

CIRCULAR LETTER.

To the Churches composing the Western N. B. Baptist Association.

DEAR BRETHREN,—Permit us to call your attention to the subject of Ministerial support. Serious Christians and reasonable persons believe that men must be called of God to preach the Gospel, while the great duty of their support is not so sacredly regarded. Do not many, even in this enlightened age, disregard all rule and obligation relative to it, and think if the Lord calls a man to preach, it is his duty to engage in it most earnestly, whether he is supported or not? How the Bible and a cold, covetous heart disagree, where self-interest is concerned! And how many Churches and religious societies suffer irreparable loss, run down, and become extinct by neglecting to support the Gospel Ministry! What a blighting influence such neglect exerts upon the precious cause of Christ, and is probably one of the greatest causes of the frequent removal of Ministers, and of distracting, dividing, and unsettling many once flourishing Churches. Therefore the cause of Christ, the welfare of his Church, and the salvation of sinners, seem to demand a most serious consideration of the subject.

Ministerial support is established by God himself. Under the Mosaic dispensation He did not allow the Priests to be neglected; they were annually, bountifully, and promptly supported, by the direction of God, who said to the people "Take heed to thyself, that thou forsake not the Levites as long as thou livest upon the earth." Their obligations were perpetual and made most sacred by the Holy One of Israel. Our Saviour enjoined the same duty under the Gospel dispensation. When he entered upon his public labors, He cast himself upon his hearers for support. And when He sent his Apostles to preach, He told them to make no provision for future wants, because "The workman is worthy of his meat." They were therefore to expect a competent support as a just reward for their services. God has made the duty as plain and absolute as any other command in the Bible and has ordained that they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel.

Reason enforces the duty. Who does not consider that reason, common sense, and justice require that those who labor and toil hard for others should be fully and honestly compensated for their labors? If a man refuse such compensation to the one who has served him, is he not considered dishonest, and as greatly defrauding the laborer? And is it not as dishonest in the sight of heaven for a people to enjoy the labors of a devoted Minister and not pay him an adequate support? To know the claims of justice in supporting the Gospel Ministry, compare it with other callings. Are the time and talents of a Minister of as much value to himself and family as those of men in other pursuits? Do not justice, reason, and the Bible demand that the services of a Gospel Minister should be estimated equal with those who benefit society by the power of cultivated intellect. So that mental services are considered worthy of a greater recompense than those mere physical powers, because they are more difficult to obtain, and demand the exercise of the higher qualities of our nature. If then, the recompense bestowed upon scientific or professional men be the standard, how will Ministerial support generally compare with it? They are expected to be fully paid, so as to make a comfortable living and lay up something for old age, while it is not unfrequently the inquiry relative to Ministers, what can they live for? How many are not satisfied without talents in the pulpit as would, in secular pursuits, secure a competent