

CIRCULAR LETTER,

To the Churches composing the Western Baptist New-Brunswick Association.

BELOVED BRETHREN IN CHRIST,—

We design in this annual epistle to call your attention to the importance of cultivating brotherly love. And in doing so, we shall notice some reasons why we should cultivate a spirit of love to one another.

First. The children of God are all one family, they are all born from above, they can look up to God with confidence and cry Abba Father. They can claim Christ as their elder brother, and the Holy Spirit as their comforter. They are all travelling one way—their joys, sorrows, and anticipations are one. They expect to spend an eternity together, singing the high praises of God and the Lamb. When a contention arose between the servants of Abraham and Lot, the old Patriarch Abraham referred to this family connection, and did it in such a way as to shew that he thought the relationship was sufficient to silence all contention. "Let there be no strife I pray thee, between me and thee, and between thy herdsmen and my herdsmen, for we are brethren." If the spirit of discord and strife in the domestic circle is unpleasant and injurious in its tendency, how much more so when it enters the sacred precincts of the Christian Church, disturbing the peace of the spiritual brotherhood, and introducing confusion into the family of Christ! When Christians fail to love each other, they furnish food for the infidel, and cause the enemies of the truth to blaspheme.

Again. Brotherly love is the proof of our union with Christ. The Apostle says—"We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren." "He that loveth not his brother abideth in death; whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer, and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" Love is the very essence of true religion. Were an individual to possess the wisdom of a Paul and the eloquence of an Apollas, and all the gifts and tongues of men and angels, without love he would be as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. Love suffereth loss and is kind. Love envieth not, love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth—beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth, but will live when faith and hope shall cease. Love is the golden chain that links together in the bonds of enduring fellowship the