

CIRCULAR LETTER.

Beloved Brethren,

The approach of another of our annual meetings, reminds us of our duty of addressing you on the subjects, which are so deeply connected with our present peace and our eternal welfare. The subject to which we would solicit your attention, is, that of the importance of making a suitable provision for the support of a gospel ministry.

We could easily select a subject that would be more agreeable to our feelings, and perhaps to yours ; but we do not think any other subject so necessary to be discussed at the present time. We would therefore wish to lay aside our own feelings, and the personal interest which some of us have in this subject ; and address you simply as those who have obtained mercy to be faithful.

Among every denomination of christians, whose ministers are supported by the voluntary contributions of their people, there are, no doubt, difficulties in providing a suitable support for them ; but we apprehend the difficulties on this subject are greater among us, than among any other denomination. If this difficulty arose from a want of means, we would endeavour to submit with patience, and say nothing upon the subject ; but we believe this is not the case ; for although there are not many among us of the rich, the mighty, or the noble ; yet there is a sufficiency, both of numbers and property, for the purpose. Neither do we conceive that it arises from a want of true piety : We trust, that there are as many among us, in proportion to our numbers, who have given themselves and their property to the service of God, as can be found among any denomination of christians. It must then follow, that the principal difficulties arise from a want of right views of the subject ; and this induces us to offer to your consideration the following arguments, in behalf of the practice we would recommend.

The first argument we would advance on this subject, is drawn from the principles of equity and justice : One end for which the great Creator has bestowed upon men their various talents, is, that by a right exercise of those talents, they should provide a suitable support for themselves, and those who are dependent upon them ; consequently, whatever occupation takes up the time and talents of a man, whether of a civil or sacred nature, if for the benefit of his fellow men, it should in point of equity, yield him a suitable support. To this argument the Apostle resorts (1st Cor 9. 7.) when he enquires, " who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges ? who planteth a vineyard and eateth not of the fruit thereof ? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock ? As if he had said, " shall the warrior, the husbandman, and the shepherd, all receive a compensation for their labours, while we are neglected ? shall those who minister to the support, safety and comfort of the body, be entitled to a living, while engaged in those services, and shall not we also be entitled to a support, who contribute to the safety, comfort and well-being of both body and soul in this life, and that which is to come."