

The Religious Intelligencer.

AN EVANGELICAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER FOR NEW BRUNSWICK AND NOVA SCOTIA.

REV. E. McLEOD.]

"THAT GOD

IN ALL THINGS MAY BE GLORIFIED THROUGH JESUS CHRIST."

Peter.

[Editor and Proprietor.

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THE INTELLIGENCER.

JOHN BUNYAN

(From the Christian Cabinet.)

John Bunyan was born in 1628, at Elstow, a village near Bedford, and was said, "of a low, inconsiderable generation," for of his "father's house," he added, "being of that rank that is the meanest and most despised of all the families in the land," and this saying is the principal evidence on which persons believe that he belonged to the gipsy race, but at the period of his birth his parents were settled inhabitants of the village named, not apparently distinguished from their neighbours, except in so far as they appear to have been more intelligent and orderly than some of the people around or of Elstow, and to have held education in esteem, for the boy was early sent to school, and the church has reason to grudge the circumstance that he learned to write. His school days soon passed, away and he was set to his father's business, as a tinsmith. Many writers prefer the term "tinker," but the elder Bunyan appears to have been settled as a tradesman of Elstow, who probably supplied Bedford, in part at least, with his class of wares. Bunyan has given a bad character of his youth in his own writings, but there is no reason for supposing him to have been an atrocious sinner, guilty of great crimes, or even of any crime in the eye of the world. He felt all evil to be exceeding sinful, in progress of years, and he was cast down and humbled low at the remembrance of many sins, of squandered time, of base thoughts, and wicked words, and great irregularity; yet he seems to have been always an honest man, whose sins were directed against himself chiefly, except in the penitential meaning. Against these, there only have I sinned. At all periods of his life, he laboured hard under the burden of sin. Wrong doing did not come to him easily. He had to struggle with a tender conscience, that never got quite scared. Perhaps the case might be placed correctly, but differently, by saying that sin even in Bunyan's youth was a struggle against the influence of the Spirit, for he was a selected person to whom was committed a great work.

Some of Bunyan's biographers have described his boyhood and youth in different terms. Dr. Ryland, in his preface to Bunyan's works, calls him "the thinker of Elstow, a practical atheist, a worthless, contemptible infidel," with many more hard titles; but they seem to be erroneously bestowed, for Bunyan was a Sabbath breaker, in common with the other Elstow young men, and he does not; that he was fond of foul-door sports and sports is probable; but in their own place they need not necessarily be sinful; that he was greatly addicted to the use of profane language cannot be questioned, and so far as this sin may be deemed evidence of contemptible infidelity or practical atheism, we must admit the accuracy of those epithets written by Dr. Ryland, and which are not in any other sense true. Bunyan was a Sabbath breaker, a profane swearer, a rough lout, often, and to some extent he was a drunkard, but he was not a licentious person, and so far from being an atheist or an infidel, he had a deep fear of the future, constituting the horror of intervals in sinfulness, while he seems always to have entertained a certain degree of religion, and trembled to hear of a man reputed to be religious.

He notices some narrow escapes from drowning, but such events occur in every life, if they were noticed. Nearly every reader has been at some time apparently on the very edge of eternity—close up to the judgment seat. Bunyan noticed these facts as special mercies, and so they are as distinguished from the common mercies of daily life, but they are common to all men.

During the civil war, John Bunyan joined the Parliament army, and he appears to have served at the battle of Naseby, while he was undoubtedly at the siege of Leicester, although he did not acquire eminence as a soldier, and seems to have obtained his discharge, for while he was only been in his seventeenth year, at the siege of Leicester, which occurred in 1645, he was at Elstow, and his friends were contriving a marriage for him, in the hope of rendering him steadier thereby, while he was not yet nineteen years of age; and as his friends felt so much interest in his future career, we infer that there had been good points of character visible in Dr. Ryland's most atrocious sinner, who married, while scarcely nineteen years old, an estimable, and "very virtuous loving and comfortably obedient and obliging young woman of his own neighbourhood, born of good honest godly parents, who had instructed her as well as he was able in the ways of truth and saving knowledge." The natural supposition is that this young woman so well instructed did not despair of John Bunyan's future when he consented to become his wife. They had no means whatever, and the marriage, according to common or to modern idea, must have been imprudent. Mrs. Bunyan brought a dowry of two books to her husband, and they were all the property that had been left to her by her father, of whom she bore the following testimony:—"That he was 'a godly man,' whose life was 'strict and holy in his days, both in words and deeds,' and 'who approved and corrected vice, both in his house and among his neighbours.' These narratives respecting her father induced him to aim at some reform, and he read the books, entitled 'The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven,' and the 'Practice of Piety,' while under the influence of his 'good and gentle wife,' he sought to subdue one sin after another, in the hope of thus getting rid of them, but this plan is never successful, and so Bunyan rather fell back to the great discouragement, we may believe, of his wife, but from his practice of profane swearing he was turned by hearing a female, who also was addicted to this vice, tell a neighbour that he was sufficient to spoil a village. He determined to wipe away that reproach, and from that time onward he swore no more.

During all this period of sin Bunyan was not an atheist. He never had any leaning to infidelity. On the contrary he was devising schemes of salvation for himself on account of his descent from the gipsies. He like many other men endeavoured to solve the mystery of the ten tribes, supposing that the gipsies represented the lost house of Israel, and that he might be saved, being of them.

After he had abandoned swearing, he gave up some other bad practices and was the subject of a considerable personal and social reform, but still he said that "he was all this while ignorant of Jesus Christ and going about to establish his own

righteousness." We might not suppose that he was ignorant of the history and name of our Saviour. On the contrary, he had commenced to talk of religion; to be a disputant, perhaps even to recommend the faith, and he had Mrs. Bunyan's books, and above all, Mrs. Bunyan's conversation, but he had not been drawn into the acceptance of salvation on the sole condition of the gospel, and as he was witness he went about to establish his own righteousness.

His enlightenment is ascribed to a conversation which he heard one day while pursuing his calling in the streets of Bedford, between two or three women, members of the Baptist Church, who were mindful of the old statement, "they that feared the Lord spoke often one to another," and Bunyan marvellous much at their peace of mind, would often return to share their conversation, until at last he was induced to call on Mr. Gifford, the pastor of the Baptist Church. Now this man had been all that Dr. Ryland imputes to John Bunyan—all, or nearly all—and he could comfort the troubled soul by directions to the fountain, where his own sins had been washed away from his conscience; but his visitor did not so easily find peace in believing, for he ever crossed into the dark shadow of infidelity, it must have been towards this time, when he was tossed to and fro in a troubled sea of opinions, concerning election and anti-unitarianism; and many other doctrines which literally became to him temptations. John Bunyan's experiences at this period of his life were against too easily supposing that it is quite an easy thing to turn away from sin and become a saved sinner. Few Christians will ever probably have to undergo the experiences of the author of the "Pilgrim's Progress," for he was to be graciously and providentially qualified by these experiences as he was qualified by natural genius to discharge a noble work, yet the history of his spiritual trials and troubles is well calculated to check alike despair and presumption. He did not find peace easily. After he had found it he was again disturbed by many mental temptations and vain thoughts. The conquest of the great enemy in his mind was the labour of years. These years, however, enriched the mind that conceived the most remarkable of the uninspired books in our language.

John Bunyan became a member of the Baptist church in 1653, in the usual manner, being then in his twenty-fifth year. Three years afterwards Mr. Gifford was removed by death, and the church requested Bunyan to act as exhorter, which seems to have been then considered among them a different office from the pastorate, for a Mr. Burton was chosen to the pastoral charge of the congregation, although Bunyan had acquired popularity as a preacher.

The office of exhorter or evangelist brought no increase to Bunyan's means, and he provided for his family by his daily labours. He experienced some opposition from "doctors, priests and ungodly laymen," and also from the people called "Quakers." The latter class induced him to write his first book entitled "Some Gospel Truths" respecting "The Divine and Human Nature of Christ Jesus." As was common in those times the book has a long title; but its object is stated in the words quoted. It caused a controversy which continued for some time, and produced several publications and rejoinders.

In 1657 he was indicted to meet his trial at the assizes, on the charge of preaching the Gospel. It was a strange charge to be brought even so far as an indictment in the days of Cromwell's government, and it was quashed. Bunyan at this time was in his thirtieth year, and the last seven years must have been a period of severe mental, and physical labour. He had required the slender educational acquirements of his school days, and he had to renew them. His discourses necessarily required some preparation, and he was also engaged in his literary and theological works, yet his family were not neglected; and he had means secured to print and publish, although controversial books circulating in a limited locality, would scarcely pay paper and printing.

Bunyan's first wife died soon after this event and before his imprisonment. They had two sons and two daughters who survived her, and one of the daughters was blind. The father's attachment to his blind daughter has been rendered the subject of a fine historical painting—representing her visit to her father in Bedford jail. His own words are more affecting than any painting, where he wrote "poor child, thought I, what sorrow art thou like to have for thy portion in the world! Thou must be beaten, must beg, suffer hunger, cold, nakedness, and a thousand calamities which I cannot now endure the wind shall blow upon thee! Oh the hardships I thought my blind one might go under would break my heart to pieces."

The death of his wife must have affected him greatly for a season. Their children were all young, and nearly as helpless as the blind daughter; while her mother, after all has been said and written respecting his conversion, was probably the chief instrument in that work. She survived to hear her husband, so rough and wild at the period of their marriage, a popular advocate of the Gospel, and an author of some repute in theology, although she would value more the clear evidence afforded in his daily life of his personal salvation. It is instructive in the highest degree to trace the minute history of the Spirit's work in the world, for the now nameless peasant who very early in the seventh century died, having led a godly and holy life, and first impressed this character on his daughter's mind, became the instrument that led to the Pilgrim's Progress, but we should have to trace the thread that leads backward, upward and upward to the throne.

Bunyan was married a second time to a very remarkable woman, who became a most devoted mother to his children during his long imprisonment, and his earnest and honest advocate before the courts in London; and yet she also was a different and retiring person, who by no other cause could have been drawn into any appearance in public.

In November, 1660, immediately after the Restoration, Bunyan was apprehended while preaching in a private house, at Banwell, near Haverhill, in Bedfordshire. Two crimes were imputed to him—first, that he "devilishly and maliciously abstained from going to church," and, second, that he was "a common upholder of several unlawful meetings, and conventicles." He was confined in Bedford jail, with the Ouse running under his apartment for twelve years. In the first year, and in the last four years, he was a prisoner at large or on parole, for he was allowed to go out and come in, and was even chosen pastor of the Baptist

Church in Bedford, while yet a prisoner. All the efforts of his attached heroic wife to obtain his release were unavailing, although Sir Matthew Hale, before whom she pleaded his cause, was desirous to concede her request; but neither husband nor wife would come to any terms on matters of conscience, or compromise the husband's right to preach. He was apprehended early in the winter of 1660, and he was pardoned in the summer of 1672; although his first controversy was with some members of the Society of Friends, to their interference he was indebted for his freedom. Twelve years of his life had passed in prison, and he was now in his forty-fifth year. Sixteen years of life remained to him, and he laboured as if he had not more than one year. He raised a new chapel at Bedford, and he itinerated through several of the eastern and southern counties everywhere proclaiming the glad tidings. He was an earnest and eloquent preacher who founded many Congregations, and some of the Baptist Churches in the South of England have probably forgotten their illustrious descent. He differed from some of the strict Baptist Churches in declining to make his opinions on baptism a deep ditch between him and other Christian communities; being a man of a Catholic and liberal spirit so far as he could seek for union. Although he had no charge in London, yet he was well known and popular in the metropolis, both by his preaching and his writings. His fame as an author has eclipsed his popularity as a preacher, yet he was the first of preachers to a numerous class of hearers in his time. He had audiences like those of Whitfield a century afterwards, and as many as 3,000 persons attended some of his services. Charles II. had heard of his eloquence, and could not comprehend why his bishops, with all their learning, could not collect congregations equal to those of the "preaching tinker," as in the language of the king's party the author and the preacher of Bedford was styled. The monarch had not learned that genius copes with learning and excels it, yet their combination is advantageous.

Bunyan survived the period of persecution to die in 1688, the year of the revolution. He had visited Reading on a labour of love, and on returning to London he was overtaken by a storm, and took fever at the house of Mr. Stradwick, a grocer in Snow Hill, where he died in twelve days after his arrival, on the 31st August, 1688, and in the 60th year of his age.

His blind daughter, for whose support after his death he once felt many fears, had gone before him; three of his children survived and were members of his church at the period of his decease. Four years were to pass away before the post came from the Celestial City for Mrs. Bunyan, and with that anxiety for her husband's usefulness that eminently distinguished her life, she occupied them in preparing a collected edition of his works, numbering nearly sixty books and pamphlets. Hannah Bunyan, the great-grand daughter of John Bunyan, died in Bedford in 1770, in her 70th year, and she is supposed to have been his last descendant. The fame of the "Pilgrim's Progress" even a hundred years ago would not have allowed any claim of descent from its author to be forgotten or lost, if one could have been established, and so the family died out with Hannah Bunyan.

John Bunyan believed his family to be connected with the gipsies, although his personal appearance did not support that idea. He was a strong built man, of ruddy complexion and red hair, which age, and labour, and trouble turned grey. His character was eminently affectionate, and although he had a natural bent for controversy, yet when God set him free he went for twelve years through the south-eastern counties, chiefly as a peace-maker. He met his death on an errand of that nature, for he had gone to London to close a family feud in which he appeared to have only had the interest of an acquaintance or friend. His ideal or imaginative genius was of the highest order, yet he restrained it in the greater part of his works. His treatise on Justification by Faith, in reply to a work by Fowler, who afterwards became Bishop of Gloucester is one of the most valuable of his time, and it is comparatively unknown. The "Pilgrim's Progress" was written in Bedford jail. It is a prison poem, born of unmerited suffering, and could only have been produced by a man of much sorrow and many trials. Several of his friends opposed its publication, but no other book ever had a similar sale. One hundred thousand copies had been printed in London alone before the author's death, and it had been translated into six languages. More than thirty languages have been now employed to convey the ideas of this remarkable work, and the Bible alone exceeds it in the number of copies printed and circulated.

It has been the object of much criticism, and of many imitations. The first part is generally preferred by its critics, but we cling to the idea that the end of the second part as a poetic composition, is the most imaginative and yet the most touching of Bunyan's writings.

His gipsy descent he well established Christians should not forget their indebtedness to a neglected race, who, if they have not done many books well, have given us one lasting monument of the manner in which God can and does employ the most unlikely instruments to achieve his objects, and the salvation of men.

GRACE BEFORE MEAT.

A correspondent sends us several inquiries in regard to the authority for this practice, the best mode of observing it, and the benefits resulting. As to the authority for this usage, such sentences of inspiration as "He everything give thanks," "Whatsoever ye do, whether ye eat or drink, do all to the glory of God," seem amply sufficient. And to precept is added example. In nearly every instance of taking food we find the record of the giving of thanks. Thus our Lord, when feeding the four thousand (Matt. xiv. 30), and the five thousand (Mark vi. 41), and when with the two disciples at Emmaus (Luke xxiv. 30). The example of Paul on the convict ship (Acts xxvii. 35) is equally explicit.

Here certainly is biblical authority enough to dispense with any necessity for exploring ecclesiastical history—a task from which, therefore, our correspondent must excuse us.

The Christian propriety and profitableness of the practice are, moreover, so obvious, that like mode of observing it, and the Sabbath school, which are nowhere in terms enjoined by the Scriptures, it commands itself to every sympathy of a renewed heart.

Our correspondent inquires if a prayer that the

food may be "blessed to the nourishment of the body" does not "savour of the Popish superstition which baptizes bells and blesses dumb beasts." Certainly not. The essential mischief of those practices is the notion of prelatial sanctity involved in them—a sort of consecrated magic distributed by the touch of priestly fingers. There is, on the other hand, the same inherent propriety in a prayer that food may nourish and strengthen as in prayer that medicine may restore us from disease.

As to the spirit and method of giving thanks at the table, there is room for great improvement; and we thank our correspondent for the occasion here afforded for some further remark.

One father of a household, among our acquaintance—a Christian brother, too, whom we highly esteem—mumbles his "grace" as if fearful some one at the table might overhear him. Another dashes into his petition in the midst of the bustle of taking seats. Another puts down his head, and has finished his thanks before you are fairly aware what he is at. The number who really edify in performing this service, is lamentably small.

If we might be allowed to offer counsel touching the matter, we should say, Come to this devotional service, in a reverent spirit, and with the desire for religiously profiting all concerned. Do not be hasty in the thanksgiving and prayer. Wait till all are seated, and the silence has become perfect. Then speak quietly, but audibly, seriously, and earnestly. Do not fall into the same unvarnished round of words. Having a formula at the tongue's end is apt to deliver the tongue from all dependence on the heart. Do not ask only that the food may be "blessed to the nourishment of the body," but that, with gratitude and devotion, it may be likewise a means of grace to the soul. Do not offer an *exordium* or offer counsel touching the place and occasion. Do not, at the moment the last words fall from your lips, seize the knife and fork, or turn with some trifling remark to your next neighbour at the table. Let there be a pause; be as deliberate in *closing* as in *commencing* the service. Let the impression be stamped on all listening that you seriously mean to commune with God in this service, not to recite a dry formula. Lastly, have that meaning. Be sincere. Be fervent. Many a soul has been even led to the cross by the manifest earnestness seen and felt in a good man's "giving of thanks."

THE WATCHWORD.—In one of the great rock galleries of Gibraltar two British soldiers had mounted guard, one at each end of the vast tunnel. One was a believing man whose soul had found rest upon the Rock of Ages; the other was seeking rest, but had not found it.

It was midnight, and these soldiers were going their rounds, one meditating on the blood which had brought peace to his soul, the other darkly brooding over his own disquietudes and troubles. Suddenly an officer passes, challenges the former, and demands the watchword. "The precious blood of Christ!" called out the startled guard, forgetting for a moment the password of the night, and uttering unconsciously the thought which was at that moment filling his soul. Next moment he corrected himself, and the officer, no doubt amazed, passed on. But the words he spoke had rung through the gallery and entered the ears of his fellow-guard at the other end like a message from heaven. It seemed as if an angel had spoken, or rather as if God himself had proclaimed the good news in that still hour. "The precious blood of Christ!" Yes; that was peace! His troubled soul was now at rest. The midnight voice had spoken the good news to him, and God would carry the message. "The precious blood of Christ!" strange, but blessed watchword, never to be forgotten! For many a day and year, no doubt, it will be the joy and rejoicing of his heart.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE.—Rev. Leigh Richmond was one evening with a brother clergyman on the cause of a poor man who had acted inconsistently with his religious profession. After some angry and severe remarks had been made on the conduct of such persons, the gentleman with whom he was discussing the case concluded by saying: "I have no notion of such pretences; I will have nothing to do with him."

"Nay, brother," replied Richmond, "let us be humble and moderate. Remember who has said, 'making a difference.' With opportunity on the one hand, and Satan at the other, and the grace of God at neither, where should you and I be?"

THERE IS THAT SCATTERETH AND YET INCREASETH.—This passage of Scripture was strikingly illustrated in the case of William Powell, a dearly beloved member of the St. Paul's church in Jersey City, who died of a throat affection, July 12th, 1862, in the forty-second year of his age. About ten years ago he came to this city, and connected himself with this church. Though without wealth or any early educational advantages, he yet rose rapidly in favour with his brethren, until in their esteem he was second to no man in this charge. He soon became known, respected, patronized, and beloved throughout the city, and from a humble place in society he advanced, by God's blessing, to a position of wealth, honor, and great influence. The Apostle's language would have suited brother Powell's feeling in explanation of the matter, "By the grace of God, I am what I am."

But that others may know what kind of men the Church delights to honor and God deigns to prosper, I will remark that our brother was distinguished among us for several things. First, he was a man of sterling integrity. Openness and honesty branded in all his transactions, and he was transparent in all his transactions. He did just what he engaged to do, and did it at the time. Secondly, he was in sympathy with humanity around him; he wept with them that wept, and rejoiced with them that rejoiced. Benevolence was with him a ruling passion. While he was yet a poor man, his contributions to benevolent purposes were both large and numerous, and his heart expanded with the enlargement of his purse. He deemed no sacrifice too great, no service too hard, if required to promote the interests of his beloved Zion. He was a friend to the preachers; and his friendships were warm, generous, genial, and confiding. Such was Brother Powell. His inducements to cling to life were many and great, but by prayers and tears he committed himself to God, and patiently waited and suffered his will—and now "he is not, for God took him."—N. Y. paper.

RUSSIA AND THE RUSSIANS.

(Continued.)

RUSSIA AS A FIELD FOR EVANGELISTIC LABORS.

No country in Europe has greater claims on the friends of the Gospel than Russia. Its very vastness is fitted to arrest our attention. Russia in Europe is larger than all the rest of Europe. But the Russian empire, comprising as it does so large a portion of Europe, the entire northern end of Asia, and the northwestern part of North America, is quite one-seventh part of the habitable globe, for it contains all of eight millions of square miles. In size it is about equal to the British empire. Russia in Europe has more than 62,000,000 inhabitants; while the entire empire has very nearly 70,000,000, not 79,000,000, as some of the newspapers have asserted.

The position and influence of Russia make it one of the most important countries for Christian effort. The Russians are Asiatic in their origin, manners, instincts. Their desire for conquest is very much in the direction of Asiatic countries, or Asiatic people, rather than the countries of Western Europe. And if the Russians possessed as much knowledge of the true Gospel as the English, they could and would do great things for the salvation of the entire Asiatic continent.

But the greatest reason of all why we should desire the evangelization of Russia is to be found in its need of the Gospel. More than 60,000,000 of people in Russia are Christians in contradistinction from the remaining millions of the population, which are Jewish, Mahometan, Pagan. There are not more than 2,500,000 of Protestants in the entire Russian empire, while there are 7,500,000 of Roman Catholics, and quite 50,000,000 followers of the Greek Church, including the various branches of *schismatics*, or people who have, for one cause or another, separated from that church, but retain, in many cases, many of its ceremonies and worst errors.

The Protestant churches of Russia are to be found mainly in Finland, the Baltic provinces, (Esthonia, Livonia, and Courland,) and in the dispersed German Colonies in the Southern portions of Russia in Europe, and the Trans-Caucasian provinces in Asia. And while it is true that a resuscitation of evangelical Protestantism is going forward among the Protestants of Russia, it is to be deplored that there is even yet comparatively but little spiritual life in their churches. Still the religious condition of the members or followers of the Greek and Roman Catholic churches is incomparably worse than that of the Protestant.

From 1818 to 1825, in the last year of the Emperor Alexander I., much was done by the Russian Bible Society to print and circulate the sacred Scriptures. But the opposition of the hierarchy of the Greek church, which is the national church of Russia, though all others are tolerated, triumphed, and the "Russian Bible Society" was suspended when Nicholas came to the throne. It remains suspended till this day. But the "St. Petersburg Bible Society" was allowed to be formed in 1831 by the Protestants, and for their benefit or rather for the benefit of the population that is not included in the great national church—the "Holy Apostolic church." That Bible Society has done much to circulate the Word of God in the Finnish, Esthonian, Lettish, German, Polish and Armenian languages, especially in the first three or four of these.

We have been gratified to learn that the Imperial government has directed that the Bible be translated into the modern Russ, the vernacular language of what may be called the great Russian or Slavonic race. It was high time. Only the New Testament, the Pentateuch, the Book of Judges, and one or two other portions of the Old Testament were translated and published by the Russian Bible Society just spoken of, and the translation of them is said by the Russians not to be good. What the translation now making under Imperial auspices will prove to be we cannot predict. Our expectations are not high, for the Septuagint has as much influence in the Greek church as the Latin Vulgate has in the Roman Catholic. The Gospels and Acts of the Apostles have been printed, and 200,000 copies have been circulated! Let us praise God for this. Even a poor translation of the Bible is better than none.

While there is but little true apprehension of the glorious Gospel of our Lord in the Greek church, we have no doubt that the Saviour has his "hidden ones" in the bosom of that communion, who will be his "in that day when he makes up his jewels." Bishop Tchern, in his day, was a faithful preacher of the Gospel. He was the author of many books. Several of his writings are circulated as tracts. There are some true followers of Christ among the "Separatists," or schismatics, in Russia, although the greater part of these people, amounting to several millions, seem to be as ignorant of the pure Gospel as the church from which they have seceded. The best of them, we apprehend, are the *Molokani*, in the southern part of Russia in Europe. There certainly are many excellent people among this sect, which seems to have had its origin in reading the Scriptures; probably some of these copies, nearly half a million in number, which the Russian Bible Society had put into the hands of the people before its noble career was arrested in 1825 by the late emperor.

In no country in the world is the mode of doing good by religious tracts of more importance than in Russia. The censorship, though very rigid, has permitted the printing of a very large number of tracts, a work which a little band of evangelical Christian brethren in St. Petersburg have been for many years prosecuting. Of late the government has greatly encouraged the temperance cause, by freely allowing the publication of tracts on that subject.

One of the grandest methods of doing good in Russia is to employ suitable agents to sell or barter religious tracts at the great fairs at Nishni-Novgorod and other cities in the empire. In this way sometimes 100,000 copies and more have been circulated in a single year. Our American and Foreign Christian Union, when it bore the name of the Foreign Evangelical Society, once and again employed an excellent young Englishman, who knew the Russian language well, to go to the great fairs of Russia and sell religious tracts. Of course a large number have been circulated in other ways. In many parts of Russia the number of people who read is small, so far as the masses are concerned. The people of Finland being almost all Protestants, know how to read. The same is true to a great extent in the Baltic provinces. The Poles, too, can far more generally read than the people who belong to the Russian or Greek church.

The desire for religious tracts in Russia is very striking. The poor people who have the good fortune to get one at, or by means of the great fairs referred to, often value it more than we do an octavo volume. The Russian traders who come to the fairs will often exchange a coarse cotton handkerchief, worth ten or twelve cents, for a tract, which they will carry into the heart of Siberia, or any other part of the empire from which they have come.

We were once driving along the Gulf of Finland, in company with a pious young English merchant, returning from Oranienbaum, the summer residence of the late grand-duke Michael, to Peterhoff. It was a beautiful summer afternoon. We had not proceeded far till we found ourselves near a small bathing establishment, with him. When he was erected for the benefit of his daughters, a soldier was guarding the causeway or bridge that extended from the land to the little house in the water. We stopped to examine the establishment. The soldier was a pensive-looking man from Finland, but spoke the Russian and Swedish languages well. He was very civil in his manners. After we had left him and returned to our carriage, happening to look again towards the little bathing-house, we saw the soldier standing where we had parted with him, with his hat in his hand, reading a book. At our request, the English merchant endeavored to inquire what it was the soldier was reading so reverently. He remained some time engaged in conversation with him. When he came to us he was so affected by what he had seen and heard, that it was some time before he could relate it. He said the book which the soldier was reading was a tract in the Swedish language, which he knew, as many in Finland do, and related to both Temperance and the Way of Salvation. Said the soldier, "I have had this book two years, and I read it every day. It is the only book I possess. Since I commenced reading it I have never tasted a drop of brandy, nor will I as long as I live; and I have learned from it the way of salvation through Jesus Christ, and I am daily endeavoring to get ready for heaven. I cannot expect to find much happiness in this world as a Russian soldier; but I am looking forward to that eternal life which the Saviour has promised me!"

Deeply touched by this simple and beautiful story the young Englishman put his hand into his pocket, and gave the soldier money enough to get a Bible and many tracts, and told him where to find the Bible and Tract Depository in St. Petersburg. "O," said the soldier, "I shall then have a Bible! I never expected to enjoy that happiness. I shall not be able to go up to St. Petersburg for some weeks, but some of my mess will be going up soon, and I will send up by them and get the book of God."

A BRIGHTER DAY IS COMING.

While the government has ordered the Bible to be translated into the vernacular of the great Russian people, the printing of the New Testament has been commenced; and while there is much doing to circulate the Scriptures in Finland, the Baltic Provinces, and among the dispersed German colonies in the empire, it is a matter that calls for devout thanksgiving that the interests of evangelical religion are advancing among the Protestants of Russia. In Finland there is a growing spirit of Foreign Missions, as we stated in the *Christian World* for July.

This is indeed good news. But we have equally good news from Livonia, one of the Baltic Provinces. At the meeting of the Lutheran Synod of that province, last year at Bolmar, a very interesting discussion respecting Foreign Missions took place. This synod sends its missionary contributions (last year about 5,000 roubles, or \$4,000) to the Lutheran Missionary Society of Leipzig. A deputy of the synod to the annual meeting of the Leipzig Society made a report. One clergyman stated that in his parish four Estonian boys, the sons of wealthy farmers, were preparing, with the consent of their parents, for the foreign missionary service, and were to be sent, toward the close of the year, to the Institute of Leipzig. Several motions for establishing a Russian Missionary Seminary, and for selecting some missionary field of their own, were referred to the diocesan, and will be acted upon at this year's synod. At the close of the synod, a young minister who had just finished his studies at the University of Dorpat, and who was on the point of entering the Missionary Seminary of Leipzig, in order to prepare for the mission in India, was solemnly ordained.—*Christian World*.

AS OLD MAN'S REGRET.—A poor old man, who carried the weight of a hundred years upon his bowed shoulders, once tottered ten miles to a special religious meeting.

"How long have you walked in the way of faith?" inquired the minister.

The old man sighed and said, "I lived one hundred and three years and six months in this manner, knowing nothing of the way to heaven—blind and ignorant."

"And now what is your hope?"

"My hope, sir, is the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world. O, to think that I should have gone on so long not caring for my guilt! Jesus was ready to lead me to himself! but it was he at last who made the truth burst upon me. How can I praise him enough for his wondrous love toward such a poor sinner!"

Regret, wonder, love and gratitude made up that old man's feelings. But how narrowly did he escape hell! Over a century of rebellion against Christ! Surely he was a brand smitten from the burning. Aged man! how long have you lived in opposition to Christ? You are at the mouth of the pit. Do you intend to go into eternity with all your guilt upon your head! If you surely ought to begin at once—aye, this instant—to seek your long-neglected Lord. There is not a moment to be lost, for he will find you if you do not find him. If you die in your sins, you will endure the punishment of hell as long as a life spent in doing evil? "Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong (asks Jehovah), in the day that I shall deal with thee?"—*Good News*.

THE FAMILY DAY.—"Talking of 'family ties,' and 'family love,' and 'family gatherings,' where would it all be if it were not for a 'family day?' said a working man. "What do you mean?" I asked.

"I mean," he replied, "that the Lord's day is the 'family day.' Why, I and thousands of working men would hardly know our own children if it were not for that blessed day which brings us all together. We are off in the morning before the little ones are up, and when we get home at night they are mostly gone to bed, or they are tired, and so are we, and it's not very much we can know of one another at the face end of the week; but when that best day comes that's all our own, then we can gather round the table or fireside and talk to one another, and we can go to the house of God together, and think him that has given us one day in seven as a holy, blessed 'family day.'"