

Circular Letter.

INCREASED LIBERALITY—THE DUTY OF THE CHURCH, AND THE NECESSITY OF THE AGE.

THE CIRCULAR LETTER FROM THE NOVA SCOTIA WESTERN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION TO THE CHURCHES OF WHICH IT IS COMPOSED, 1872.

Beloved Brethren,—

The sublime and startling statement, "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price," rings in our ears at the very commencement of our religious life. And as we hear the Master's voice saying unto us, "Glorify God in your bodies and spirits which are his," we acknowledge his claim. We admit his right to all we have and are. Life—body—soul—all,—we are ready to lay on his altar. And we exclaim, "What have we but our sins that we have not received? But as a limb loses strength and vigour by lack of exercise, so does a faculty of the soil or a grace of the heart. Through improper training, neglect of carrying out good resolutions, or the cooling of religious ardour, we soon come to seek our "own, and not the things that are Jesus Christ's; originally all things were declared to be the Lord's; yet we find even Christians ready to claim some things as their *own*. They would seemingly break up the proprietorship of Jesus, and to a certain extent dispossess the Creator. To warp us back from our departure from God in this matter to a proper anchorage-ground, let us note the following considerations:—

I. GOD *demand*s LIBERALITY AT THE HANDS OF HIS PEOPLE.

Did he not ask of the ancient patriarchs, even to a tenth of their income, valuable animals in sacrifice? And was not this offering imposed upon them as an obligation they owed to God, and as a condition of his worship? We are told that "the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering." It is said that "Abraham gave Melchisedec tithes of all." "Even the patriarch Abraham," says Paul, "gave the tenth of the spoils." And Jacob said; "I will surely give the tenth unto thee."

As time passes on and the strife for wealth grows keen, and men are in danger of becoming selfish and exclusive, the Lord demands liberal gifts of his people Israel, as an evidence of their attachment to him and a proof that their worship is sincere. The burdens laid upon them in this matter would seem to us heavy in the extreme. The tenth was to be given to the tribe of Levi. Another tenth was for public festivals, and for the poor. The first born males of cattle were to be given up, and other donations were to be made