

CIRCULAR LETTER.

The Circular Letter of the African Baptist Association to the Churches of which it is composed.

DEAR BRETHREN,—Having been appointed to write the Circular Letter of our Association, I would rather have seen the lot fallen into more experienced hands than mine, not having the desired qualification for such a duty. I most cordially solicit your sympathy.

Among the most important blessings which the Divine Being has conferred upon mankind, may be numbered the happy display of good and pious examples. In every age and country, perhaps in almost every little district throughout the earth, He has placed some of His faithful servants or returning prodigals to bear witness of His power and goodness, and to encourage others to a life of purity, piety and beneficence.

The one to whom I allude is our most respected and much lamented Brother John R. Thomas, who was Secretary of this Association for the past (15) fifteen years; but the Divine Creator thought fit to call him home from his earthly seat of action, and to take him to that undiscovered country, from whose bourn no traveller has ever returned. By his death the Association has lost a noble member. His habits were temperate; his manners were social; but more than all, his end was a happy one. During the latter portion of his life, when his sufferings at times were quite severe, in one of his sharpest fits of pain, looking up to Heaven, he said: "God's holy will be done; I bless Him for all my afflictions."

He was of strong bodily constitution; but a severe cold, which he caught about one year previous to his death, brought on a consumption of the lungs. The nearer he approached his dissolution, the more plainly was observed his continual improvement in a spiritual and Heavenly temper.

I have conversed with him on more than one occasion of his willingness to die. He expressed his desire to live or die, as it pleased Divine Providence. He rejoiced in the comfortable persuasion of accepting *Christ* in his youth. A few days before his decease he said: "I shall now die; but O! what unspeakable glories do I see!