

The Dearest on Earth to Me

By John Thiel, [mp3](#)

Scripture reading: Luke 8:20 And it was told him [by certain] which said, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee. 21 And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it.

*I have a Friend so precious,
So very dear to me,
He loves me with such tender love,
He loves so faithfully;
I could not live apart from Him,
I love to feel Him nigh,
And so we dwell together, My Lord and I.*

You want to remember those words of song while we contemplate the word of God, because we want to make those words real, and not only wonderful poetic fancy. In my experience over the years, I have found that people sing hymns and their lives are not in harmony with those very hymns they sing. This is where the scripture comes to my mind: They draw *nigh unto Me with their mouth, but their heart is far from Me*. May this not be our case.

It is with great deliberation that I now share this message with you. Do you know of someone of the past, or the present, with whom you have bonded into a relationship of perfect harmony, a relationship that filled your soul with absolute comfort? Have you ever had someone so close to you that understands you, and whom you understand; a precious bond? The description of such a friendship is expressed in the experience of David and Jonathan:

1 Samuel 18:1 And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.

Here was a soul knit with the soul of another. Such was this love that when Jonathan was slain in battle, the lament of David was very great.

A Relationship Higher Than Romantic Love

2 Samuel 1:25 How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, [thou wast] slain in thine high places. 26 I am distressed for thee, my

brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women. 27 How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!

Here is a love that we want to explore, a love which is far higher than the experience of romantic love between a man and a woman, even higher than the ordinary marital relationship of husband and wife. There was a relationship there between Jonathan and David which was very pleasant, a relationship of which David could say, *Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women*, passing that romantic love.

As we seek to explore this love, let me read to you a non-rhyming poem under the term of *friendship*. This is somewhat an expression of the love that may have been between Jonathan and David:

*Even when we are apart, we are together;
We have a special kind of communication
That needs few words and little time;
We have a rare understanding that has grown strong enough over years
To weather long silences and distant partings, and still continue to grow.
We've been through a lot together,
And I guess that's why we are the kind of friends we are,
The kind who understand each other without need for promises.
Our friendship has meant so much to me;
It's filled my life in so many ways no other friendship ever could.
We have that kind of friendship
That has grown over much time and many shared moments,
The kind of friendship that will last forever.*

The Dearest on Earth to Me

Do you ever yearn for a friend like that? to have someone with whom you can have a friendship of this calibre, where there is absolute satisfaction, absolute comfort, nothing left to have to try to do to make that person love you? Interestingly, if you were to see two people in that kind of relationship, would you be jealous? Because there is something really special about those two, and you might think, It's just not fair; I wished I had something like that.

Throughout my years of experience, indeed, I have found that jealousy is very rampant around us when someone has something that another person doesn't have. But there is no need to be jealous of such a demonstration of friendship. *Every human being* may bask with one such a friend. That which the heart yearns

for, a friendship of such a calibre, everyone can have. Everyone can have such a friend.

A Friendship above Familial Ties

Consider carefully the following words, which are a direct reference to a friend that could be yours and that is possible to have:

Proverbs 18:24 ...there is a friend [that] sticketh closer than a brother.

There is such a person. There is a friendship available to all of us, a friendship that is of a calibre that is closer than someone who is a very warm brother to me. This person who *sticketh closer than a brother* is speaking in the following words. Speaking to His disciples, Jesus said:

John 15:15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

I call you friends, He says; and I want to share with you, to make known to you, something that is very dear to Me and that I have with My Father. How much? “*All things* that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you.” What a friendship.

John 15:16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and [that] your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

Here is a relationship invitation that is extended to every human being, if they will but receive this Friend. And the closeness that this Friend proposes to you and me is marvellously expressed below. He can be a friend to you, to me, and to everyone else, as though you were the only one that He was a friend to.

As If You Were the Only One

Every soul is as fully known to Jesus as if he were the only one for whom the Saviour died. {DA 480.1}

As we continue to proceed through this message, please, open your heart to this relationship that is here being brought before our mind. The intimacy with us that He is offering us is of such a nature, so intimate, that you feel you are the only one who has that relationship with Him, and nobody else can have it. And yet, you know that the other person also has it who does the same thing as you with Him.

He cares for each one as if there were not another on the face of the earth.

{Ibid.}

That belongs to you; it belongs to me, if I will open my heart to this. He cares for me, He cares for you, *as if there were not another on the face of the earth*. He is a very, very special Friend—*the dearest on earth to me*.

But then Jesus left the earth, and He is now in heaven. But, as we read, in this friendship, even when we are apart we are together. This friendship is something that is there even if we are separated.

Though now He has ascended to the presence of God, and shares the throne of the universe, Jesus has lost none of His compassionate nature. Today the same tender, sympathizing heart is open to all the woes of humanity. {DA 480.5}

Still bearing in mind that He knows you and cares for you *as if you were the only one*.

Today the hand that was pierced is reached forth to bless more abundantly His people that are in the world. ... He will never abandon one for whom He has died. Unless His followers choose to leave Him, He will hold them fast. {Ibid.}

Look at His Friendship

Through all our trials we have a never-failing Helper. He does not leave us alone to struggle with temptation, to battle with evil, and be finally crushed with burdens and sorrow. {DA 483.1}

He does not leave us alone in this experience.

Though now He is hidden from mortal sight, the ear of faith can hear His voice saying, Fear not; I am with you. {Ibid.}

The ear of faith can hear Him say that. People have said to me, But this is not somebody that I can touch and handle; I need somebody I can handle and experience. Well, the ear of faith can hear.

...the ear of faith can hear His voice saying, Fear not; I am with you. "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore." Revelation 1:18. {Ibid.}

Look at His friendship:

I have endured your sorrows, experienced your struggles, encountered your temptations. I know your tears; I also have wept. {Ibid.}

Can you see the friendship here? He is offering this to us. Look at the friendship:

The griefs that lie too deep to be breathed into any human ear, I know. Think not that you are desolate and forsaken. Though your pain touch no responsive chord in any heart on earth, look unto Me, and live. {Ibid.}

What a Friend. Do you want a friend like that? There is such a friend who *sticketh closer than a brother*. This is closer; can you see? Even things which are so precious and inwardly my own experience, He knows, and I can talk with Him about that. This is someone you can handle; this is someone you can see; this is someone you can hear. I don't ever want us to feel that we need someone else. He is there. It is called *atonement—at-one-ment*. How intimate can it be? How intimate can this Friend be? You see, Jesus became a human on earth in order for you and me to find a Friend especially for me, a personal Friend—the Dearest on earth to me—who specifically came down for that purpose.

Notice how He now talks to us in reference to the intimacy that is actually someone who sticks closer than a brother, closer than a human, earthly friend. We read in our poem of a friendship that has grown and is eternal; but no human being can get as close as Jesus.

No Human Being Can Get as Close as Jesus

Here is our Friend praying; He says:

John 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 17 [Even] the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him:

Interesting language, isn't it? They can't accept this kind of friend, this kind of comforter, because they can't see Him. "Give me somebody I can see! Give me somebody I can embrace! Give me somebody that is physically there!" *The world cannot receive* Him because they see Him not, neither know Him;

John 14:17 ...but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

Notice what He now says in the next breath:

John 14:18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

I will pray for another Comforter, says He, but when He comes, it's Me coming to you; because where one is, the other is also.

How Intimate Can It Be?

How close? No human being can get inside of your skin; but this Person can. He is not only *with* you, but *in* you. At the time when He spoke those words, Jesus was with the disciples, but they had not yet received the full impact of the Holy Spirit. So He says, He shall be *in* you. How intimate is that? *A Friend that sticketh closer than a brother.*

John 14:23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

Would you like a friend that lives with you continually, all the time? That's Jesus. The Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, these are able to come into us and make their abode with us, so that wherever I am abiding, they are abiding with me. This is what you call a *bosom pal*. What is a bosom pal? He is in my bosom; He is right there.

The more the eye looks upon Him, the more His life, His lessons, His perfection of character are studied, the more sinful and abhorrent will sin appear. By beholding, man can but admire and become more attracted to Him, more charmed, and more desirous to be like Jesus until he assimilates to His image and has the mind of Christ. Like Enoch he walks with God. His mind is full of thoughts of Jesus. He is his best Friend. {8MR 182.3}

He is his best Friend, a bosom pal. So close that He is in my bosom. Having contemplated this reality in God's word now, I ask you the question: Is Jesus the dearest on earth to you? Is He your best Friend, a personal Saviour?

Is Jesus the Dearest on Earth to You?

Look how extensively He proposes to relate with you. Look at the further detail of this. He is a Friend who doesn't want you to become distracted from Him. He says:

Luke 14:26 If any [man] come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

In other words, He can't be My friend. Remember, He said to the disciples, You are My friends, because I share all the intimacies of the Father with you.

The marginal reading renders it: “If any man come to Me, and *hate not by comparison* his father, etc.” In other words, “Which one will you love more: Me, or mother, father, wife, children, brethren, sisters, or your own life also?” You are here beginning to see an intimacy that is solicited by Jesus and which makes Him definitely the dearest on earth to you.

The expression in Matthew explains this meaning of *hating in comparison*:

Matthew 10:37 He that loveth father or mother [and all the other ones] more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

He wants a friendship, and He does not want you and me to have someone better than Him in that friendship. This is why it says, If any man *hate not* his father, and mother, etc. He is saying: If you, in comparison to the love that you have to Me, have someone over Me that you are going to have a friendship with over Me, then My friendship is not possible. In other words, you see here that He is craving for a closer relationship with you than you might have with anyone else on earth.

The Intimacy Solicited By Jesus

A jealous person once said to me: That person just has to crook their finger and you jump. What does Jesus have to do for you to jump to His attention?

John 15:13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. 14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

He just has to intimate His will, and you are His friend, His bosom friend. And He is your friend, you love Him dearly; He just has to suggest with a movement of an eye, and you jump. This is normal for us. We would do anything for someone we love. Wouldn't we? Children, if you love your mom and dad, and they say, Please, do this; do you say, Oh, I don't want to? Or do you say, Yes, of course, I love you, Mommy, I love you, Daddy; anything you say. That is friendship. And Jesus wants to be your friend.

Jesus says, I stick closer to you than a brother. He is saying to you now, I lay down My life for you. What else could He have done to win my friendship? He laid down His life for me? He says, *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.*

Just do everything God says. It doesn't matter what anyone else says. He is my friend! This is the Dearest on earth to me. In fact, as you stop to think for a moment, it says He laid down His life for me. He wants to be my friend, and

what did He do? He left heaven; He left the joys of the friendship of the angels; He left everything, His throne, His position, to come down and become my friend. Who has given the greatest sacrifice in that friendship?

...that love ... led Christ to leave His heavenly home and take man's nature that humanity might touch humanity and draw humanity to divinity. {COL 303.1}

So that divinity becomes your best Friend. Let's wake up. When it comes to challenges in my life, and Jesus says this, but my flesh and my friends says that, my mother and my father and my children say something different, what am I going to do? Is there much of a battle? Not when you realise that this Friend gave up everything to be my Friend. He who has done the greatest wants to be my Friend.

Is This My Friend?

Therefore my heart begins to pulsate within me as I open my heart to these thoughts of His communication. My heart becomes His. And the description of this kind of friendship because of what He has done to win my friendship, is given in beautiful detail here in the following quote. This is the question now: Is this my friend? Am I prepared to have such a relationship with Him?

Who has the heart? With whom are our thoughts? {SC 58.2}

Where are my thoughts? With my best Friend? or with everything else that distracts me?

Of whom do we love to converse? {Ibid.}

What am I talking about? What do I love to converse on?

Who has our warmest affections and our best energies? {Ibid.}

Can you see? Our affections are to take pre-eminence to Him, not to anyone or anything else. He has my *warmest affections*, my *best energies*.

If we are Christ's [if we are His friends], our thoughts are with Him, and our sweetest thoughts are of Him. All we have and are is consecrated to Him. We long to bear His image, breathe His spirit, do His will, and please Him in all things. {Ibid.}

This reminds me of that statement of the Spirit of Prophecy which says that God *has a preference in regard to the way I dress* (*Evangelism*, p. 268.3). Do I want to please Him? How do I dress? Do I follow exactly what pleases Him in the

way I dress? You see, He wants to be my Friend. And I am absolutely enthralled with His love, Look what He has done to unite with me; and now He just has to crook His finger, and I jump. This is *the Dearest on earth to me*.

Commonly this language “the dearest on earth to me” is a term applied solely to a marriage. The thought is that: No one else shares the unity on earth like me and my wife have, or me and my children. But stop for a moment. If marriage is contracted in Jesus, and children are born in the relationship with Jesus, then indeed, because Jesus is the Dearest on earth to me, then the Jesus that is in my wife and in my family makes my family the dearest on earth. True enough.

The presence of Christ alone can make men and women happy. {AH 28.1}

You know what it’s like. In the family, if Jesus isn’t there, are we happy with each other? *The presence of Christ alone can make men and women happy.*

All the common waters of life Christ can turn into the wine of heaven.

{Ibid.}

If Jesus is in the common activities of life with me, then it all becomes *the wine of heaven*.

A Symbol of the Family in Heaven

The home then becomes as an Eden of bliss; the family, a beautiful symbol of the family in heaven. {Ibid.}

If Jesus is first and foremost, my best friend on earth, then in my relationship with my family, with my children, if it is in Jesus, we have a symbol on earth that is *a symbol of the family in heaven*. This takes us into something very interesting in the study of God’s word.

If the husband, the father in the house, has Jesus as his dearest friend on earth; if the wife, the mother, has Jesus as the very dearest person on earth to her; and if the children have Jesus as the very dearest friend on earth, can you imagine the bliss? Indeed, the home *becomes as an Eden*.

You Can Have a Personal Friend

But it is a sad story in the time in which we live, that such a thing seems to have evaded the human race today in the churches. The Spirit of Prophecy tells us that this is a very rare thing today. And if we don’t have that blessed thing of a family like that, never mind, you can have a personal Friend.

Now, as in Christ's day, the condition of society presents a sad comment upon heaven's ideal of this sacred relation. {MB 65.2}

Can't we all testify of it?

Yet even for those who have found bitterness and disappointment where they had hoped for companionship and joy, {Ibid.}

Can you take your thoughts back to when you first found your marriage partner? You were thinking, Oh, wonderful! This is going to be wonderful. You had hoped for precious unity, and you became bitterly disappointed. This is the story of today.

Yet even for those who have found bitterness and disappointment where they had hoped for companionship and joy, the gospel of Christ offers a solace. {Ibid.}

What is the solace?

The patience and gentleness which His Spirit can impart will sweeten the bitter lot. {Ibid.}

Remember the other Comforter that Jesus spoke of. He is going to bring that beautiful relationship of the friendship of Jesus to me. So although I am missing out on that beautiful relationship that I anticipated in my marriage, I have it in Jesus. Remember, He makes our abode with us:

The heart in which Christ dwells will be so filled, so satisfied, with His love that it will not be consumed with longing to attract sympathy and attention to itself. And through the surrender of the soul to God, His wisdom can accomplish what human wisdom fails to do. Through the revelation of His grace, hearts that were once indifferent or estranged may be united in bonds that are firmer and more enduring than those of earth—the golden bonds of a love that will bear the test of trial. {Ibid.}

This is if the family is still together and they can work together in Jesus. In that case it *can* be recovered. But sadly, today there are many that cannot be recovered.

Heaven's Source of Companionship

This takes us now into the gospel reality. The gospel can make Jesus my dearest Friend; and you will thus find the family that marriage is a symbol of. What is the family that marriage is a symbol of? Consider the union of heaven's source of companionship.

I often shake my head when I see people using scripture as a theory and not as a living reality. Consider this thought of a comfort of a friendship and closeness that is here portrayed as the family in heaven:

1 John 5:7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

Can you hear the argument: “No; there’s no such thing as three in the God-head. No, no.” This is a lot of waste of time. Here is a reality that there are three beings in heaven who are so intimate with one another that they are one. That’s all it is saying. That is the family of heaven. And that family of heaven wanted to share their joy and unity with other creatures, so they created. And the marriage is to be a symbol of the family of heaven. Let us contemplate this a little more closely.

1 John 4:16 God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

This tells you something. If God were on His own, could He be love? Three beings who love one another, that is God. They love one another in a manner which Jesus wants to convey to us. Let us think upon the following words of Jesus:

John 10:30 I and [my] Father are one.

The Holy Spirit, which proceeds from the only begotten Son of God, binds the human agent, body, soul, and spirit, to the perfect, divine-human nature of Christ. This union is represented by the union of the vine and the branches. Finite man is united to the manhood of Christ. Through faith human nature is assimilated with Christ's nature. We are made one with God in Christ. {RH, April 5, 1906 par. 16}

We are talking about an intimate friendship. Through the Holy Spirit, by faith, our human nature is actually *assimilated with Christ's nature*.

I Want Them to Have That Love

John 17:26 And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare [it]: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

This is the friendship; this is what Jesus was praying for. And through the Holy Spirit, through our faith in this work, the human nature becomes *assimilated with Christ's nature*, and *we are made one with God in Christ*.

If Jesus is the dearest on earth to me in the way that we have here expanded it, and I take hold of that which is available to us as individuals and as families to follow the family of heaven in symbol, we now come to the prayer of Jesus where every individual who has chosen to receive this friendship is included. If you choose to accept this friendship; if you make it as your own as the preeminent friendship over everyone else, and you receive Jesus as the dearest on earth to you; if every individual is so bound to Christ, what will he find others in in that assimilation? If I am assimilated with Him, and another person is assimilated with Jesus too, and another person also, what do you get? Can you see in this prayer Jesus' desire for our friendship?

John 17:24 Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am;

He wants my friendship here on earth so that He can have me with Him in heaven. I pray, says He,

John 17:24 ...that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

What is the glory that we are to behold there? The love of God. *God is love.* He says, I want them to have that beautiful love that we had and have together.

John 17:22 And the glory [the love] which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: 23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

Can you see something now? The dearest on earth to me is Jesus. If I have really opened my friend so fully to Him, and my brothers and sisters have done the same thing, the same person who is dearest to me on earth is dearest to them on earth. And as we engage in this intimacy with Jesus, what is the natural outcome with each other? You and I will become the dearest on earth to each other, because the same Jesus in you is in me. And can the Jesus in one quarrel with the Jesus in the other? No. This is our privilege. Jesus prayed, I want them to have the unity that You and I have, Father; I want to be to them a friend that sticketh closer than a brother; I want to have them experience our unity, so that they can experience it in heaven in eternity.

Christ desires His soldiers to stand shoulder to shoulder, united in the work of fighting the battles of the cross. He desires the union between those who work for Him to be as close as the union between Him and His Father. Those who have felt the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit will heed the lessons

of the divine Instructor, and will show their sincerity by doing all in their power to work in harmony with their brethren. {UL 366.3}

He desires the union between those who work for Him to be as close as the union between Him and His Father. The union that Jesus is praying for in John 17 is expressed also in the following quote from the Spirit of Prophecy. Follow the privilege of the intimacy that is ours to have.

Unlimited Intimate Friendship

Talking about Jesus' prayer for us to experience this love and unity, it says:

This request of Christ has no limit to its fulness. {RH, November 3, 1896 par. 3}

Can you imagine? This is infinite. An intimacy, a relationship of intimate friendship that *has no limit to its fullness?*

He desires that his followers shall reveal to the world his spirit of unity and love. {Ibid.}

But what has to happen for this to be a reality? We are reading here something that is ideal. We might think, If only we had this... Have we experienced this? There is always something that stops this. Here comes the direction:

Answering the Prayer for Oneness

But before this unity can exist among them, there must be a genuine renovation of every heart; there must be a vital connection with God; the character must be formed after the divine similitude. {Ibid.}

In other words, my personal relationship with Jesus must be such that He is the dearest on earth to me and I am prepared to do whatever He says, to follow through with my relationship with Him at all costs. And as you and I do this, what will happen to our relationship? We will have an unlimited joy of friendship together; and the world will look on and say, This is unreal. But this is how the world will know that Jesus has been sent. This is what He said. This is real; it is not unreal. It *can* happen. But it depends on our choices, whether we will actually make Him the very dearest on earth to us.

Those who are drinking from the same fountain of blessing will draw nearer together. Truth dwelling in the hearts of believers will lead to blessed and happy assimilation. Thus will be answered the prayer of Christ that His dis-

principles might be one even as He is one with the Father. For this oneness every truly converted heart will be striving. {FLB 343.2}

How do we strive for this unity? By making Jesus my best friend on earth. And as we do this with resolve, with an intensity of choice and decision to make Him the very best friend in my life, this is how we will answer the prayer of Jesus for us to be one together.

The Final Joy of This Intimacy

That beautiful intimacy we can have here will then usher us into that intimacy in eternity.

There the redeemed shall "know, even as also they are known." The loves and sympathies which God Himself has planted in the soul shall there find truest and sweetest exercise. {AH 544.1}

There is no limit to the precious union that we can have. But there are certain dangers here on earth, because if people look at you and you have an intimacy together with me that is of this unlimited nature, we have to be careful. The loves that God has planted in our hearts we have to sometimes be very careful how we express to each other. I have learned that lesson the bitter way. We can have an understanding between us that does not always need to be shown and expressed. In other words, I feel like giving you a hug sometimes, but if you are a woman, I won't do it, because it will be misunderstood. But many times I wished I could give you a hug. But no. I have made some mistakes on that before. I had this beautiful concept of love, and I felt the love of the other person, so I can them a hug; and I got into trouble. You may sometimes wonder, Why doesn't John show me a little bit more affection? This is the reason. But I love you dearly if you love my Jesus like I do.

But *there*, when we get to heaven, *there* we will exercise the intimacy of this love like we could not do here on earth. *The loves and sympathies which God Himself has planted in the soul shall there find truest and sweetest exercise.* Reach out for that time if you have to hold back certain amounts of exercise here. But you know we've got it; we love each other.

Who Are My Brethren?

Those people who do what Jesus says, what are they to Him, and what is He to them?

Matthew 12:46 While he yet talked to the people, behold, [his] mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. 47 Then one said un-

to him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. 48 But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?

In other words, Who are the dearest on earth to me?

Matthew 12:49 And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! 50 For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

These are the dearest on earth to Me, He says. They are the body of Christ. They are one body.

I wish to make an appeal today: Do you at times feel lonely? I will never forget the words of one brother many years ago. He said to me, I don't like you preaching "I'm never alone", because I feel alone. There is an appeal in this message. When I feel alone, when I feel lonely, what must I do? I must cross the barrier between me and Christ. There is a barrier there. This is why I feel lonely. When I am looking for comfort in everything else but Jesus, there is a barrier between me and Him. For us to enjoy this kind of unity that has been evading us in this company for many, many years, we are called upon to cross the barrier that still exists between me and Christ, between me and His body.

The Inner Circle

Of His disciples during His life on earth, Jesus said, These are my mother, my brother, and my sister. They were the inner circle.

Whenever He spoke to the multitude, the disciples formed the inner circle. They pressed close beside Him, that they might lose nothing of His instruction. {CG 295.1}

That's it. They are looking for every crook of His finger to not miss a single part of His instruction. This is *the inner circle*. So when I feel alone, I must enter into the intimacy with Jesus and break down the barrier that exists between me and Him, and that may exist between me and my brothers and sisters. Directly in relation to the inner circle, there also comes to us the following statement. I received such rebuff by those claiming to be my family when I preached this in the past:

The unity, the harmony, that should exist among the disciples of Christ is described in these words: "That they may be one, as we are." But how many

there are who draw off and seem to think that they have learned all they need to learn. {TMK 172.2}

You see, there is the barrier.

Those who choose to stand on the outskirts of the camp cannot know what is going on in the inner circle. They must come right into the inner courts, for as a people we must be united in faith and purpose. . . . It is through this unity that we are to convince the world of the mission of Christ, and bear our divine credentials to the world. {Ibid.}

What is God's church? The Adventist Church? The independent companies? Which one is it? Where are the credentials? The credentials are demonstrated by the unity as it is in Jesus, the friendship we have with Him. This is what it says. Get into the inner circle. Break the barriers. *It is through this unity that we are to convince the world of the mission of Christ, and bear our divine credentials to the world.* We don't have to say, This is God's church. We will bear the credentials.

The golden chain of love, binding the hearts of the believers in unity, in bonds of fellowship and love, and in oneness with Christ and the Father, makes the connection perfect, and bears to the world a testimony of the power of Christianity that cannot be controverted. {TMK 173.2}

Do you feel lonely and alone? If you will practice this message that I have shared with you, you will never feel lonely again; and we will be a company that bears the *divine credentials*.

Amen.