

CIRCULAR LETTER

Dearlly Beloved Brethren—

As I have been reappointed to address you by letter, at first I hardly knew where to begin or what to say that would be profitable to my own soul and to yours. But my attention has been arrested and my soul has been meditating on two particulars, and while I thus meditate, I will by the good Lord's assistance, write unto you, trusting it will be a benefit to all.

FIRST—The union between Christ and Believers.

SECONDLY—Imperfect attainments.

First then—There is an union between Christ and believers that every metaphor falls short of. No relation so near as He. The friend may prove false, the brother betray the brother, parents cast off the relation, and husband and wife be separated. Three strong figures hold forth this union, that of the tree and his branches, the head and his members, and eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of God. Now, what we eat and drink mixes with the mass of blood, and is so intimately assimilated with the fluids, that no power can separate it again. So when by faith I receive the Son of God, and eat his flesh and drink his blood, my soul partakes of the divine nature, till every power is holy, every affection heavenly, and till the life of Christ is made manifest in my body. After this union, the soul and Christ cannot be separated; death may send the soul out of the body, but cannot send Christ out of the soul. And hereupon follows a commonness of interest. Christ renews the will, sanctifies the affections, enlightens the understanding, and claims the whole soul for his temple. Yea, more, he showers down his mercies, numbers his crosses, weighs his afflictions, wherewith he himself is also afflicted, and bears his sorrows. And all of Christ is the soul's; his righteousness, his love, his joy, his