

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.  
FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETIES.

Extracted from a report of the New-Hampshire Bible Society.

Since the last anniversary, the Board have been favoured, by the generous attention of Mr. Ralstone, the Treasurer of the Bible Society of Philadelphia, with the Tenth Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society which was adopted in May 1814; and also with a "Summary account of the proceedings of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and of the beneficial effects, which have resulted from its institution." These two pamphlets comprise 356 pages; and contain a large mass of very interesting information. They are documents of high value. They furnish "unequivocal proofs of the deep interest excited in the public mind, by an institution which has for its object the circulation of the Holy Scriptures, with a view to the glory of God and the salvation of mankind." So deeply has this interest been felt, that upwards of 400 Auxiliary and Branch Societies have been formed in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and the adjacent Islands. In addition to these, numerous Bible Associations were formed, consisting chiefly of subscribers of one penny or two pence each. In connexion with an Auxiliary Society in London, eight such Associations were formed, which the poor manifested a great readiness to join. From the above mentioned Auxiliary and Branch Societies, the Parent Institution received, during the year proceeding May, 1814, more than 230,000 dollars. Donations and bequests to a very large amount were also received; and there was a very considerable accession of new members, who subscribe not less than one guinea, each, as an annual payment, or not less than ten guineas, each, as members for life.

Furnished with so ample resources, the Society was very extensively engaged in supplying the destitute with the word of life. The amount of copies of the Scriptures, issued by the Society in one year, was 167,320 Bibles, and 185,249 Testaments, making a total of 352,569. Besides this large and extensive distribution of the Scriptures, the Society had afforded very liberal aid to other Societies in Europe and elsewhere by donations.

As we pass upon the Continent of Europe, our attention seems first directed to Russia. The St. Petersburg Bible Society, and its Branches, occupy very elevated ground; and for the time of their existence, are not perhaps surpassed in zeal and activity by the British Foreign Bible Society and its numerous Auxiliaries.

"The committee of the St. Petersburg Bible Society have displayed throughout, and continue to display an extraordinary degree of energy, liberality and wisdom." We have been informed, that in the space of two years the committee printed 38,700 Bibles in seven different languages; while 31,500 were printed in four different languages, by subdivisions of the principal Society. We are further informed, that the Bible was on sale in St. Petersburg in fourteen different languages; and these were eagerly sought for, and purchased with avidity.

To impress your minds with the vast importance of the present exertions in Russia to multiply and circulate copies of the Scriptures, it may be observed, that the Armenian Scriptures had become so scarce, that it was with the greatest difficulty a copy could be procured to print from; and that it cost as much as 35 dollars.—Only two years ago, in the district of Dorpat in Livonia, including a population of 106,000 souls, not 200 Testaments were to be found.—The number of those who speak the Finnish language is said to be not less than 1,300,000; no edition, either of the Old or New Testament, has been printed for thirty years; and scarcely a single perfect copy of the former could be purchased. When such is the scarcity of the word of God, and so immense the value of this sacred treasure, how delightful are the tidings, that "it is the determination of the Russian Bible Society, that their exertions shall not be diminished, until every family in Russia possesses a Bible!" This is the determination of the great and good Alexander.

STATE OF THE JEWS.

The state of the Jews has, at this day,

become a subject of increasing attention and solicitude among Christians both in Europe and America. Almost eighteen centuries have elapsed since this degraded and deluded people, for their rejection and crucifixion of the Saviour of the world, have been under the curse of God. They have been cut off—deprived of the privileges of the everlasting covenant—scattered abroad among all nations and according to the "sure word of prophecy," have been "a proverb and a bye word in the earth." During this long period of many generations, they have continued the despisers of the Gospel—been hardened in unbelief—have looked with contempt upon the believers of Christianity, and have been daily expecting the appearance of the predicted Messiah, as their temporal Deliverer and King. But little exertion has hitherto been made among the followers of Jesus of Nazareth, to rescue them from their forlorn condition, and to remove the veil of unbelief from their hearts. Indeed so peculiar and complicated have been the difficulties attending their case, the general impression among Christians has been, that to gain access to them, and to adopt and pursue means for their conversion to Christianity, with any considerable probability of success, is impracticable. Human agency has been considered unnecessary and unavailing, and that nothing short of a miraculous and immediate interposition of Divine power would effect this wonderful event and bring about their promised restoration. Of late, however, a different view of this subject, seems to have become prevalent in Christendom. Many begin to feel that something may be done—that something ought and must be done, and that immediately, by the Christian community, to deliver them from their present state of blindness and bondage, and to bring them into the liberty of the children of God. Though success is not to be expected without divine co-operation, yet it is now believed that means must be used—that human agency is required—that we are bound not only to weep over the miseries of this unhappy people and to pray for their restoration, but we must act—we must go forward "to the help of the Lord, against the mighty."

There are two or three circumstances which seem to be clear intimations of Divine Providence, that the period for their deliverance and conversion to Christianity is nigh at hand. One is, the increasing conviction among Christians, that access to them is practicable, and that it is their present duty, to engage in devising and pursuing means to bring about this important event. Another is, the success which has attended the feeble exertions that have already been made, in their behalf, and the disposition manifested among many of them, to receive and read the New Testament.

These communications will be found interesting. In this connexion, we would suggest one consideration, which we think ought to excite the particular attention of Christians and prompt them to immediate exertions in behalf of the Jews, even in preference to the Heathen, and that is, according to the prophecy, the restoration of the Jews or their conversion to Christianity is to be expected previous to that of the Gentiles. The ingathering of Israel is represented as that, which will be as life from the dead to the Gentile world. If this be the case, what a powerful motive is presented before us, for first, commiserating their case and for making them the objects of our first and best effort in the cause of Christian benevolence! "When the Lord bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice and Israel be glad."

Bost. Recorder.

From the New-York Gazette, May 14.  
ON THE ANCIENT SALTNESS OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LAKES.

It is highly gratifying to observe the increasing interest which the natural history of our country has excited. The following letter treats of the General Lakes of North America, and the adjoining regions, in a geological point of view it will undoubtedly tend to stimulate inquiry, and induce travellers to become attentive observers of the scenes around them.

The beautiful slab of dove colored marble lately brought by Major General Brown from the neighborhood of Lake Ontario, in Jefferson county, New-York, evinces the former dominion of the ocean in the place where it was quarried; for it is filled

with Scallops, or Pectinates, animals of the marine character, and not known to inhabit any other than salt water.

The very peculiar fossils, embedded in silicious rocks, brought by Major Long, of the corps of Engineers, from the banks of the river Illinois, warrant a like conclusion, as to the tract lying between the Michigan and the Mississippi. The hills of cockles, and some other remains of a new and extraordinary nature, distinguishable, in them, are referable only to creatures of the sea.

So the petrifications of Michilimackinac, collected by Dr. Stevenson, convince the geologist, who examines them, that they were, at some former period, covered by a briny fluid. Fort Holmes stands on a summit of the island, several hundred feet above the level of Lake Huron. The rock which supports that military work, is a lime stone, intermixed with flint, and running into chalk, with variegations of fluted bivalve shells. These strata must have been placed where they are by the agency of an ancient ocean.

Thus it appears, that the regions bordering on Ontario, Huron and Michigan, bear witness of a former submersion in salt water; which, having been drained off by the falls and cataracts, has been succeeded by fresh water.

With these facts before him, the reader will comprehend more clearly the facts and reasoning in the following letter, worthy of a Pallas or a Humboldt.

Geological considerations on the condition of the Middle Lakes of North America, addressed to the Honorable Samuel L. Mitchell, Professor of Natural History in the University of New-York, etc. by B. F. Stickney, dated Indian Agency Office, Fort Wayne, Jan. 24, 1817.

"Dear Sir—I have not had the pleasure of seeing, or having any communication with you, since I left the city of Washington, in the spring of 1812, for this place. I have frequently recollected our last interview; it was in the office of Secretary of State—when you lectured me upon the necessity of greater industry in collecting and arranging geological observations. I must acknowledge my indolence notwithstanding.

"But as you have been so good as to open the field of inquiry in relation to the inland seas of this continent—in relation to the past and present state of their waters and inhabitants; and as I have spent several years in the neighborhood of those seas, I will try to assist you in carrying that enquiry a little farther.

"From such observations as I have been able to make personally, and some others supported by the testimony of great numbers, I am of opinion that, at some remote period, the waters of those seas, west of Niagara Falls, were discharged through the Mississippi river, if there were any discharge and for the following reasons.

"1st. I believe that no person who has viewed Niagara Falls attentively, has doubted that at some period the ridge of rock over which the water now passes, has been much higher than it now is.

"2d. That there is not much difference in the level of the water in the Lakes or Seas of Erie, St. Clair, Huron and Michigan—perhaps not more than five feet.

"3d. That the height of land dividing the water between the seas and the Mississippi river, is very low; particularly where the Illinois and Chicago rivers have their source, and discharge in opposite directions. So low, that perogues pass three or four months in the year, without difficulty, from the Michigan sea to the Illinois river. The height of land is computed at about eighteen feet above the surface of the sea.

"4th. That all the western parts of the state of Ohio, and Indiana, and the Illinois territory are of alluvial formation. That the Prairies produce convincing proofs to the observer, that it has not been many centuries since they have been covered with water; and that that water subsided very gradually. From which, all the higher spots of ground in the Prairies have become clothed with forest trees, and the lower have none; as though the lower ground had not had time for the trees to take root and grow since the water had subsided.

"Now, if the ridge rock at Niagara Falls was one hundred feet higher than at present, it is evident, from what has been stated, that the water could have no other discharge from those seas, than through the Illinois river

into the Mississippi, and perhaps no discharge at all. But salt water fish might ever have found their way annually up the Mississippi and Illinois, and down the Chicago river, and return if they pleased.

"But the most difficult part of the question, in deciding whether the water has been salt or not, is whether evaporation be admitted to be sufficient to counterbalance the influx of hundreds of rivers into the seas. If we could believe that evaporation was sufficient to account for the water of so many rivers, I think we might satisfactorily show the source of supply of the muriate of soda, there being many springs highly charged with this salt, discharging into the American seas; beside other sources of supply. There are two springs on Sagana River, discharging into the Huron of sufficient magnitude to satisfy me if there were no other supply, that the whole mass of water might become sufficiently impregnated in a few centuries (if water produced any change) to give the salt water character to its inhabitants, if there were no other discharge than evaporation. And it may be observed, that if the rock of Niagara was twenty feet higher than it now is, a great part of the country is so low, that the water would spread to such an extent as probably to make the surface two or three times larger than at present; and of course, the quantity of water evaporated would be in proportion to the greater surface. And upon observing the very small quantity of water discharging from the Erie, by the straits of Niagara, compared with the many times greater quantity flowing into the Superior, Huron, Michigan, St. Clair and Erie seas; and again, upon comparing the quantity of water passing through the straits of Niagara, with the quantity passing into the St. Lawrence from Montreal, to Quebec, by estimating the width, depth and velocity of each, we perceive that there is not so large a quantity of water passing in any given time through the latter as the former.

"The question has suggested itself to me, if a dam were made across the straits of Niagara, at the discharge of the Erie sea, 20 feet higher than the present surface of the water, whether the water in common would rise to the height of the dam, with the increase of surface, and proportional increase of evaporation.

"If stopping the discharge of water through the straits of Niagara would not raise the water to a sufficient height to discharge through the Illinois river, I should be ready to subscribe to the doctrine of the ancient saltness of the water of those seas, without farther enquiry. But as we have not seen this experiment made, nor is it likely we ever shall, we must follow you in your resort to other sources of evidence; and where we cannot furnish absolute demonstration, to supply the deficiency by conjecture.

"That many of the fish, tortoise and fossil productions, have a family likeness to those who inhabit salt water, I can bear witness; and it can be supported by the testimony of thousands.

"Another circumstance that may aid in the investigation, is, that the habitudes of the fish of those great inland waters, are the same in passing up their tributary rivers, in the spring, to cast their roe; as from the seas of salt water. It may be a greater convenience to the sturgeon, herring, etc. to have a large body of deep water for a winter's retreat, and rivers to resort to in the spring, to breed and rear their young, than the quality of saltness or freshness of the water. The codfish, finned tortoise, and other "ocean animals;" may have chosen those seas for their residence, from their great depth and extent, and therefore maintaining greater uniformity of temperature; and I think it must be admitted to be choice, as there is a free passage open between the oceans of salt water and the fresh seas.

"Experiments have not been made, within my knowledge to show that sudden changes of fish from salt to fresh, or fresh to salt water, is an inconvenience to them, or that it produces any change in their constitutions. It is a matter of habit with many kinds to make this change annually.

"I have made these observations to excite further enquiry, and they are submitted to your discretion, to be given to the public, if you think they will have a tendency to produce that effect.

"This interesting part of the continent, remaining unexplored by men of science, affords matter for volumes, if I had leisure and industry to give it to you.