

Circular Letter.

CONDITIONS OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH.

THE CIRCULAR LETTER OF THE NOVA SCOTIA EASTERN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, TO THE CHURCHES OF WHICH IT IS COMPOSED.

Dear Brethren,—

We would affectionately solicit your attention, in this Annual Letter, to some of the *Conditions of Spiritual Growth*, a subject intimately associated with the glory of Christ and lying at the foundation of all church and Denominational as well as individual prosperity and usefulness. Intellectual, numerical or pecuniary enlargement will prove a very doubtful blessing without a corresponding spiritual development, though the latter will become a safe and helpful handmaid to the former.

During the past year, God has greatly blessed many of our churches with additions to their membership. It becomes those churches so favoured to realize their increased responsibilities, and institute careful inquiry as to how these new recruits may be made to answer the design of their *new birth* and best subserve the interests of Christ's Kingdom. We greatly fear that religious life is too often stifled at the outset and religious growth stunted and dwarfed for want of the employment of proper means to promote it. The scriptures call upon us to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." To "be also enlarged." To "press forward to the mark," to "go on to perfection," &c. The sacred writers nowhere countenance a stand-still policy in the christian life, they represent that life as a *race to run*, a field to be cultivated and a journey to be taken. The church is the mystical body of Christ, every true christian is a member of the body, and the body as a whole can only be developed by the growth of its members. This truth should be well understood and acted upon by all the senior members of the church and zealously taught to the younger as soon as they enter our ranks. Instead of allowing the impression to strengthen, that, after the first act of consecration to Christ, the main part of the work is done, which young Christians are very apt to entertain, every effort should be made to correct such an impression and make them feel that their life work is just begun.

This should be attended to immediately, there is no time to lose. The first three months after conversion will, as a rule, very largely determine the whole future of the christian as to usefulness in this life. Some say, be cautious in bringing the hardships, dangers and duties that lie across the christian's path, before his mind at the outset. You will discourage him, let him find out for himself. This