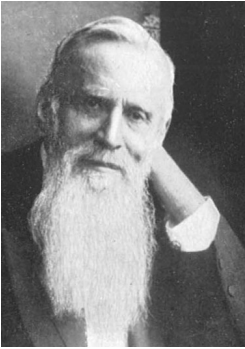


## The story of a “Dear Grandfather”



The “Dear Grandfather” in the picture was Friedrich Wilhelm Baedeker. He came from Germany to live in England when he was a young man. He met some Christian men in England who told him about the Saviour. Friedrich understood. He was sorry for his sins and trusted in Jesus. Now he wanted to tell everyone else about Him. He went back to Germany and began preaching. Then he found that there were people in Russia who spoke German so he went to preach to them too.

Many people were becoming Christians in Russia. An Englishman, Lord Radstock, had preached to the Russian nobles and many of them were now followers of the Lord Jesus.

At this time Christians were treated cruelly in Russia, whether they were rich nobles or poor peasants. The government did not allow their meetings and put them in prison or sent them into exile. Do you know what it means to be sent into exile? It means to be sent away from your home. Sometimes exiles have to leave their own country for ever. In Russia the poor exiles had to go leave their homes and go to hard places to live inside Russia. Russia is a large country. There are many very cold parts far, far away in the north. There are other parts where there are great ranges of rocky mountains and, in those days, not many roads. The government sent Christians to live in these places. Here they had to work hard day and night to get a living.

Friedrich went all over Russia. He preached everywhere he went. The picture shows you how he travelled. The roads were very rough. The places he travelled were very wild. There were



often robbers and bandits. Friedrich did not carry a gun or a dagger to protect him. God looked after him wherever he went. There was often bad illnesses in the places he went too. He had learned some skill as a doctor and that helped him.

Where there were exiled Christians they were so pleased to see him. “It is the Dear Grandfather!” they would say when they saw him coming. He preached to them and

comforted them. They knew that God had not forgotten them – he had sent them a Dear Grandfather who loved them and helped them. How glad they were when he came!

By train, by boat, by sledge, over paths and tracks, along frozen rivers, across the snow-covered plains the Dear Grandfather travelled and travelled all over Europe and Asia preaching everywhere he went. He travelled in Bohemia, Moravia, Hungary, Galicia,<sup>1</sup> Poland, Switzerland, Finland all over the Russian Empire as far as China including Ukraine, Siberia the Crimea, the Caucasus, Estonia and Latvia. Can you count how many countries that makes? Can you find them on a map in your atlas or on a globe?

Once the Dear Grandfather was in the town of Zürich in Switzerland. There were many clever students in the town. They did not believe the Bible was true and they laughed at it. The Dear Grandfather had notices made about his talks. “Dr. Baedeker from England will talk about the Bible” said the notices.

“Dr Baedeker?” said the students. “From England? He will be sure to be up to date! He will pull the Bible to bits and say it is all wrong. We will enjoy that!” The students flocked to the first meeting but when they heard him say that the Bible is true from beginning to end they were very, very angry. There is a big lake at Zürich. If the Dear Grandfather had not managed to slip out by a little door at the back of the hall, the students would have taken him and thrown him in it. He was not allowed to speak in that hall again but he found other places to preach. God blessed his work and people were saved from their sins.

The Dear Grandfather preached to the rich nobles, the poor peasants and the exiles. He travelled thousands and thousands of miles carrying Bibles, Testaments and tracts and preaching in German, English or French. Where the people did not understand these languages he found someone who could speak one of them and could tell the people what he was saying in their own language as he preached.

When the Dear Grandfather found out about the terrible conditions inside Russian prisons he wanted to visit the prisoners. But how would he get permission?

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<sup>1</sup> Now part of Poland and Ukraine.

He asked an important Russian lady, a Countess, – could it be done? “No,” she said sadly but she remembered what he had asked.

One day she was out shopping. Her husband, the Count, stood at the shop door waiting for her. Suddenly he noticed the Director of Prisons walking down the street. Quickly he ran after the man and brought him back to the shop. He called his wife, “Here, quickly!”

“What is it?” she asked, hurrying to the door.

“There is the very man you want, the Director of the Prisons Department. He is the man to speak to!”

“How may I help you, your Ladyship?” asked the Director.

“I would like you to give my friend Dr. Baedeker, an Englishman, a permit to visit prisons and see the prisoners, to give them Bibles and do them good.”

“Does your friend think he can make prisoners good?”

“He thinks God can, through His Word, the Gospel.”

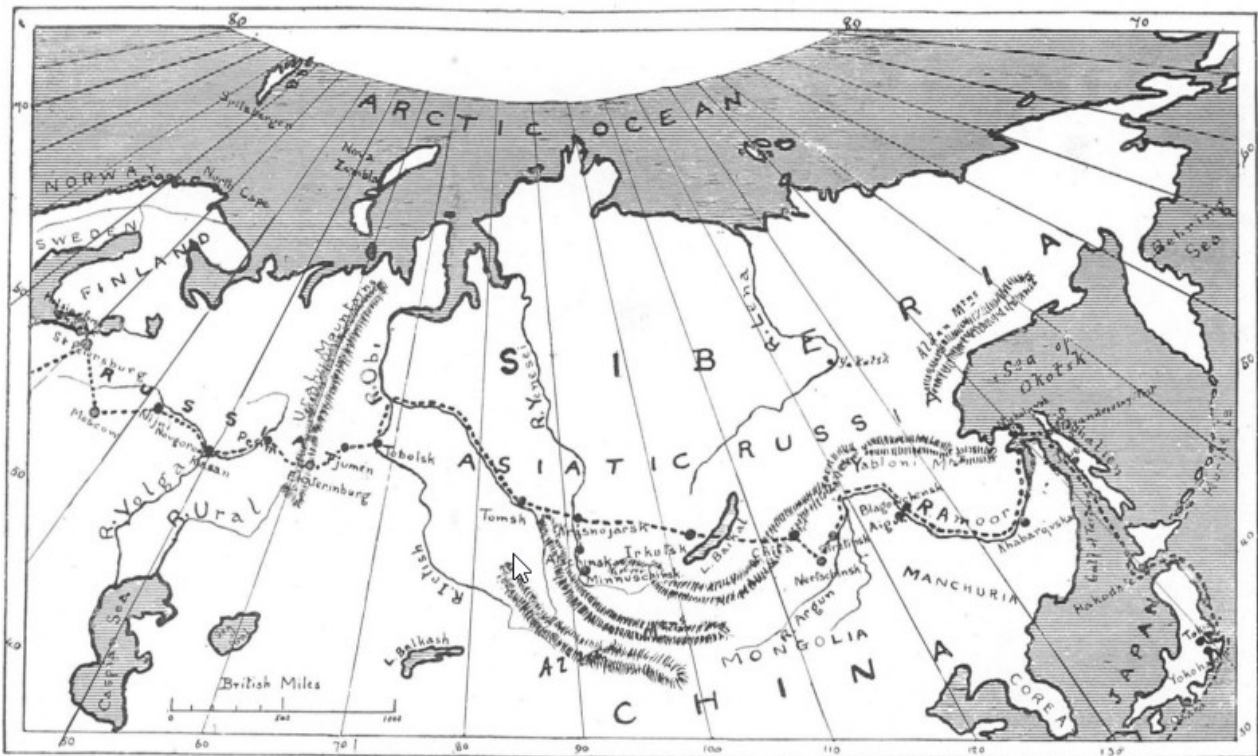
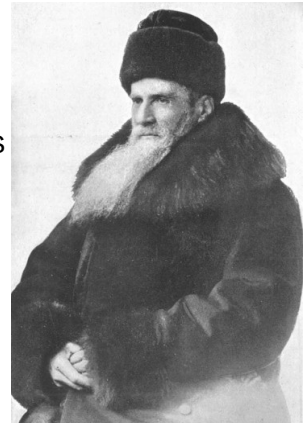
“That is so, madam! I will see that he has the permit he wants.”

The permit let the Dear Grandfather into terrible prisons all over Russia. Once it was stolen with all his money as well! He wrote to the Countess – could she get another one?

When the new permit came it was even better than the old one. The old one had allowed him into only some kinds of prisons. The new one allowed him to go to any prison. As a preacher in Russia the police watched him closely in many places. But whenever he showed his permit he got out of trouble. He was even allowed to keep on preaching when the Russian nobles who held meetings in their homes were sent into exile for preaching.

The Dear Grandfather did not forget the men who worked in the prisons guarding the prisoners either. He told them about the gospel too. How pleased the prisoners were when he gave them Bibles. When he came back to a prison after some years he looked to see what had happened to the Bibles he had left on his last visit. They were always well used. In one prison the prisoners had found scraps of cardboard. They used them to make cases to put their Bibles in to keep them safe from dirt and wear.

The Dear Grandfather kept on travelling and preaching until he was eighty-three. In this picture you can see him in the warm clothes a rich lady gave him. She was worried that the clothes he had would not protect him from the bitter cold. On the old map below you can see part of just one of his journeys. What a long way he went! Find out what Jesus told his disciples to do in Mark 16:15. I think the Dear Grandfather must have loved that verse!



DR. BAEDEKER'S FIRST JOURNEY ACROSS ASIA.