious, but that the taxes are heavier and the levy for the army more frequent and severe. What wonder then that they regard modern innovations as a curse, and fondly hope for the day and the man that shall restore to "Old Muscovy" her pristine glories!

Introductory Sermon.

The following sermon was preached before the Western Association, in Fredericton, Sept. 4, 1854, by the Rev. Thomas Magee, and we publish it in the *Visitor* by the request of the Body. Those who love plain spoken, gospel truth will feel interested in perusing this discourse:—

II. Tim., I, 13.—"Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."

Timothy, to whom this Epistle was addressed, was a native of Lystra, a city of Lycaonia in lesser Asia. We perceive in his case the advantages of an early religious education. Though his father was a Greek, yet his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois were Jewesses of excellent character. The pious care they took of his education had its desired success. From a child he had known the Holy Scriptures. When Paul came into those parts again he had the satisfaction to find that not only Timothy continued steadfast in the faith, but was in great esteem with the Churches of Lystra and Iconium, for his distinguished piety and zeal. The discovery of so excellent a temper promised fair for eminent usefulness, and would not fail to recommend him to the Apostle's regard, who, from that time, seems to have fixed upon him as his companion and assistant in labours. He appears to have been to Paul what John was to Christ, the most beloved of his assistants. Seeing him worthy, he laid his hands upon him, by which the Holy Spirit, in its miraculous influences, was given him, and doubtless he was present and assisted when the hands of the Presbytery were laid upon him, when he was ordained and formally set apart for the work of the Ministry. Paul couples him with himself in several epistles which he wrote to the Churches—calls him his beloved Son, and says on one occasion that he had no man like minded. Surely Timothy was highly favored, he had no need to go to College when he had such a preceptor, who was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, and who was not a whit behind the very chief of the Apostles.

A large portion of the two Epistles which were written to him was taken up with instructions how he should behave himself in the Church, and give full proof of the Ministry, so that his profiting may appear unto all. In the text we have selected, he charged him to hold fast the form of sound words which he had heard of him in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

Having now the volume of inspiration completed, and appealing to the Bible and the Bible only, as the religion of Protestants. We, as an Evangelical community, would exhort one another. That we hold fast the form of sound words, in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus. In pursuing our subject, we would select a few of the leading truths which we deem of vital importance. And in the first place need I to exhort my brethren to hold fast the being, attributes and perfections of the one eternal and self-existing God. The

Unity of God in the Trinity of his person, that there are three persons in the one God, in whose name we are Baptized. That there are three which bear record in heaven. The Father, the Word, or Son and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one. It has not pleased Him to reveal the mode or manner of the Divine existence, for with our limited capacities we could not comprehend him, nor can we comprehend the mode of our own existence, how a trinity of soul body and spirit is in every one of us, and shall we not believe our own existence, because we cannot comprehend it? Of what importance in the wonderful scheme of salvation is the doctrine of the Trinity in the Godhead. While Jehovah the Father stands at the head of the economy of redemption, Jehovah the Son is that great medium through which all its blessings flow to us, and God the holy spirit, the great agent by which these blessings are conveyed to his believing people. Hold fast then my brethren these great cardinal truths. That there are fools that say there is no God and none but fools say it, is a painful thought. In rightly dividing the word we must give such their portions, proving that according as he has revealed himself in the Scriptures, He is the Omnipotent and Omniscient God, who in the beginning created the heavens and the earth and all the hosts of them, that in wisdom he made them all, giving to matter its different collocations and laws, who is every where present as the Omnipresent Jehovah, in whom we live and move and have our being. Behold God making man lord of this lower world, putting all things terrestrial under him, placing him in a paradise of beauty, as on a throne of state. As his sovereign he gave him a law showing him his dependence upon him as his great Creator, and informs him of the consequence should he disobey. But man being in honor continued not. In an evil hour he yielded to temptation, threw of allegiance to his Sovereign, thought he would be independent and equal to God knowing good and evil. Thus he gave his maker the lie, suffered unbelief in the veracity of God to predominate over him—manifested his ingratitude to the God of his life and all his blessings. And what was the consequence? Alas, who can tell. The moral image of God in which he was created became defaced, and he that was but little lower than the Angels, became but little superior to demons. In a word he became totally depraved. His posterity partook of his own likeness, he begat a son in his own image, what I understand by total depravity is setting up self in the place of God, as the Idol, that man would have all men and things, bow to, crown, and worship. Supreme self love is the universal depravity of the human family. This manifests itself in different ways in our world. In many it appears in its worst forms of vice and crime. How awful, yet not more awful than true, are those expressions of the Apostle, Romans IV. 19. By one man's disobedience many were made sinners, every individual of the human family with David has to acknowledge, I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me. But was God taken by surprise? I speak with reverence. Were the purposes of him, who knew the end from the beginning, frustrated? No, his counsels shall stand and he will do all his pleasure. Behold how at once he meets the dread catastrophe. In the cool of the day when the delirium of the guilty culprits were we may suppose somewhat abated, he calls them before him, they once delighted to hold communion with him; but now conscious guilt covers them, slavish fear takes the place of that love they once had for him, and they feign would hide themselves from his presence. He declares their awful doom, but does he leave them to sink in utter and eternal despair? Nay he turns to the serpent the devil that beguiled them, and in uttering

the curse that should come upon him, a blessing is implied to guilty and wretched man. Here is the first link in the golden chain of prophecy and promise—"The seed of the woman shall bruise the Serpent's head." We perceive in this whole transaction, how the purposes of God begin to be developed. That as sin has reigned unto death, grace should reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. From the period of this first promise types, prophecies, and promises are given from time to time in the form of sound words. The prophet Isaiah, 9th. chap., saith "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." Yes the seed of the Virgin was Emanuel God with us, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God, he declares that the Father and He are one, and that whosoever hath seen Him hath seen the Father, and that all men should honor the Son as they honor the Father, He says in Revelations, chap. 1. v. 8. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." Hold fast my dear brethren this form of sound words. Cling to the proper Deity of Christ, as well as to his humanity. This qualified him for the great work which his Father, as standing at the head of the economy of redemption gave him to do, the fulness of time being come, behold him now made of a woman, made under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law, for he became the end of the law for righteousness unto them that believe, but we must pass on nor wait to dwell on his miraculous conception, the songs of angels at his birth, &c., the joy of old Simeon and Anna, &c. Let us behold him when entering upon his public ministry, he comes to his forerunner who had been preparing the way before him, and being determined to fulfill all righteousness and ratify every ordinance of his kingdom, he demands his servant John to attend to that ordinance which he received not from man, but from heaven, and was baptized of him in Jordan, signifying by it, that after having fulfilled his ministry he should be baptized in blood, should be immersed as it were in the place of the guilty, covered with their sin and guilt, should be overwhelmed while treading the wine press of his Father's wrath alone—should die the just for the unjust, should enter and sanctify the grave of his people. He declares, by his prophet Hosea, chap. 13. v. 14. "I will ransom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death; O death, I will be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy destruction." In this ordinance he declares that having risen from the mystic grave, he shall rise again, burst the barriers, lead death and hell captive at his chariot wheels, and as sure as the head is risen so will every member of his mystical body. Having come up out of the water, Jesus prays; the heavens are opened, the Holy Spirit descends upon him in the form of a dove anointing him for his three fold office of Prophet, Priest, and King, and a voice from heaven saying this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Let us now view him as entering upon his public office, as a prophet, he is led by the Spirit into the wilderness, he fasts forty days preparing himself for his public ministry. Now appears a favorable time for that proud and hitherto too successful spirit, to try his strength, as the prince of the power of the air, all things seem favourable to the tempter—he has the second Adam not in a garden of beauty and of plenty, but in a wilderness, where after a long fast Christ was hungered, he suits his temptations to Christ's circumstances, but after trying his utmost skill he is utterly foiled, he flies vanquished and crest fallen from the field of conflict. The