THE FRIENDLINESS OF JESUS

I.

In these studies, we are undertaking to discover the impression that Jesus made upon his contemporaries. What did those who knew Him best think of Him? When they had been in His presence, and discussed Him after His departure, what did they say about Him? What impression did He leave upon them? I believe that everyone who felt the impact of His presence in the least carried away a distinct impression of the characteristic that we have for our discussion this evening.

I have been a bit at a loss as to what to call this characteristic that is so prominent and so outstanding. Love would perhaps be a good name for it, but I hesitated to use it because it has grown a bit hackneyed through much use. Not the fact of it, understand, but the discussion of it. We have talked about love till it has somehow lost its thrill. Charitableness was also considered, but that is too cold. It smacks too much of the Superior dealing out benefits to an Inferior. I think we could find no better word for the quality of which I speak than "friendliness."

Now that Jesus was pre-eminently a friendly man, I think no one will deny. Everyone who touched Him felt the thrill of His personal interest. Here is a man, they were convinced, who really cares. His interest in me does not grow out of the contribution that I am able to make to His cause. He is not interested in me because of my social or political position. He is interested in me as an individual, as a personality. I take it that Jesus was the most genuinely friendly man of His day, or of any day.

II.

When we look for evidences of this, our embarrassment is not where to find them, but how to use the abundance that we do find. His whole life is radiant and beautiful with the spirit of friendship. This is evidenced in at least three particulars.

1. His friendliness is proven by what those who knew Him thought of Him.
His friendliness did not always beget friendliness in those about Him. Some loved Him for His friendship, but others hated Him. But even those who hated Him did not deny His friendliness. In scorn and anger they called Him a friend of publicans and sinners. This was, in fact, the chief fault they found with Him. He was not unfriendly to themselves, He just refused to hate their hates and to recognize the chasms they had made between man and man. Refusing to share in their antagonisms, they hounded Him to the cross.

While on the cross, they hurled another word at Him that was full of venom, yet nothing finer was ever said about any man. "He saved others, Himself He cannot save." Here is one, they confessed, who has been giving Himself for others. In sheer friendliness, He has so given Himself to the task of saving others that it has cost Him His life.

Then there is a golden sentence in the tenth chapter of the Book of Acts. Peter, in his sermon, is giving the brief epitome of the life of Jesus. He tells the thrilling and winsome story in a single sentence. "He went about doing good." That has always impressed me as about the most beautiful ever written, even regarding Jesus. "He went about doing good." Surely no higher use of life could be made than that. Out of sheer friendliness, He was always seeking the chance to help.

2. Not only can we see the friendliness of Jesus in what others said of Him, but far more in what He actually did. These assertions of friendliness on the part both of friends and foes were made on the basis of the actual deeds of Jesus. They had witnessed His acts of friendliness to all sorts and conditions of men.

First, when they said He was a friend of publicans and sinners, they were telling the absolute truth. One day, He passed the toll booth of a man named Matthew. Matthew was an outcast. His money, had it been his desire to make an offering to the church, would not have been accepted - it was tainted money. His oath would not have been accepted in a court of law. Had one entered into an agreement with Matthew and
pledged himself under oath to render him a service, he would not have been bound by that oath. But Jesus invited this outcast into the inner circle of his friendship.

Such friendliness naturally won Matthew whole-heartedly. He made a feast in his house a little later - it was one of the first church banquets that we hear of. He invited all of his outcast friends and they came and Jesus was the guest of honor. He sat down among them and enjoyed their companionship. The Pharisees were outraged, but Jesus with a twinkle in his eye said, "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners." It is not the whole that need a physician, but the sick - you gentlemen are already well. Therefore, I have no mission for you.

Then there were the sinners. The lowest of these were the women of shady reputation. One sought Him out in the house of Simon the Pharisee. It is one of the loveliest stories in literature. Jesus captured her soul forever by His sheer friendliness. One day another soiled piece of broken earthenware was flung at His feet. He was too much of a gentleman even to look at her. He stooped down and wrote on the ground, but He defended her from her tormenters and said, "Go thy way and sin no more." Sinners found in Him a friend.

Second, He was not only friendly to the outcasts, He was friendly to good people. We sometimes so emphasize the friendship of Jesus for the underprivileged that we forget this. He was friendly to Lazarus and to Martha. He was friendly to Mary. He took her part one night when His disciples were criticizing her. He linked her name with His own and made her immortal, saying, "Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this that she has done shall be spoken of as a memorial to her."

He was friendly to the rich young ruler, to Nicodemus and to Pilate. Neither privilege nor lack of it was a barrier to His friendship.

Third, He was a friend to the unfortunates, to those whose chief cry was that they had fallen behind the procession. He took lepers into purity. "Lord, if Thou wilt," one said to Him, "Thou canst make me clean." He believed in the Master's
ability, but doubted His willingness. Life had dealt so harshly with him that he had ceased to believe in anybody's friendship. But Jesus met his half-faith with His usual winsome friendliness. "I will," He said, "be thou clean."

On a certain Sabbath, He found a bit of human wreckage that had lain for thirty-eight years within a few steps of a pool he thought would heal him, but nobody had ever given him a chance. Hope, long deferred, had made his heart sick. He had become a whining and embittered pessimist. But Jesus bent over him with eyes all bright and tender with interest and said, "Wilt thou be made whole?" And while the man was telling Him how impossible it all was, thir friendly Christ had gotten him on his feet. Jesus showed His friendliness by what He did.

3. Then Jesus showed His friendliness by what He said. He was always seeking any human need. "Come unto Me," He invited, "and I will give you rest." "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man will lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends." Jesus changes the relationship of master and servant to that of friends. "Henceforth I call you no longer servants, but friends." Jesus offers us His friendship - He is the friendly Christ.

III.

what are we to do with this amazing friendliness of Jesus?

1. We are to accept it as conferred upon us the highest possible privilege. There is no finer privilege, humanly speaking, than that which comes through a real friend. Charles Kingsley, when asked for the secret of his beautiful life, answered, "I had a friend!" To be a friend of Jesus then is the climax of privilege.

2. It is also the climax of responsibility. If we are friends of Jesus, His good name is locked with ours. If we fail, He fails. Friends are mutually devoted to each other. In the hour of need, each gives his all to the other. Jesus, in His friendship to us, gives us His all but on the condition that we give ourselves to Him.
Then we are under obligations to be friendly one with another. In fact, it would seem that almost our whole duty is summed up in this. Jesus, in His parables of judgment, shows His approval or disapproval upon us in proportion to our friendliness to our fellows. "These shall go away," He says at the close of one striking parable and the reason assigned was their failure to be friends.

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, the priest and the Levite are left in the pillory of an eternal shame. This is the case not because they were cruel and wicked men, but because they refused to do an act of friendship to a man in need. The Samaritan, on the other hand, has come to do acclaimed good to all subsequent centuries, though we know nothing of his religious faith. The degree of goodness was given him because he proved a friend to a nameless man who was in desperate need. And Jesus is saying to you and me what He said to them, "Go and do thy likewise."
"The Reverence of Jesus."

Matthew, 6: 9.

I am going to speak to you this evening on that characteristic of Jesus which is of all other possibly the most lacking in ourselves. I have spoken to you on the manhood of Jesus, on His broadness, on His narrowness, on His sinlessness. Of course in all these high qualities we are defective. But I doubt if in any of them we are so utterly defective as in the characteristic about which I am to speak to you at this service.

My subject is the reverence of Jesus. In your reading of the New Testament have you ever been struck with the profoundly reverent spirit of our Lord? You see it not simply in one or two isolated deeds that He did or words that He spoke — it absolutely pervades His whole life. It pervades His whole life because it was one of the most pronounced elements in His character.

What is reverence? It has been characterized as our feelings in the presence of what is worthwhile. It is the attitude of mind and heart, almost an instinct rather than an attitude I should say, toward what is worthy and good and noble and true. It is a characteristic, therefore, that belongs to all known people. To be utterly defective in it is to mark yourself as a moral dwarf.

Now, as Christ is supreme in all other great virtues, He is supreme in this virtue of reverence. There was nothing worthy or beautiful that He did not revere. The secret of His reverence of course lies fundamentally in His reverence for God. Back of all beauty, back of all nobleness shone the face of God. He was reverent in the presence of what was worthy because primarily and fundamentally He was reverent in the presence of God.

Look at His reverence in the presence of nature. It was Wordsworth, the reverent hearted poet, who said,

"The meanest flower that blows often can give thoughts that lie Too deep for tears."

This great souled man did not stand around and pick blackberries while every common bush blazed the glory of God. The meanest of flowers filled his eyes with tears and reverence. Why? Because he saw back of the frail flower, back of the stem upon which it grew, back of the earth that gave it birth the might of God.

This attitude of Wordsworth is a faint shadow of the attitude of Jesus. He called men to look on nature and to learn from her. "Consider the lilies how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin. Yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." "Consider their beauty," he says. "Consider the secret of it. What is the secret? God clothed them, and the lily was something to fill Him with reverence because the sight of them led Him up before the very throne of God.

Did you ever notice how reverent Jesus is in His handling of the scriptures? I am amazed at how flippantly some men presume to correct and set aside the Word of God. Jesus never approached the
The reverence of Jesus

sacred Word with irreverent steps. He declared that the scriptures could not be broken. He said "one jot or one tittle of them should in no wise pass away." He called even the Old Testament scriptures the word of God. Having a profound reverence for God, He had a profound reverence for the Bible.

And may not you and I learn a deep and needed lesson from the attitude of our Lord. I do not mean for us to treat the Bible as a fetish or as a fortune teller's book. I do mean that we shall approach it reverently saying in our hearts, "I will hear what the Lord will speak." It is only as we so approach it that its message can come to us adequately and enriching. The spirit of irreverence that treats the Bible as it treats any other book will find the Bible often as dumb in our presence as any other book.

Then Jesus Christ was reverent toward the house of God. I think His face never so flamed, His heart never so pounded with holy anger as it did when He saw the irreverence with which the men of His day treated His Father's house. He could not endure it. It drove Him to deeds of physical violence. He thrust those irreverent souls out into the street, overturned their tables and scattered their money on the floor. And He declared in His holy indignation, "It is written that this shall be a house of prayer for all nations, but you have made it a den of thieves." It is a lesson that you and I greatly need today. I do not believe reverence is in any sense merely a thing of our attitude, but I do believe that a true spirit of reverence will lead to a more reverent attitude than some of us have in the house of the Lord. Did you ever sit in an audience and hear a great choir sing in such a way as to thrill you and open your heart for the worship of God, and then when the time came for prayer to see them sit bolt upright and turn through a book maybe or maybe even talk to their neighbors? Believe me, hearts, the irreverent attitude that some of us assume in the house of God makes it impossible for the service to attain its best results and for God to reveal Himself as He longs to do. You may say, "Oh it is only a church", but remember it is God's house. The Temple in the days of Jesus was in the hands of very unspiritual men, and yet Jesus regarded its courts with profound reverence, not because of the presence of men, but because of the presence of God. It was His Father's house.

Then Jesus was profoundly reverent of another institution in His day, an institution that was greatly dragged into the dust, even as it is today. Jesus had profound reverence for the marriage tie. And here again His reverence was based upon His sense of God. The marriage tie was to be regarded as sacred because what God had joined together man had no right to put asunder.

We live in a day when the marriage tie may be sundered for any reason, and the contracting parties may form other alliances. Now, I believe that there are times when men and women are justified in separation, but there is only one condition upon which they are justified in remarrying. And our discipline is very spiritual when it forbids any Methodist preacher to marry a couple that has been divorced for any reason than the one reason of infidelity. And the preacher that so does not only breaks his vow of ordination, but he violates the plain teaching of the Word of God.

Oh is there a lesson that we need to learn today more than the
lesson of reverence for the sanctity of the marriage vow. Upon it rests the stability of the state. Upon it is based the whole church. Upon it is based all our hopes for time and for eternity. May the Lord save us from the flippant and frivolous and irreverent and godless spirit in which we look upon the marriage vow.

Then Jesus Christ, last of all, had a profound reverence for Himself. He revered His body as the temple of the Holy Ghost. He respected Himself as the sent of God, the agent through whom the Heavenly Father was to reveal Himself to the world. We need the same sort of reverence for ourselves. Tennyson may not be altogether correct when he says, "Self reverence, self knowledge, self control - these three alone lead life to sovereign power." But it is absolutely true that no man ever achieves His highest unless he has profound reverence for his own personality as God's immortal gift to him, as the medium through which he is to serve the world.

Now, why is it, I wonder, that we are so wanting in this beautiful grace of reverence. One reason is, I think, that we have not been sufficiently trained in that direction. Reverence is not a grace that most of us possess naturally. It certainly is not a characteristic of youth. Give a baby the Word of God and he will tear it to pieces as quickly as he will a yellow journal. He will insult a queen and pull the beard of a king as quickly as he would that of an ordinary day laborer. A small child has no reverence.

Nor do we accumulate a very large fund of it as we get on into our teens. The ordinary sixteen year old boy fancies he knows much more than his father. The ordinary girl of that age can give her mother, as well as her grandmother, points in all important matters. Youth naturally has a rather poor opinion of the aged. They fancy that they are back numbers. That is true of every young generation in some measure. It is profoundly true of a generation so poorly controlled as our own.

Then success makes for irreverence. A man who has made a hard fight and has won, and even more so sometimes a man who has won without a hard fight, tends to lose his reverence. The men to whom he used to look with a respect that amounted to reverence are only commonplace men now. They are men not even equal to himself. Not only has he lost his respect for them, he has lost his respect in large measure for the Lord. That was the trouble with the Rich Fool. That was the trouble with another rich fool to whom I talked. He said, when reminded of the goodness of God to him, "I was there." That is, "I owe nothing to God. I have won myself."

Then the last and greatest cause of irreverence possibly of all is sin. Sin blinds us to a sense of God. Sin puts out the eyes of the soul. A man who has no sense of God is very likely to be irreverent.

Now, I am sure that there is not one of us that has just as much reverence as we ought to have. We may have more. We need to have more. We need it because reverence is a badge of character. A man said the other day that he was out in a park at Chicago and saw a fine looking stately gentleman approach the statue of Lincoln. As he did so this splendid man took off his hat. Meantime, he said, there were those sitting on the pedestal of the statue writing obscene verses. Whatever may be your attitude toward Mr. Lincoln, this you know, that the man who took off his hat was an infinitely larger man than the one who sat on the
pedestal and scribbled obscenity.

Then we need reverence, last of all, because reverence is the path to God. That is true whatever it is that we wish to know. If you are going to learn science you have got to approach your study not in the spirit of a braggart. One has well said that nature does not disclose her secrets to the man who simply says, "Stand and deliver." Huxley tells us the attitude: "You must sit down before her as a little child dispossessed of all our preconceived notions and hear humbly what she will say." That is, if you are going to learn the language of nature, if you are to be a scientist, you must be reverent.

If that is true in the realm of the physical, it is infinitely more true in the realm of the spiritual. You do not ascend the hill of the Lord on flippant and frivolous and careless feet. You do not approach the bush aflame with God as you would any other thorn bush on the hill side. You must take off the shoes from off your feet and realize that the ground upon which you stand is holy ground. You must approach reverently or the bush will never have no flame and the voice of God will be to you an utter dumbness.

And now as we close let us reverently hear Jesus as He leads us in prayer: "Our Father who art in Heaven; hallowed be thy name." What is His first petition? Not for the doing of His will, not for daily bread, not even for the forgiveness of sins, as fundamental as that need is, but the first petition, and it is put first because it is of supreme importance, is that God's name may be reverenced. May not we bow our heads and also our hearts and ask for ourselves this supreme reverence. It means that we shall be more like our Lord. It means that we shall approach in this way nearer to our heavenly Father. It means that we shall be bigger and better and nobler. May the Lord help us to be more reverent.

CGC:BR
THE PATIENCE OF JESUS

I

Patience is a Christian characteristic. By this I mean that a Christian must be patient. This is not, however, the same as to say that everyone who is patient is a Christian. There are certain lower animals that put most of us to shame. You have seen a cat playing at the door of the home of a mouse for hours and hours. We used to have a dog who would mind the place, and he would stay there with admirable patience, and he would stay there all day long.

This, then, is a virtue that does not mark us as distinctive Christians, but that we cannot be Christ-like without. Christ was the most patient of men. Paul, in writing to his son, Timothy, tells him to follow after patience, to pursue it, to never stop till he captured it. He prays for his converts that they may be sound in patience. Luke tells us that it is in patience that we shall win our souls. That is, that without patience we are likely to lose our souls. So, patience is a virtue that is an absolute necessity.

II

What do we mean by patience? It is a word that is on our lips again and again. We say of a certain idea that does not appeal to us - companionate marriage, for instance - "I have no patience with such an idea." We say of certain individuals, "I have no patience with him or her." We tell of certain happenings, and then say, "I lost my patience." Sometimes we haven't lost much when we lost our patience, we were too short on that commodity to begin with. We speak of our patience getting worn threadbare, thus implying that it was very thick
and solid before this particular individual wore it out.
What, then, do we mean by patience?

Patience, as Dr. Jefferson tells us, looks in two
directions. It has two fairly distinct meanings.

1. Patience means the power to wait for a hoped-for
good. Now, waiting, you know, is not easy. I remember going
into the hills with my father when I was a small boy to water
cattle. When the road got too rough to ride, he dismounted and
lifted me from the horse and put the bridle reins in my hands,
and told me that he was going to step down into the woods, and
for me to wait. But my patience soon gave out. I hitched the
horse and made for home. I had not gone but a little distance
when he overtook me, and the little interview that we had was
intended to make me sound in patience.

I suppose that most of us, who had the good fortune
to grow up on the farm, planted a garden when we were young.
Now, the trouble with a garden is that you can't plant it today,
and reap the harvest tomorrow. As a rule we dig up the seed to see
how they are getting on so many times that we do not give them
time to sprout at all. It takes patience to raise a garden,
or to grow any kind of crop. Patience is power, then, to wait.

2. Patience is power to suffer, and to endure, to stand
against the pain of physical agony and the suffering that is
born of opposition and failure and defeat, to fight in the face
of antagonism and be beaten back, and yet keep on. Mighty few
of us are sound in that kind of patience. A football team
usually plays better when it is winning than it does when it is
losing.

When we think of this kind of patience, Job usually comes
into our mind as an outstanding example. Now, Job was patient
after a fashion, but his patience was a very imperfect one. He
did much to keep his faith, and to hold fast to his integrity. But he raged and yelled and cursed the day he was born. I do not know that I have seen anybody suffer as much as Job, but I have seen those who bore their sufferings more patiently.

Another, and a finer example of patience is that of Moses. Moses set out when he was come to his maturity to free his people. They did not desire freedom. They had become cowed in heart as well as in body. He had to flee the country and remain away for forty years. Then he came back and for forty years more he fought his lonely and difficult fight. But he never gave up. He never completely lost patience. The writer can account for his marvelous patience only in terms of a sustaining vision of God. "He endured, after seeing Him who is invisible."

III

But when we want to see patience at its best, patience that is perfect, we turn to Jesus.

1. Jesus was perfect in the patience that could wait. His life was very brief. He died before He was far into His thirties. But though He had come upon the biggest of all possible missions, that of saving the whole world, He did not rush into it hurriedly; He preached for possibly a bit less than three years. But He waited for thirty years before He began.

Then, when He began, how patient He was! He utterly refused to take any short-cuts. He knew short-cuts, even as we, and far better. He was tempted at times to take some of them. When the devil took Him and set Him on the pinnacle of the Temple and told Him to cast Himself down, He was giving Him a chance to take a short cut, to win by the spectacular. Jesus chose the slow method because He was sound in patience.
He was patient in dealing with the individual. He sought out His disciples, one by one. Having found them, He gave Himself to the slower task of training them. They were constantly quarreling among themselves. They were full of arguments as to who was going to be greatest. Also, they were selfish, and little, and mean, and contemptuous. But He never lost patience with them; He kept believing that the changeable son of Jonah could be made into a rock, and that selfish and narrow-minded John could become the Apostle of love.

Then, He was patient in His effort to win the world. When He died, so far as the great nations of the earth are concerned, He was absolutely unknown. His own people had utterly rejected Him, and crucified Him. He had only gathered about Him a little handful of a hundred and twenty souls. But He was in no sense discouraged. He told His disciples that He had overcome the world. And He went back to heaven with the tread of a conqueror.

2. Then, how patient He was to endure! Think of all He endured from His friends. How constantly they misunderstood Him! How his own devoted mother thought Him crazy! How His leading apostles shamefully lied and denied even knowing Him! How the treasurer of His group betrayed Him with a kiss! But it never changed Him in the least. It never made Him the least bitter. If folks do not do just what we think they ought to do, if they don't visit us when we are sick, we get our feelings hurt and quit. But Jesus was patient. Then, think what He suffered at the hands of His enemies. They never let Him alone. They hung on His words day after day, trying to entrap Him in His talk. Every deed that He did, every word that He said, was scrutinized in the hope of being able to get Him into trouble.
At last they killed Him, but they never killed His patience. He was sound in patience. He had patience to perfection.

Now, this is what we must have if we are to be like Him. Of course patience is necessary in every department of life. It takes patience to do anything that is worth doing. We must have patience if we would be Christians.

(1) We need patience with ourselves. How true it is--some of us are to lose patience with ourselves! We set ourselves to the task of learning something new, but we soon quit because we lost patience. Or, we give ourselves after a fashion to the supreme task of being a Christian. Of course we stumble and blunder a thousand times. Sometimes we even give it up. But we need to be patient with ourselves.

(2) Then we need more patience with one another. How short we are on patience even with our friends; with the members of our church, with our own Sunday-school class! Let them disappoint us ever so slightly, and our patience is gone, and we are ready to criticise or to quit.

(3) Finally, we need patience with our Lord. He doesn't always do things like we think He ought. He doesn't always answer our prayers in the way that we expect and desire. He does not run His world to suit us always. Many times, though we hardly confess it, we lose patience with Him. The Psalmist knew this when he said, "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him." He had tried this patient faith, and found the way: "I waited patiently for the Lord, and He heard me." If we are patient, He will hear us and enable us to be patient with something of the patience of Jesus.
(NOTES FROM PRAYER MEETING SERVICE - JANUARY 6, 1937)

THE NARROWNESS OF JESUS

"For narrow is the gate, and straightened the way, that leadeth unto life...."
Matthew 7: 14

Narrow is a word we do not like. It insults us, it wounds our pride, it walks all over our vanity. We could stand a good many nicknames and face quite a few offenses without flinching, but to be called "narrow" - that is more than most of us could stand. The word smacks of immaturity, lack of vision, undeveloped mentality.

In the face of all this, it seems a bit shocking to speak of the "narrowness of Jesus," and yet, there was a real sense in which He was narrow. In fact, His narrowness was one of the sources of His power. Had He been less narrow, His impact upon the world would have been less pronounced. We cannot know Him as He was without taking into consideration His narrowness.

I.

Wherein was He narrow? He was not narrow in the sense that we generally consider narrowness. For instance, He was narrow in His national sympathies, He was a patriot, but his patriotism did not make Him hate nations other than His own. He came of a narrow people. Every Jewish boy was taught to pray morning by morning a prayer in which he thanked God that he was not born a Gentile, but -- Jesus prayed no such prayer. His sympathies were as wide as the race.

Nor did Jesus share the voice of His people regarding the Samaritans.
Of all the hates of which we are capable, there is no hate more bitter than that between kinfolks. The Samaritans were kin to the Jews, but they were a mongrel race, therefore, the Jews hated them with a shocking intensity, but Jesus did not share this.

Then Jesus lived at a time when women were discredited. They stood higher among the Jews, perhaps, than among any other people, but here they were in no sense equal to men. Every Jewish boy was taught to pray morning by morning not only a prayer of thanksgiving that he was not born a Gentile, he was taught also to thank God that he was not a woman.

Finally, Jesus knew nothing of denominational narrowness. John came one day with face fairly flushed with pleasure. He said that he had seen something worthy of great commendation, - he saw one casting out demons in Thy name, and he declared joyously that "we forbade him because he followed not us." But Jesus said, "Forbid him not, he that is not against us is on our part."

Wherein then was Jesus narrow.

1. He was narrow in His judgments of men. He did not look upon all men with approval. There were some that He commended; there were others that He scourged with the sword of His mouth. His words fairly blaze and burn after all of these sinners.

2. Then he had a shocking way of dividing folks into two classes. This He did again and again. There were those who had life and those who did not. There was no middle class. Mark you, He did not divide them into the perfect and the imperfect, but He did maintain that at the least every man either had life or he did not.
He compared men to trees; some of these trees bore good fruit, others bore evil fruit. But they were of two kinds and two only. He spoke of two foundations upon which men build their lives — two and two only. One was of sand and the other was of rock. He spoke of two gates through which people enter, and two roads by which they travel. Here again, He speaks of two only, one was narrow and the other broad. One was travelled by the many and the other by the few.

One day He told a story of ten bridesmaids who set out for a wedding, but He did not divide these bridesmaids into ten groups, nor five, but only into two. "Five of them," He said, "were wise and five were foolish." There were these and these only.

Then going out of this, He was narrow in His conception of human destiny. Right or wrong, He indicated that these people who belonged to two classes and only two would experience two destinies and only two in the life to come. He spoke of the "House of many mansions" — to this some would go because of their fitness to the place and there were others who would not feel at home there. We do not like such a view today, but none the less, it was the conviction of Jesus.

3. Jesus was narrow in His conceptions of the conditions of salvation. "Narrow is the way," He declared. Why did He not make the conditions easier — because He could not. He did not make them narrow — they are narrow in the nature of things. He only stated the facts about them. The road to every worthwhile achievement is a narrow road.

When the architect drew the plans for your First National Bank building,
for instance, he had to say to himself, "narrow is the way." Those plans did not have to be approximately correct, they had to be exactly correct. When the contractor set out to build, he had to tell himself, "narrow is the way." He did not glance at the blueprints now and then and follow them with more or less accuracy. He had to follow them exactly.

If you have made up your mind to write good prose, - narrow is the way. If you are determined to write good poetry, the way is more narrow still. If you desire to be a master of any musical instrument, - narrow is the way. Paderewski said that if he failed to practice one day, he could tell a difference; if he failed to practice two days his friends could tell a difference; if three days his audience could tell a difference. Therefore, he practiced some eight hours a day. Surely, "narrow is the way!"

Here is a young couple that has just gotten married. How can they hope for success? There is one thing I have to say, "narrow is the way." If they are unwilling to walk a narrow way, the broad way will end in the divorce court. The way to life is narrow, just as is the way to any goal that is worth claiming.

4. He was narrow in the bounds He set for His ministry. He confined Himself to one little country called, Palestine. It was a part of the great Roman Empire, it was a very small part at that, a country no larger than the State of Connecticut. He might have traveled abroad to Greece and Rome and Egypt, but he shut Himself within this one small country.

Not only so, but within this small country, He gave His energies, chiefly to the instructing of a dozen men. These men would have been ordinary but for what
He did for them. When He prayed His last prayer, He said, "I pray not for the world, but for those whom Thou hast given me out of the world."

How narrow He was, yet it was a narrowness that He deliberately chose. He gave Himself to this narrow way that He might touch the wide world. As He prayed for His own, He stated His reason for such a narrow prayer - "that the world may know that Thou didst send me."
"It shall come to pass that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me."

- John 16:32.

I.

Courage is one virtue that is held in universal admiration. That is not true of all virtues. Take humility, for instance. There are lots of folks who have no admiration for humility. They would not be complimented by being called humble, they would rather be insulted. There are some who do not care much about poise. They rather pride themselves with the quickness with which they can fly off the handle. But courage—everybody admires that.

It was admired by the most ancient of peoples, by those who lived in the dim centuries. It is admired by the people of today. The cultivated Greeks admired it. The American savages admired it no less. It is admired by the young and there is nothing that thrills them any more than courage. It is admired by the old—their chilling blood still warms at the sight of a hero. About the worst insult is to be called a "coward." The one universal compliment is to be called "courageous."

Now there are different kinds of courage. There is physical courage, for example. There are men who are physically brave. Danger does not impress them at all. They can brave the perils of fire and sword, earthquake and tempest, and never lose their heads. But upon this type of courage they have no monopoly, they share it with some of the lower forms of life. An enraged lion has it. It belongs to the bulldog. It belongs also to the enraged rattlesnake. A rattlesnake is the most gentlemanly of all snakes, in my opinion. But when he is aroused, you cannot but admire his grit.

Then there are those who are courageous when they have the proper backing. Huey Long was said to be of this kind. As long as he had his bodyguard about him, he knew no fear. Left without this support, he might get panicky.
Then there is the courage of the soldier who is brave while he is rubbing elbows with comrades. He is brave while his blood is hot with the excitement of battle, but the courage of Jesus was not of this type. His was more like what one has called "five o'clock in the morning courage." He was brave while there was nothing exciting. He was brave while nobody was present to cheer Him on.

The courage of Jesus was what we know as moral courage. That is not to say that He was defective in physical courage, but He had the type of courage where the moral sense dominates. He had that type of courage that sent Him to do what He believed He ought to do regardless of whether He was afraid or whether He was not. That is courage at its best.

To have never felt a sense of fear may not be to our credit, but to have shaken with appalling fears and dare to defy those fears in the doing of the thing we feel we ought to do, that is courage at its best.

II.

Now when we turn to the life of Jesus, we find Him constantly displaying this highest type of moral courage.

First, think of the courage it took to dream that mad dream of His. One day He shut up His carpenter shop and went out to return to it no more. Where was He going? He was going to set up the Kingdom of God. He was going to make a new world. It was the starkest impossibility that any man ever faced, but Jesus faced it with a calm courage, praying and teaching us to pray, "Thy Kingdom come," - believing that at last his dream would come true though there was not another man who shared His hope with Him.

Second, when He began his ministry, think of the courage it took to alienate from Him so many that He desired to win.

(1) He alienated the crowds. Eager multitudes followed Him in the early days wherever He went. But He saw that they were following because they did not understand. They must know the truth. One day, therefore, He preached till the thousands that were about Him dwindled down to twelve frightened men and He looked at them with quiet eyes and
said, "Will ye also go away?" What courage it takes to throw cold water on the enthusiasm of our followers and change their partisanship into indifference or into positive antagonism. But Jesus did it and did it of set purpose.

(2) Then he alienated the religious leaders of His day. Many of those men were earnest and intelligent. They would have been most helpful as disciples. He longed passionately for their fellowship and co-operation, but they were interested in petty things that He knew to be petty, - how many times one should wash ones hands before eating. And He would have nothing to do with such nonsense. Then they had made wide chasms between themselves and the most needy people of the day and Jesus insisted upon crossing those chasms.

Think of that visit to Jericho. They knew that He was coming. I imagine that there was a reception committee. The leading churchmen were going to show Him honor. Perhaps there would be some speech-making and then He would go to dine at the house of a leading Pharisee. But when He reached the city, He ignored the reception committee. Worse still, He looked up into a sycamore tree and saw perched up there the worst hated man in the town. He was Zacchaeus, the tax collector. And He called to this renegade and said, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down; for today I must abide at thy house." That took the same type of courage it would take to go into some Mississippi town for a meeting and turn aside from all the lovely homes and go home with some renegade colored man.

(3) But if it is hard to alienate crowds and religious leaders, it is harder still to alienate friends. And Jesus had to do that. Think of that day when He went back to preach in His old home church after He had been in the big outside world. There He had made a noise. Enough of His great achievements had come back to Nazareth that they were anxious to see Him. They packed the synagogue to hear Him for the news that He would preach.

His sermon began well, having read a beautiful passage of scripture, "they wondered," the story says, "at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth." His mother was there, his brothers and sisters were doubtless there, their faces were full of pride and
appreciation. But Jesus saw that they were narrow and mean and their attitudes toward those of other races were narrow and mean. He proceeded to tell them that when the Lord wanted Elisha to be taken care of He sent him to the home of a pagan instead of a Jewish home. He told them further that though Elisha was able by the power of God to cure leprosy that only one leper was cured by him and that was in Nahum and Nahum was not a Jew but a Syrian. By the time He got that far, they were so angry that they tried to kill Him - He had to flee for His life.

Then take His rebuke of Peter. Jesus had just told how He was to go to the cross, Peter, in honest love and sincerity said, "Be it far from Thee Lord." It is hard to resist ones friends. There is a similar scene in the life of Paul. His friends are urging him not to go to Jerusalem and he turns on them fiercely and says, "What men ye be, weeping and breaking my heart. I am willing not only to go to Jerusalem, but to die for the name of Lord Jesus." And Jesus turned on Peter and said, "Get thee behind Me Satan."

Then what courage it took Jesus to seemingly let His friends down at the end of His ministry. Even after He was arrested, they expected Him to make His escape. They could not believe He would allow himself to be killed. There seemed almost a tone of apology in His words to them when He said, "Do you not know that I could pray to My Father and He would send twelve legions of angels." I do not have to do this, He means, I am doing it because it is best. But it took courage.

Third, Jesus had the courage to seem to be a coward. He remarked how He had to flee from Nazareth. More than once did He have to go and hide Himself from His enemies. A man who was less brave would have refused and would have been killed before His work was done. Jesus was brave enough to seem to be a coward because He wanted to live till He could say to His Father, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do."

Finally, think of the courage it took to face the cross. I know that hundreds have faced it just as bravely as He. But this does not detract from the fact that without fear for Himself, He died and as He died, He prayed for those that murdered Him, rather
than for Himself. Surely Rousseau was right when he said, "If the life and death of Socrates was the life of a philosopher, the life and death of Jesus was that of a God."

IV.

What is the secret of the courage of Jesus. I think we do not account for it by simply saying He was naturally brave. He was tempted in all points like as we are. I believe that the courage that He possessed may be possessed by you and me. What then is the secret?

We find it, I think, in this text, "It shall come to pass that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me." He was made courageous as countless others have been, by a sense of a divine presence. It was a secret that He tried to share with His disciples in the garden when He said, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." He was courageous while they were cowardly, because His prayer brought Him a sense of God while they failed to pray. No man can be terror-stricken with a clear sense of God in His life. "The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge, therefore naught will we fear."

2. He was interested in an eternity bigger than His own life. (Verse 27)
When we think of the sincerity of Jesus, we think of a characteristic in which He was most conspicuous. What do we mean by sincerity? The answer is an old one. In the days of Rome, those whose business it was to quarry and dress and sell marble learned how to make a piece of marble that was defective look as if it were perfect. They doctored it with wax. The sham was so successful that it was often not detected until months or even years later.

But when this piece of marble was put into a building, the sun and the rain and the wind began to test it. By and by, the wax melted or rotted away and the piece of marble could be seen as it really was. All of it's defectiveness became evident. Therefore, those who had the selling of marble in charge had to guarantee that their marble was without wax. The two words they used were "sine cera" - then their marble was marble that was exactly as it appeared to be. Sincerity, therefore, means without make-up. It implies honesty, simplicity, straightforwardness.

Now we are not surprised when we find that in this virtue Jesus Christ was perfect. He is the embodiment of sincerity. He is sincerity personified. That is His claim when He declares, "I am the truth." Being Himself the truth, He was naturally true in all that He said and in all that He did. When He stood before Pilate, He declared, "To this end was I born and for this Cause came I into the world, that I might bear witness unto the truth." When we stand in the presence of Jesus, therefore, we know we are standing in the presence of One who is absolutely sincere. There have been those who have believed that His followers were mistaken about Him. Some have thought that He was mistaken about Himself. But all, so far as I know, whose opinions are of any value, have agreed on His sincerity.

II.

Now sincerity is a virtue that is fundamental. There are virtues that are important but that we can leave off without utter disaster. Breadth is a virtue of Jesus.
Everybody ought to be broad, but one may be a bit narrow and yet be thoroughly respectable. Poise is a beautiful virtue, but we may be defective in poise and still be quite worthwhile. Enthusiasm is a characteristic that Jesus possessed to a high degree. Everybody ought to be enthusiastic, but we may be wanting in enthusiasm and still be worthwhile. But sincerity is a virtue that we simply cannot get on without.

This is true in the realm of things. Carlyle said that if you build a lie into a stone wall, it will fall down. That is true. An insincere wall, an insincere block of marble, an insincere building will collapse. After the great earthquake and fire that destroyed San Francisco some thirty years ago, the Japanese Government sent a commission over to discover the cause. They reported that a large part of the damage resulted not from the earthquake, but from the shoddy material that went into the buildings. The disaster was born of insincerity.

This is true also of friendship. Our friend may be charming, magnetic, clever, but if he has no sincerity, our house of friendship is built upon a foundation of sand. It cannot stand. The same is true of the marriage relationship. However romantically beautiful our love may seem to be, if there is no sincerity in it, there is no permanence nor abiding worth in it. All business depends for its permanency upon sincerity and honesty. Chaos and confusion result without it.

Surely it is the supreme essential that a teacher of religion, however able a teacher may be, however capable may be the minister, though he may speak with the tongues of men and of angels, if he hath not sincerity, it profits nothing. We can bear with crudeness. We can bear with ignorance. We can stand bad grammar, if we know that back of it there is an honest and sincere heart. Some months ago, I invited Bud Robinson to speak in my church. He broke every law of grammar but he broke our hearts while he broke the laws of grammar. I have seldom seen a congregation so moved, so profoundly stirred - they were moved by his sincerity.
This is a characteristic of Jesus on which we build. He made some startling statements, His rebukes at times jar us. He made sin to appear awful. He spoke of it's consequences in terms that often shocked us. He fairly set the respectable people of His day to raging by showing them one of their number in Hades pleading for water to cool his parching tongue. Why did He say those awful things? Because He was so sincere. Then He spoke words that are unspeakably tender and full of comfort. He said, "He that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out." He said, "If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink." He promised life and life abundant. He promised to come again and receive us unto Himself. Why did He speak these cheering and bracing words? We believe He did it in the interest of the truth. He did it because sincerity demanded it of Him. We rest our faith upon Him because He was so sincere.

This sincere Christ hated insincerity, it would seem, above all other sins. The sharpest words that ever fell from His lips were words that He used to scourge hypocrisy. "Woe unto you," He said, "scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites." He showed us this sin in all it's glaring ugliness. He held up to our scorn the man who robbed widows houses and to cover up his rascality made long prayers. He went against every form of evil, but there seems to have been no sin that so aroused His indignation and antagonism as the sin of hypocrisy. Yet, in spite of this fact, how few of us are absolutely sincere.

III.

Insincerity, as we know it, is usually of two kinds.

First, there are those who wish to appear in a better light than they deserve. For instance, take the matter of worldly possessions. There are those who wish to appear richer than they are. I have a friend, a rather brilliant chap, who married a girl who was almost as brilliant as himself. But they were both in love with the same one and that was theirselves. He tried to hold her by posing as a moneyed man. The result was that he
wrecked himself financially and ended by wrecking his home. They are divorced today. Their ship was founded upon the rock of insincerity.

How much better it is not to try to appear richer than we are. "It is no disgrace to be poor," as a wise man said, "it is just inconvenient." I remember a sweet old story that I read from my Latin book when I was in school. It told of a dear old couple, Philemon and Baucis. They were exceedingly poor. The wolf often howled before their door, but the writer makes this wise declaration, "They made poverty light by accepting it."

Second, there are those who wish to appear more clever and more knowing and more talented than they are. I read some time ago of a donkey who suddenly got rich, possibly he struck oil or he won the sweepstakes. Anyway, he found himself rolling in wealth. At once he became ashamed of his family. He had his ears trimmed up and pinned down and began to run with the horses. He fancied that he was making a great hit, but one night they asked him to sing. Of course, as soon as he opened his mouth, they all knew who he was.

Then there are those like the ancient Pharisees who wish to appear better than they are. These are nothing like so plentiful as they used to be, but we still have a few who draw long faces and seek to make a pioused stone a substitute for a religious experience. Of course, this is a bit disgusting and pathetic. One of the silliest things about being insincere is that the deceiver seldom deceives anybody but himself.

Then another tragedy connected with it is that it is such a strain. How hard it is always to be playing a part. Some folks wear themselves out at it. Years ago when our boys were small, we bought them a baby Victrola with a number of records of Mother Goose rhymes and other songs. There was one of these songs that I have never been able to forget. It may be a song for children, but it fits into our lives still better. It runs like this:

"A jolly old sow once lived in a sty
and three little piggies had she.
And she waddled about saying, "Umph, u.ph, u.ph," while the little ones said, "Wee, wee."

"My dear little brothers," said one of the brats, "My dear little brothers," said he.
"Let us all for the future say u.ph, u.ph, u.ph.
"It is so childish to say wee, wee."

Those three little pigies grew slim and lean,
And lean they might very well be.
For somehow they couldn't say, "Umph, umph, umph."
And they wouldn't say, "Wee, wee, wee."

And after a while these little pigs died.
They all died feo-dese,
From trying so hard to say, "Umph, umph, umph."
When they only could say, "Wee, wee, wee."

And a large part of the world is making itself lean and wretched just by trying to say, "Umph, u.ph, u.ph," when it only can say, "Wee, wee." How much better it is to leave off pretending. How much better to dare to be ourselves. There are times, I know, when we are much discouraged with ourselves. There are times when our little gardens seem very narrow and lean and mean, but it is by cultivating them that we raise a crop. By insincerity, we lose at once our happiness and our usefulness.

IV.

Now then shall we set about attaining this high virtue? There are two steps that we can take.

First, we can come again to sit at the feet of Him who declares, "I am the truth."

Second, in His presence, we can take ourselves in hand and cultivate day by day the fine high virtue of transparent honesty and genuine sincerity.
THE PATIENCE OF JESUS

We are beginning this evening a study of the character of our Lord. Mark you, this is not a "Life of Jesus." We are thinking of those characteristics that distinguish Him from others. It is not a study of the "mystery" of His person. It is an effort to view once more the face of that strange "Man of the Cross" who has brought the whole world under His spell.

I believe we will find this helpful because it was the way of the first disciples that came to know Jesus. How did Peter, and James, and John come to fall in love with the Master? How did they come gladly to go out and lay down their lives for Him, to rejoice even when they were ashamed to share His name? This change was not wrought by the study of theology. It was wrought by fellowship with Jesus himself.

I believe we shall find this study at once interesting and helpful. Of course, there are many of you who have thought on this character through the years, but the more you know the more you will desire to know. There are others perhaps who have lost the vision of this phase and there are others still whose vision has been retarded, by prejudice, -- you have refused to look at Him because He has been misrepresented by some minister or by some member of the church. Nathaniel had a prejudice of this kind. He did not like Nazareth and when he heard Jesus came from that section, he was against Him, but his friends said, "Come and see," and when Nathaniel saw, he believed.

It is my conviction that this Man is the Way and the Truth, and the Light. I believe He is the one way for the individual, the one way for the church, the one way for our bewildered world. In looking at Him, we see what we
ourselves can be and ought to be. As we look at Him, we realize what our one business in the world is, and that is to re-produce Him, to make Him known to others.

I.

Now as a beginning, we want to think of the patience of Jesus. As our guide, we shall have the gospels. We shall also have the guidance of a good many others, among them I wish to mention Charles Jefferson, especially. Countless millions have looked at this face and have seen Him as the one altogether lovely and the one of 10,000. Let us look tonight thinking especially of His patience.

What is patience? It is a word we use constantly. We say at times, "So and so annoyed me until I completely lost my patience." At times, perhaps, you did not lose much when you lost it. Or we say, "I have no patience with that idea." We have no patience with King Edward acting like a cry-baby over a sister who has made two unsuccessful ventures already.

Patience has a two-fold meaning. It's first meaning is to wait and hope for good. Now waiting is not a something at which we Americans are supposed to shine. I remember planting a garden years ago, but when it failed to come up the next day, I dug it up. I was one of impatience. When I was a small boy, my father and I went out into the hills to look for the cattle. We came to a place where the horses we were riding could no longer go. He left me to hold the horse while he went down to continue his search. I became impatient and made
for home. When my father caught up with me, he taught me a lesson in patience.

Most of us find it hard to wait. We want quick returns on our money. That is one of the chief causes of panic. We want quick returns in the educational realm. That has led to numerous short cuts -- ten lessons by correspondence will fit us for almost any task. We want quick returns in the realm of religion. We often, therefore, are not willing to teach and to wait. Waiting for a desired good when that good is your husband and the dinner is getting cold, is sometimes difficult. It is sometimes hard to wait when that good is your wife and you are in the car ready to go.

Then patience means how to endure. To endure physical pain, criticism, persecution, and tribulation. The high water mark of this type of patience is usually thought to be Job. Now Job was patient in that in spite of his suffering, he clung to his faith, but he wailed, and sobbed, and cursed the day he was born, and while Job was patient, I think I have seen a good many saints who excelled him greatly.

Perhaps a far better example of patience is seen in Moses. When Moses struck his first blow for the freedom of his people, he was sure of their backing, he soon found that they did not understand. He was compelled to flee for his life. He had to wait 40 years, then he returned to renew his effort only to meet with opposition and criticism and whining. At last he marches across the wilderness reminding one of a patient teacher carrying a big, whining, yelling, crying baby -- but he never gave up. He endured as seeing Him who is invisible. That is patience.

But when we come to patience that is best, we found it in Jesus. We
are patient in certain parts and in certain directions, we are patient with
certain folks, but His was a full law of patience -- it was the very patience
of God.

1. Think how He could wait. He died when He was yet in the morning-
tide of life. He had 33 brief years in which to live but 30 of them were spent
in utter obscurity. As He toiled there in that carpenter shop, doing things that
seem so utterly commonplace, as he looked out on the big world and thought of
the great task calling Him, how eager he must have been to go. Yet he waited.

Then after His baptism, he did not at once enter upon His task, but
went into the wilderness for meditation and prayer. Here He fought again a
battle with impatience and conquered. The Devil suggested a short-cut and quick
returns. He set Him upon the pinnacle of the temple and said, "Cast Thyself down."
What a quick way to come into the limelight -- but Jesus refused. He showed Him
the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them and said, "All this will I give
Thee if Thou will fall down and worship me." But Jesus took the hard way and the
long way.

How patient He was with His disciples. They were always blundering,
always proving a disappointment. The very best came one day when one was priding
himself on the fact that he hindered one who was casting out demons because he
would not follow in his crowd. But Jesus did not turn him out of the church.
He discovered early that Judas was a rascal, but he hoped and waited with infinite
patience.

How patient He was in the accomplishment of His mission. He set out to
re-make the world, to bring in the Kingdom of God. When He died He only had 120
followers -- most of them were unlearned and social nobodys, but He declared that He had overcome the world and He went back to God content to wait for the final victory.

2. Then how Jesus could endure. How much he suffered at the hands of His enemies. He was constantly dogged by unscrupulous men who sought to pick Him to pieces and make life as hard for Him as possible. There were those who hated Him with a hate that would be satisfied with nothing less than His death.

Then if He suffered at the hands of His enemies, He suffered more possibly at the hands of His friends. His own mother thought He was crazy. His brothers refused to believe on Him. One friend denied Him, another betrayed Him, and everyone forsook Him. But there was no hint of rage -- no flinging them away in angry impatience. He endured the Cross, despising the shame.

III.

How are we to be like Jesus? We are to be like Him in patience. It is a beautiful and Christ-like virtue and one that is needed by all of us.

1. We need to be patient with ourselves. We haven't arrived as we one day thought we would. We have tried and failed and failed again. Some of us have been half persuaded to stop trying. But if we ever expect to win, we must not lose patience with ourselves.

2. We must be patient with others. All of us are very annoying and very trying at times. That is true of our husbands and our wives. That is true of our children. It is true of our fellow-Christians. True even of a good many in the
ministry. We must be patient with each other.

3. We need to be patient with God. His ways are not our ways. Sometimes when we rush into His presence in prayer, we get impatient with Him because He does not take orders from us or because He gives us bread instead of a stone. Unless we are to fail, therefore, in our Christian lives, we are to be sound in patience. In this virtue we win as we live in the daily fellowship with our Lord.
THE REASONABLENESS OF GOD

Tonight we want to study Jesus as a man of plain, practical common sense. When we speak of common sense, we speak of that sense without which all other sense is nonsense. It is not called common because it is so wide-spread. In fact, it is a rather rare quality. It is exceedingly hard to find one who is thoroughly sane. At least it is hard to find any one excepting ourselves. Almost all of us are a bit off, or somewhat lopsided in certain directions.

Some years ago I married a lovely couple. The groom was a Ph.D. The bride had good sense. A few weeks later, the young husband rushed into my office almost frantic. "Well," he said, "I suppose I am going to have to get a divorce." And while I was wondering who the man was that had run away with his wife, he told me this: He said I went home and found my wife reading "Billie and the Major", and I snatched the book out of her hand and threw it in the fire.

What was the matter with him? He was a bit of an educated idiot, a plain crank. He was just slightly crazy. The same was true of that mountaineer father who was killed while trying to punish his daughter for being out after curfew. He was unreasonable. That is true of a lot of us.

Now, unreasonable folks are hard to live with. To that, many perplexed husbands can testify. To that, also, many a wife whose hair has turned gray ahead of time can testify. To that, also, many a father and mother, and many a son and daughter can bear witness. Sometimes folks get so unreasonable that nobody can live with them. Sometimes it is necessary to lock such in an institution.
Many of those in our asylums are not altogether mad; they have just, in some measure, lost their reason.

While holding a revival in Raleigh some years ago, I became quite well acquainted with the superintendent of the State Hospital. One day he invited me to a clinic. A fine-looking young man was brought in. Upon being questioned as to what he did, he answered that he was a business man. "I own all the National Banks," he said, "and half of the Post Offices. Henry Ford and John D. Rockefellow both work for me. That is, both did, but I fired Henry Ford last week." He was as happy and sunny as a lark. But, when he was given a dime, he received it joyfully. "If you are rich," one asked, "why did you accept that dime?" "Oh," he said, completely unmoved, "I didn't want to hurt the man's feelings."

Now, since unreasonable people are rather difficult, we are not surprised that Paul prayed to be delivered from them. But if an unreasonable man is difficult, how much more an unreasonable God! How thankful, therefore, we ought to be for the reasonableness of Jesus! It is a characteristic, I think, that we do not emphasize as much as it deserves. In fact it is a characteristic that some completely fail to recognize. There are not a few that look on Jesus as a bit unreasonable. That is not surprising. There was a time when his mother thought He was crazy. To us, He at times seems a bit unreasonable because He is so different from ourselves. All sane folks ought to be like us.

Then, we often feel that Jesus is a bit wanting in reasonableness because of certain of his followers. Did you ever notice how thin a partition often separates the vitally Christian from the fanatic? I think the most attractive individual in the world, and the most reasonable, is the genuine Christian. But it is possible to be very earnestly religious and yet be exceedingly crazy, and thoroughly
unreasonable. The Jews that crucified Jesus were very religious. They would rather have died than to have defiled themselves by going into the palace of Pilate. But at the same time they were eager to purge themselves, and to dip their hands in the blood of Christ. We find folks of the same type today. Naturally a good many feel that Christianity is not quite a sane and practical program for living.

But when we face the facts, I think it is evident that the sanest man that ever lived was Jesus. No one was ever quite so reasonable as He. It is impossible to turn the pages of the New Testament and not be impressed by this fact. I am going to ask you to think of his sanity for genuine reasonableness in three particulars.

I

In the matter of discipleship.

1. How do we become disciples? Jesus made everything hinge on the faith. We are to believe in order to be saved. "But I cannot believe," one often answers,"I cannot make my judgment blind. I cannot believe a thing just because I am told to believe it. If the evidence does not seem sufficient, then belief for me is impossible." Therefore, for Jesus to make faith a condition of salvation is unreasonable.

Now, if faith meant simply an intellectual conviction, there would be some justice in this contention. But faith goes far deeper than that. Faith means assent of the will. It involves venturing on what you believe. Jesus tells us that if we are willing to believe, we cannot only come to believe, but to know. "If any man is willing to do His will, He shall know."

Now, that puts knowledge within reach of every man. It was a knowledge born of experiment. How did Edison come to know
electricity as he knew it? By obeying its laws. How have men found out how, though heavier than air, a ship can fly under its own power. By testing it out. And a man whose will is on the side of Jesus can come to a saving faith. It matters not how little you may believe tonight, if you begin to live up to what you actually do believe, you will come into the fulness of the life. That is reasonable and sane.

II

Look next at the teaching of Jesus on the method of overcoming evil. He said some things that seem so extreme that the wise smile over it. Take this, for instance, "You have heard it was said of them of old time, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, but I say unto you that you resist not evil but if a man smite you on one cheek, turn to him the other one also." Now, here is a method of dealing with evil that is altogether new. If a man smites me, I can do one of three things: I can run. In that, I may encourage my antagonist in his evil way, and simply postpone the further punishment that he wishes to give me. Or, I can hit back. In that case, we may fight it out. But in so doing, we have proved nothing except which is the better boxer. Or, I can refuse to hit back, and refuse to run, but face my foe unafraid, because I fight with other weapons. This is the method of Jesus. It is the only method that promises abiding victory.

A few years ago, we fought a war to end war. But that was madness. War never ends war. It only begets another war. Hate never produces anything but hate. Taking revenge only prepares the way for a new crime. In proof of that, look at the feuds of the Tennessee and Kentucky Mountains. One day the Scribes and Pharisees dragged a sinning woman into the presence of Jesus. "Moses said she ought to be stoned", he declared, "but what sayest Thou?" Jesus said,"Neither ...
I condemn thee, go and sin no more." The remedy suggested by Moses would have made a corpse. The remedy used by Jesus made a new woman.

Believing that the only remedy for the destruction of evil was good, Jesus declared that "the meek should inherit the earth." That sounds like madness. But it is in process of realization today. The nations that are the worst off, the most heavily burdened, are not the peaceful nations, but the war-like. The meek birds are inheriting the earth, and the meek beasts are inheriting the earth. And those that use the tooth and claw are being exterminated. What Jesus said about the destruction of evil is, therefore, infinitely sane and reasonable.

III

Prayer.

Think next of the common sense of Jesus in His teaching about prayer. It is possible to talk much nonsense about this most important privilege. It is possible to pray foolishly and almost blasphemously. But, if we follow the teaching of Jesus, we will do none of these.

1. Jesus declares that prayer is reasonable. He tells us that our children pray to us every day, and we answer their prayers. This, we do, in spite of the fact that we are ignorant and sinful. Therefore, how reasonable it is to believe that our loving Heavenly Father will answer our prayers. "If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father in Heaven give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him."

2. If we desire our prayers to be heard, we must offer them in sincerity. We must not pray simply to be seen of men. That is unreasonable. You would not give a gift to your child if you knew he were asking it simply for the sake of impressing some bystander, when in reality he did not desire the gift at all.
3. He said our asking must be simple and direct. We are not to be heard for our much speaking, and we are not to use vain repetitions. We are not to say over so many forms of prayers so many times. To say God is moved by such process is to think of Him as non-intelligent. What would you think of a mother who would require of her child that he said a certain form so many dozens of times before giving him a piece of bread? Such praying is unreasonable.

4. Finally, Jesus taught that for our prayers to be heard we must be forgiving. Prayer puts in our hands something of the power of God. Therefore, God cannot reasonably trust that power to one who will not use it in the interest of love. How unreasonable to expect a loving father who loves his other children as well as He loves you to accept your prayers when you are so out of harmony with Him as to hate what He loves!

The more we study the Words of Jesus, the more we are convinced that never man spake like this man." His words are not only the climax of wisdom, but because they are that, they are the climax of sanity and good sense. The most poised and sane and reasonable teacher that ever taught was Jesus. To obey Him is to lay hand on the promise both of the life that now is, as well as that which is to come.
THE POISE OF JESUS

John 6: 67 - "Will ye also go away?"

This question was asked in the midst of seeming defeat and failure. Many a man would have been completely upset and utterly overcome. Most of us in such a situation would have lost our heads altogether. We would have thrown up our hands asking, "What is the use?" and given way in complete and igneous defeat. But Jesus remains as cool and seemingly undisturbed as if the whole enterprise had been a complete success. In other words, Jesus kept His poise.

What do we mean by poise? It is beautiful and worthwhile characteristic. It is one that for our own good and for the good of others, we need to cultivate. Without it, we are constantly getting into hot water. Without it, we are again and again covered with shame and confusion. With it, we are not only able more often to maintain our own self-respect, but we become a source of strength to others. How many a situation has been saved by the man or the woman of poise. What then is poise?

1. One part of poise we might call self-control. At our peace meeting last night, we had the pleasure of hearing the Glee Club from Central High School. While they were in the midst of a selection, one of the boys standing in the very center of the group toppled over in a dead faint. Now that was a circumstance that was a bit upsetting, but one or two of the group assisted by a man from the audience carried the young fellow out to fresh air while the Glee Club went on with its song. They did not miss a note and those listening to the song would never have known that anything had happened had they been listening over the radio - that was poise.

Some years ago, I knew a most excellent preacher who was conducting a service in the City of Chattanooga, Tennessee. Near the front there was an old gentleman who
was wheezing and sneezing and coughing and clearing his throat in a fashion that was most disconcerting. The preacher gave him a few fairly dirty looks, but failed to get results. At last, he lost his temper, exploded before the old man and the whole congregation and said things for which he was heartily ashamed. He never fully recovered the prestige that he lost through that one stupid blunder. Everybody saw that he was lacking in poise. He had too little self-control.

2. Then poise means mental balance. There are folks in every congregation who are ready to fall for any newfad that comes along - they never seem anchored to anything. They are not level-headed. They are wanting in reasonableness. We speak of such as being "not quite balanced." They may be developed in one direction and totally undeveloped in another. People with unbalanced minds are slightly insane. A man of poise is a man of sanity.

3. Then poise carries with it the idea of fortitude, -- The high capacity of keeping on our way through success and failure, through applause and derision. In the good old revival days, there were folks who were all enthusiasm while the meetings were going on. There was no task too difficult for them to undertake, but when the meeting was over, often there was an utter collapse. They were lacking in poise. We have then had a story that comes out of the Old Testament. Things had been going badly for Israel, their enemies were lording it over them. Even the best of their soldiers were hiding in the caves and dins of the earth. But one day Jonathan dared to make a stand. Not only so, but he fought so victoriously that his foes fled before him. "Now," says the writer, "when those that were hidden in the caves saw that the enemy fled, they too followed hard after them for battle." They were all enthusiasm when they were winning, but all cowardice and pessimism in the midst of defeat. But a man of poise keeps his course, regardless of outward circumstances.
"The Poise of Jesus"

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
if you can trust yourself when all men doubt you
And make allowance for their doubting too ......

Then you have poise!

II.

Now look how this beautiful virtue was exemplified in the life of our Lord.

1. He was a man of the finest self-control. In His early ministry, He was flattered when the multitudes flocked about Him, but it never went to His head. Later on, He was often openly insulted. In the home of Simon, the Pharisee, He was treated with an ugly lack and want of respect. But instead of being irritated by it, He used it. During the terrible ordeal of His sham trial and of the cross, He never lost His temper.

Years later, when Peter wrote of Him, in his memory what seemed to impress him most was this, "When He was reviled, He reviled not again." This does not mean that Jesus never got angry. He did. But His anger was altogether different from yours. He blazed when wrong was done to others and one day He went into the temple and saw the religious leaders totally indifferent to the needs of a man with a withered hand. And the story says, "He looked round about upon them with anger." But our anger is usually born of some personal affront to ourselves. We lose our heads and say cruel and cutting things because we have no poise.

2. Then think of the sanity of Jesus - of the clarity of His mind. Think how well balanced He was. He was courageous, but never wreckless. He was religious, but never sanctimonious. He was tender and compassionate, but never sloppy and sentimental.

Then, He was never betrayed into saying foolish and ill-considered words. Often, He was surrounded by shrewd and keen debaters who sought to entrap Him in His speech, but never did He say a single word that He had to take back and correct. If a
stenographer had taken down his answers, he would not have needed to correct his notes.

One day, for instance, the Pharisees came to Him with a difficult question. It was one of those awful "Yes" or "No" questions that lawyers love to ask. "Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?" They are sure they have Him now. If He says "Yes, it is lawful," - then every Jew is against Him. If he says "No" - then Caesar will handle it. There is no way out of this trap, but Jesus breaks through with utmost ease. "Show me a penny," He requests. Having received it, He asks, "Whose image is this?" "Caesar" is the answer. "Render, therefore, to Caesar the things that are Caesars but to God the things that are God's." That put them in utter silence.

3. Then think of the poise of Jesus in the face of difficulties. Victory did not unduly elate Him. Defeat did not over-whelm Him. In the sentence of which our text is a part, we have a picture of what would have been exceedingly upsetting to a lesser man. It is a terrible ordeal in the mind of the average preacher to lose a crowd. It is bad psychology. A great many folks measure the merits and ability of every preacher by one single measurement - that is, his effort to draw and hold a crowd. If his church is packed, then he is of necessity a great man. Of course, this is only a half truth. Jesus lost His crowd, but He did not lose His nerve. He did not lose His courage. He did not lose His self-respect. "Will ye also go away?" he asked the handful that was left. In the midst of disaster, He kept His poise.

Then He had no less poise under an even more trying situation than this. For a minister to lose his audience is bad enough, but to face a shameful death is worse still. But when Jesus stood before Pilate, it was Pilate who was flustered. Pilate, with the mightiest nation in the world back of him, lost his poise altogether, but not Jesus. He was beautifully serene - as serene as He was when He said, "In this world you shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." At last, men robbed Him of His life, but they could not rob Him of His poise.
III.

Now this is a virtue that I am sure we covet. We are assured that we are so easily upset. How quick we are to lose our tempers. Having lost them, we say unbecoming things or we go away and pout. Thus we hurt others as well as ourselves. But we might make our very rebuffs into means of helping others. Since I have been in your city, I heard one gentleman speak rather angrily and insulting to another. But instead of answering him with kind, he gave the soft answer that turneth away wrath and every man present felt the bigness of him - he had poise. How can we have it?

1. we must cultivate it - it will not come to us as a matter of course. We cannot dream our way to it. We need to take ourselves in hand and exercise control of our tempers and also over our tongues. There are few things, I think, that so utterly destroy my respect for an individual as to see him go to pieces over some trifling nothing and act like a baby. Poise comes through discipline.

2. When it will become us in our cultivation of poise to get a right perspective. So many things that upset us are not worth getting upset over. If we realized how trifling they are, we would take it more calmly. We remember what Emerson said the stars asked him when he came out of a meeting where men had become all hot and flustered and upset. This was the question, "why so hot, little man?"

3. The third help, as another has suggested, is to be committed to a cause bigger than yourself. We get upset because we are thinking more of ourselves than of the matter we have in hand. I knew a man years ago who was an almost invincible debater. One reason was this - that he seemed interested only in his cause. When once a man slapped his jaws, he went on his unruffled way saying, "That doesn't prove a thing, the point is this ......" Of course, he won.

4. The supreme recipe for poise is none other than Jesus Himself. He had it in its perfection and if He homes in our hearts through the power of the spirit, it shall
be ours also. Through Him the Spirit is as love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, self-control. And of these - love, gentleness, self-control give to their possessor a beautiful and winsome poise.
"The Reasonableness of Jesus."

Isaiah, 1: 18.

"Come now and let us reason together." The characteristic of our Lord about which I am to speak to you this evening is one, I think, to which we give all too little consideration. We are perfectly willing to concede to Him perfection in holiness and in patience and in love and sympathy. But I feel sure that there are a great many who fancy Him not at all wealthy in the virtue about which I am to speak to you tonight.

My subject is "The Reasonableness of Jesus." I want you to think of His level headedness, of His common sense. And by common sense I mean that sense without which all other sense is nonsense. And as you study the character of our Lord with this in view I think you will be convinced of His supreme reasonableness even as you are of His supremacy in any other particular.

Do you recall that interesting event when His enemies thought to trap Him one day? They put their heads together. They were shrewd men themselves, and they said, "Let us ask Him this question: Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar?" Now, they reasoned He was to answer this question "Yes" or "No." "If He says, 'Yes', then we will accuse Him of being a traitor to his own nation. If he says, 'No', then we have proof positive of His disloyalty to Rome."

So they came with their question. And Jesus, with His incisive level headedness, saw the point and answered their question most admirably. "Show me a penny", He said. And when the penny was produced He pointed to the picture and said, "Whose picture is that?" And they said, "Caesar's." "Good", He answered. "Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's."

Then His questioners looked at each other. And each one wondered what the other would answer, and he was fully aware that he himself had nothing to answer. And they went away in utter silence. Why? Because the answer of Jesus was so profoundly sensible. It was so absolutely reasonable. It was the very acme of common sense.

Now, Paul on one occasion prayed to be delivered from unreasonable men. I think we might all pray such a prayer. I think the ordinary pastor of a large city church might be able to write a book on "Crazes I have met." We come in contact with a great many unreasonable people. I suppose the ordinary business man would have a record almost equally high. And it is thoroughly trying to be forced to deal with people that are unreasonable. It is like dealing with a spoiled child.

But if it is trying on one's nerves and patience and temper to deal with unreasonable men, what an infinite calamity it would be to fall into the hands of an unreasonable God. And yet I am persuaded that there are many today that look upon our Lord as a bit unreasonable. They look upon Christianity as something that is a little bit deficient in the fine essential of common sense.

Now, the fact of the matter is that nothing could be further from the truth. There is not one of us who is perfectly reasonable.
There are points in which all of us would be a bit cranky. There are realms in which we would all be a little bit defective in common sense. There are some particulars in which we would all be unreasonable. But Jesus Christ was everywhere and always perfectly reasonable. He was infinite in His fund of common sense. And for this reason Christianity is the most reasonable and common sense something in all the world.

This I say in the face of the fact that there are not a few even in the churches that look upon vital Christianity as a bit unpractical and unreasonable. They think that the Christian religion would suit well for the cloister. They think that it might even fit into the program of a preacher or of a hermit, but that it is not quite the thing for one who lives his life in the big, brushing, stressful world in which they live; that while it would appeal to the imaginative and to the poetic and to the sentimental, it is not of such a character as to appeal to what we today call the hard headed business man.

That this view is utterly false one needs only to read the four Gospels. We would show ourselves so much more reasonable if we would turn and read for ourselves what Jesus said, and inquire as to whether it was sensible and reasonable. But instead of doing that we oftentimes simply accept the unreasonable statements of those who will not resort to the final source of authority. So let us look at a few evidences of the reasonableness of our Lord. Of course we will be able to examine only a few. Take, for instance, what he taught as to the conditions of salvation. He said that the one essential of salvation was faith. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life."

Is that reasonable? There are many who say it is not. They say it is unfair to condemn a man because he does not believe on Jesus Christ or does not believe in a certain spiritual truth, that it is unreasonable because a man can not help what he believes. You can not, they say, make your judgment blind and believe what is to you unreasonable.

Now, while that sounds sensible, that does not state the case. Jesus asks a man to believe. He demands belief, but He knows that belief is not simply a thing of the intellect. It is a thing of the will. There is a way, He declares, to test the matter. He says, "If any man will do His will, he shall know." That is, faith is not simply for a few credulous. It is not simply for a few elect who have a genius for religion. It is for any man. "If any man will do His will, he shall know." You say that it is impossible for you to believe. "Then," said our Lord, "I will state what is possible. It is possible for you to obey. Begin by obeying and you will end by believing."

That is reasonable, is it not? That is absolutely fair. And the man that will do that will believe. "The world is round," said Columbus. "It is not," said the crowd. "Let us test it." And when they tested it they found it true. "The Messiah has come," said Philip. "From what part of the country," said Nathaniel. "Nazareth," answered Philip. "It is not so," said Nathaniel, "nothing good can come out of Nazareth." "Come and see," said Philip. "Put the matter to the test." That is all Christ required then. It is all Christ requires today. No man can say that such a requirement is unreasonable.
Or you may take the teaching of our Lord on the subject of worry. It is an important and pressing subject in any day. Worry wrecks more lives than work. Worry kills soul and body. And so Christ taught men not to worry. He said, "Take no thought"; that is, do not be anxious.

Now, He is not alone in that teaching. Men all through the centuries have argued against worry. But the trouble is, they have given us no antidote. Christian Science teaches not to worry, but it bases its teaching upon a known lie. "Do not worry," it says, "worry about sin and sickness and death because these things do not exist. You might as well worry for fear you would be carried off bya winged dragon or that a rhinoceros would eat you up on the way home." Such teaching is shockingly unreasonable.

Christ based his argument against worry on grounds that were reasonable. His teaching more, as everywhere, is full of hard horse sense. "Do not worry," he said, "in the first place, because worry does not help. Which of you by taking thought could add one cubit to his stature?" I am not as tall as I would like to be. How can I grow an extra six inches? Worry about it. No, no, that will not help. I am not as handsome as I want to be, but I will not become better looking by worrying over it. Worry never helped anything in all the world. Do not worry because it is useless.

"Do not worry," says our Lord, "in the second place, because God is your father and pledges Himself to help you. Look at the fowls of the air," he said. "They neither sow nor reap, but God looks after them. Are you not much better than they? Look at the beautiful dress that the grass wears. If God so clothes it which today is and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not clothe you who are eternal?" And He based His argument against worry, first, on its unreasonable and its uselessness, and second, upon the big blessed fact of the love of God. Now, that is what I call good sense.

Or, again, take the teaching of our Lord about the Sabbath. The Sabbath has always been an occasion for much discussion and vast difference of opinion. It is so today. There is much being said about certain blue laws that some people claim the church is trying to force upon the people. A great many of these laws have been suggested only by those who are opposing them. But it is wise to hear what Jesus really teaches about the Sabbath.

The Sabbath of His day was a terror. Laws had been past regarding it so multitudinous that it must have been a dreadful day through which to live. Almost everything was forbidden on the Sabbath. A man was not even allowed to catch a flea on the Sabbath lest he should be accused of hunting. I do not know whether he was even allowed to scratch or not.

But the attitude of Jesus toward the Sabbath was altogether different. One time He cured a man on the Sabbath who had a withered hand. On another Sabbath He cured a paralyzed man. On another He cured a woman who had had an infirmity for eighteen years. And He said to those people who were angry with Him for His Sabbath desecration, "You even pull your ox out of the ditch if he falls into it on the Sabbath. And yet you complain at me for pulling the folks out of
the moral and physical ditches into which they have fallen. "The truth of the matter is," He says, "you have misunderstood the Sabbath altogether. You have thought that the Sabbath was an institution that God needed for Himself, that He has put it here arbitrarily just for the fun of forcing you to observe it. In that you are altogether mistaken. The Sabbath was born of the love of God. It was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Man needs it. He can not get on without it. Therefore, it is lawful to do good to yourself or to somebody else even on the Sabbath day."

That is sensible. Apply it in your own life. Whatever helps me and whatever helps my brother, not physically simply, - but whatever helps us physically and spiritually, we may do on the Sabbath.

This makes it a bit hard for most Sabbath desecraters. You have no right to buy on the Sabbath. You are helping to rob somebody of his right to rest. You have no right to buy a movie ticket on the Sabbath. You are not helping yourself, and certainly you are helping to rob your brother. Keep before you the purpose of the Sabbath that is to bring to you physical rest and spiritual enrichment, and use it for that purpose. And you will not desecrate it.

Last of all, look for a moment at what Jesus taught about prayer. There are many today who do not believe in prayer. There are a great many who do not even seem to know what prayer is. What is prayer according to the teaching of our reasonable Lord? It is not a kind of charm that we say over and over. It is not telling beads or saying so many pater nosters. "When you pray," He said, "use not vain repetitions as the heathen do." Isn't it marvelously strange that so many today do that very thing? Wouldn't it take a thoroughly idiotic mother to require her child to say over a set form of words a certain number of times before she would give him a piece of bread and butter? Christ says that God is an intelligent being and that you are to speak to Him as an intelligent being, expressing to Him the wants of your heart. And that that is prayer. That is reasonable.

Then see how reasonable He is in teaching that God will answer prayer. There are many folks today who argue against prayer because they say God can not set aside His laws just for you. He can not do a certain thing just because you request it. Jesus Christ passed by all such surface logic as this and went to the logic of the heart, "Lord, you tell us to pray, but what is the use? How are we to know that God will answer us?" "Oh", said He, "if ye be evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more will your Father in Heaven give good things to them that ask Him."

How reasonable it all is! What thorough-going, everyday, practical, common sense! Then a boy asks for bread he does not get a stone. When he asks for an egg he does not get a scorpion. We meet the needs of our children because we love them. God has not made creatures greater than Himself. He will also meet the needs of His children when they pray because He loves them. Oh, we have a wonderful Savior. He is perfect in holiness, perfect in patience, thank God, also perfect in the fine grace of reasonableness.
"The Narrowness of Christ."

Matthew, 7: 14.

"Narrow is the way." I am to speak to you this evening on the narrowness of Jesus. The word "narrow" is not an inviting word. The modern mind is a bit in rebellion against it. There are few more insulting things could be said about us than that we should be called narrow. We consider it a badge of littleness. We look upon it as the mark of a mind dwarfed, stunted and undeveloped. We would be far, most of us, I suppose, from ever thinking of Jesus as a narrow man.

(There is, for instance, the narrowness of the provincial.

Now, there is a sense in which narrowness is a calamity. Some people have an eye only for the near. Their own community or their own state or their own section of the country or their own nation is all that counts for anything. The big world on the outside is not worth considering. Everybody that does not live where you live is to be pitied.

Then there is the narrowness of interest. There are people whose sympathies extend but little wider than their umbrellas. They have an interest in themselves, and, for their own selfish sake, they have an interest in their own home folks, and possibly some little interest in the particular circle in which they move. But those on the outside are but little better than barbarians. They are not worthy of their consideration. They have no interest in them.

Then there is denominational narrowness, the narrowness of those who are the holders of a certain creed. We are getting away from that kind of narrowness in some measure. There was a time when we had not a few churches who claimed to be the church of Christ in contradiction from other churches. They were in the apostolic succession, and no other church was. They only were right and all others were wrong. John was in the grip of that kind of narrowness when he forbade those casting out demons in the name of Jesus to continue their gracious work.

Now, from all these kinds of narrowness Jesus was entirely free. He knew the big world and was interested in it. His sympathies were as wide as the race. He was a slave to no form of words. There was nothing of pharasaical bondage about Him. And yet there are those today to whom he would seem exceedingly narrow.

First, He was narrow in His judgments of men. There are many today who revolt at the dividing of the world into two classes, the good and the bad, the spiritually alive and the spiritually dead. They say, and with some truth,

"There's so much bad in the best of us,
And so much good in the worst of us,
That it hardly becomes any of us
To laugh at the rest of us."

But remember that Jesus did not divide men into the perfect and the imperfect, but He did divide them into two classes, and only two. It seems a narrow statement of the case, but it was His statement. And in all the varied figures that He used He never spoke of any intermediate class. There were those who had life and those who did not have.
The narrowness of Christ

it. There are those who were right and those who were wrong.

For instance, He spoke of two gates. One of these gates was broad. It was so broad that you might enter it and take with you all your possessions. You might take with you your prejudices, your ignorance, your envy, your lusts, your hates, your self. You might take anything and everything. The other was a strait gate. It was so strait that in order to enter it you had even to deny yourself. And these two gates were all the gates that He mentioned. There were none others.

Now, these two gates opened upon highways. One of these highways was broad. It was easy to travel. It was thronged by many feet. The other was narrow and trodden only by the few. He did not speak of a way that was halfway between these two. There were only two gates, only two ways - the broad and the narrow.

He compared men to trees. These trees were again of only two kinds. There was the tree that bore good fruit and the tree that bore evil fruit. He did not mention another kind of tree that bore part good and part bad. These human trees were of only two kinds.

He spoke of two foundations upon which men might build their lives. Men might think that there were a thousand different kinds of foundations, but Christ mentioned two and only two. One of these was the foundation of sand. The other was the foundation of rock.

One day He told a story of ten girls who set out to be bridesmaids at a wedding. At once He divided those girls into classes. They did not belong to ten different classes, nor to five, but to two and to two only. Five of them were wise and five were foolish. The foolishness of the foolish consisted in the fact that they had no present supply of oil. The wisdom of the wise was in the fact that they did have a present supply of oil.

So you see that not once, but again and again, Jesus divided men into classes. He said that no man could serve two masters. He implied by that that we were going to be the servants of God or the servants of the enemy. And to certain Jews who claimed to be the servants of God, He spoke with great plainness, saying, "Ye are of your father, the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do."

Not only was Jesus narrow in His judgments of men, but He made narrow the conditions by which men are to be saved. He said the way that leads to life is a narrow way. I do not suppose that is altogether surprising. Every road that leads to what is worth while is narrow. The more worthy the goal, the more narrow the way. The man who would write excellent prose has to walk in a narrow way. Many rules shut him in. For the man who would write excellent poetry the way is more narrow still. So Jesus said that the way unto life everlasting was narrow.

In fact, He declared that there was only one way to be saved at all. He did not say that there was a multitude of ways. He never said that it did not matter what a man believed, so his life was all right. He said exactly the opposite. He said that "he that hath the Son hath light, and he that hath not the Son hath not light." In another place He declared, "I am the door. No man cometh to the
Father but by me. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life."

You see that He declared that there was only one way by which men could be saved at all. He wiped out of consideration at once every thought of salvation by self effort, of salvation by education, of salvation by any means whatever except through faith in Himself. He said that the man who would trust in Him, who would believe in Him, who would receive Him should be saved. "For to as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become the sons of God."

Nor is this faith a mere intellectual assent. It is infinitely more. The content of this faith includes absolute self surrender. It involves the enthroning of Christ as supreme in our lives. How shockingly narrow His conditions of discipleship seem to be. First, this faith in Himself that He demands, calls for an utter denunciation of all sin. Not only does He demand that we denounce murder, but we must uproot the seed that might grow into murder, that ugly seed called anger. We are not simply forbidden the unclean act, we are also forbidden the unclean thought. And we are forbidden these things not simply as a matter of expediency, but as a matter of absolute necessity. For it is better to lose the right eye and the right hand than that the wrong use of these members should bring a stain upon the soul.

This faith in Christ demands the renunciation of the world. Christ makes it very plain that if any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. It demands the renunciation of our friends, of our loved ones, not in the sense of throwing them away, but in the sense of giving Christ first place. For He says, "If any man love father or mother or brother or sister more than me, he is not worthy of me."

And not only are we called upon to renounce our nearest and our dearest and our best, we are called upon to renounce ourselves. "If any man come after me and be not willing to lose his own life for my sake, he cannot be my disciple." Truly narrow is the way that leadeth unto life. Jesus was tremendously narrow in the conditions upon which He would allow men to become His disciples.

And last of all, Jesus is narrow in His views of the life to come. As He spoke of only two classes of men in the world today, so He speaks of only two classes in the world to come. That is logical, I think. That is reasonable. Men here are made up of those who know God and those who do not know Him, those who are alive and those who are dead in trespasses and in sin. The world to come is going to be made up of those same two classes. How common sense it is. And yet when a man so speaks today he is accounted narrow.

He painted a picture once of how the nations were to be gathered before the Judgment Seat. And when sentence was given it read like this: "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." He told a story of a rich man and a poor man. The one found his way into Abraham's bosom and the other into the flames of Hades. But there were only two destinies. He never spoke of an intermediate state. On Christ's lips was no purgatory. He was tremendously narrow in His views of the future life.

Sitting one night with His disciples He told them about His Father's House, and how it had in it many abiding places. And now He was going away and prepare a place for them, and later come and receive
them unto Himself. They believed it. And millions since that day have believed it. And in the embracing of that blessed faith they have died well. Today I accept the statement, not because I deserve such a place, but because I trust in the word of Him who said it. He also spoke of another place. It was a place where "worm should not die and where fire should not be quenched." The thought of it is fairly ghastly in its horror. It startles us. It outrages us. It stirs our prejudice. I fancy sometimes it even turns some people from the truth. And yet the same Christ who tells us about the blessedness of the saved, tells us also about the wretchedness of the lost.

For this reason I dare to preach a narrow theology, a theology so narrow that it divides all men into two classes, and only two; that it makes one condition of salvation for all men who have an opportunity to hear the truth, that it holds out only one of two destinies for all men, that of heaven or hell. You say it is narrow. I am not going to deny it. All I have to say in defense is this, that it is the narrowness of Jesus.
"The Broadness of Jesus."

Acts, 1: 8.

This is an aspect of the character of Jesus that is more appealing than the one we had last Thursday. We do not like to think of Jesus as narrow. We prefer to think of Him as broad. And broad He is, and broad He was. In this respect there is none other in all history to compare with Him. Search among the most conspicuous sons of men, place them beside Jesus and their breadth is a narrow rivulet across which a child might step to a shoreless sea.

But the broadness of Jesus, let it be understood again, did not consist in any of the characteristics about which some today would pride themselves. He had, as I tried to tell you in my last address, no wide views about sin and about righteousness. He did not look on the world through the easy, indifferent eyes of the latitudinarian. His broadness did not consist in His indifference to what a man believed. He was the prophet of the narrow way. He declared emphatically that "narrow is the way that leads to life", and in that way He walked, and in that way He commanded others to walk.

In what then did the broadness of Jesus consist? First of all, He was broad in the realm of the intellect. In the largest possible sense He was a broad minded man. He lived in a distant age. He lived in an obscure country, but the thoughts that He thought and the words that He spoke are for all ages and for all countries. We run past almost all our books. We care little for what the scientists of yesterday said, but after all the centuries the wisest of men does not feel that he has in any sense run past Jesus. He does not feel that he has come abreast with Him.

Now, the man who in one day can speak words that are so fundamental that they will fit all days, the man that can so speak to one age that he will speak to all ages - that man is broad. So if we take Jesus simply in the realm of the intellectual there is none like Him. "Never man spake like this man." He is a myriad minded man. The sweep of His genius is broader than all the centuries.

"If Jesus Christ is a man,
And only a man, I say,
That of all mankind I will cling to him,
And to Him I will cling alway."

Second, Jesus was broad in His sympathies. Jesus was a Jew. The Jews were extremely narrow and bigoted. They confined their sympathies to the Jews, and not only to the Jews, but to those classes of Jews who were respectable and orthodox. But Jesus was not so limited. He had more breadth. His sympathy broke out of bounds.

For instance, there was that class rotten in body, the leper. The man of leprosy was without the pale. Terrible chasms separated him from his respectable and clean fellows. But Jesus by the breadth of His sympathy bridged that chasm. He gave to the leper His unstinted love. He put the touch of His power upon Him and made His flesh come back like the flesh of a little child.
There was another lower than the leper, the outcast woman, the woman who in all ages is the most hopeless and the most despaired of. The religionists of his day had no hope for her; they only had stones. One who was so guilty was to be stoned to death. But Jesus put round about her the sheltering folds of His sympathy. He protected her from her tormentors, and better still, He protected her from herself. He gave her a new chance.

Then there was a third class more hated than either of these. That was the publican. But Jesus in the breadth of His sympathy even took in the publican. He passed by where one of them was working one day and asked him to follow Him. He numbered him among his intimate friends. He allowed him to write His gospel. He feasted in his house in the midst of a motley throng of outcasts. The Pharisees were horrified. But Jesus answered that "they that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." And though He saw Himself hated for His breadth of sympathy, when He went to Jericho, the narrowest of all narrow cities, He spent the night in the home of the most notorious publican there. How tremendously broad He was in His sympathy.

But what is more astonishing still, His sympathy extended even beyond the outcasts among the Jews. He sympathized with the Samaritans. He dared to heal a Samaritan leper. He trod the soil of their country as calmly as He would that of Jerusalem, though pious Jews went around Samaria lest they should be contaminated. He even sat one day and talked to a filthy rag of a woman and made her forget her thirst for the water of Jacob's well in the joy and the zest of the Water of Life.

Nor did this wonderful Christ spend all His sympathy upon Jews and upon the degenerate children of Israel. He even included the gentile. The very first sermon He preached in Nazareth He told them how the prophet Elijah was sent in the hour of his need to a woman outside of Palestine. He told them how that though there were many lepers in Israel in the days of the prophet Elisha, that none of them was cured except a gentile by the name of Naaman. The sermon so angered the audience that listened to it that they sought to mob Him then and there.

The truth of the matter is that the breadth of His sympathy was one of the things that hastened His steps toward the cross. And though it brought Him to the cross, the cross was powerless to kill it. On the cross His heart went out in sympathy to the dying thief at His side. And in the agonies of death He spread in loving sympathy the sheltering folds of this tender prayer over the shoulders of the Roman dogs who were murdering Him, "God, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

"Truly the love of Christ is wider
Than the measure of man's mind,
And the heart of the eternal
Is most wonderfully kind."

He is so broad in His sympathy that He loves the whole world. And He loves it not for one day, but through all the sinning centuries.

And now as broad as Jesus Christ is in His sympathy, so broad is in His plans and purposes. One certainly would not have expected such breadth of Him. He lived, as I said a moment ago, amidst a narrow people. He was a brother of them. He never traveled abroad. He gave Himself to a little country no larger than Connecticut. He did not give Himself to all of that country. He devoted Himself peculiarly to a mere
handful of men. He numbered only twelve among His intimate inner circle. How narrow seems His purpose.

And yet it was not narrow. He has a wider aim than simply the salvation of those twelve. He has a wider plan than simply the salvation of Palestine. This purpose is for the salvation of a world. The reason He was so intensely narrow is because He is so infinitely broad. He will give Himself so exclusively to the narrow way that men can not but know it. He will devote Himself so entirely to the twelve that when He leaves them they will be so ablaze with His message that they will set the world on fire. For it is through these that He expects to touch the world.

Before He ascended He gave them His plan of campaign. He said, "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you. And ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and all Judea and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." Surely He had the wide view. He had the far vision. As He taught those twelve humble men, He saw beyond them an innumerable company that no man can number. As He taught them He saw uncounted marching armies going forth with the last man in the furthest part of the earth with a verbal message. He was broad in His purposes.

Last of all, He was immensely broad in His hopes. He had the widest expectations. Surely none but the Son of God Himself could ever have expected so much. He realized what a small beginning He had made, but He believed in His own gospel and He believed in men. He said, "The start is very small." He said it was like a grain of mustard seed, the least of all seed. He said also that it had growing power, that it would one day wax stronger than all herbs and become a tree. He never counted on His gospel failing. He said, "The word that goeth forth out of My mouth shall not return unto me void." He claimed that if lifted up, he would draw all men unto Him. He even thought that there would come a day when the swords should be beaten into ploughshares, and that the kingdoms of the world would become the kingdoms of the Lord and His Christ. He was broad in His expectations. He counted on becoming the absolute conqueror of the world. And my brethren, if you and I are to be Christ's men we must have something of Christ's broadness. We can not be narrow in our sympathies and be like Him. Wherever in all history we find men coming closer to Him we find them always getting broader in their sympathies.

And then we need to share something of His breadth of purpose. This does not mean that we are to squander ourselves over a large area. It rather means the opposite. The mother of Moses so narrowed her life in the training of her son that she touched all future ages. Susannah Wesley gave herself with such intense narrowness to the rearing of her family that she caused the world to be reborn. We are to work dominated by this big purpose, to make Christ king here and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.

Then we are to thrill with something of His boundless hope. It is not always easy to do that. Sometimes it looks as if the church is going to fail. Sometimes it looks as if the purposes of God are going to be ultimately defeated. Christ never believed that such a thing was possible and we are to seek to share His great faith. We are to work hopefully. We are to work in confidence that:

"From victory unto victory
his army He shall lead,
Till every foe is vanquished,
And Christ is Lord indeed."
Last Thursday evening we spoke to you on the reverence of Jesus. And we said that of all the characteristics of our Lord we were possibly most defective in the grace of reverence. I believe that is true. I also believe that the characteristic about which I am to speak to you this evening holds second place. If we are most defective in reverence, our lack of the virtue of patience in a contest would come as a close second.

The patience of Jesus, let us think of it a while tonight. In the first place, what is patience? It is a word that we hear very often. We use it every day. There is almost no word of our language more familiar. We say, "I lost my patience," and sometimes we did not lose much when we lost it. We say of a certain idea to which we are antagonistic, "I have no patience with it." We say of certain people who vex us or annoy us, "I have no patience with them."

What is patience? It is not mere listlessness and idleness and indifference. I went one time to a service held by certain folks who believed in the gift of tongues. I reached the service at a late hour. I noticed one man at the altar who was sleeping peacefully. I asked what he was doing there. The answer was that he was waiting for the power. And I said, "He shows great patience." Of course I was only joking. He was not showing patience. He was showing a sleepy indifference.

Now, patience, as Dr. Jefferson points out, has a two-fold meaning. First, it means power to wait for a hoped for good. Waiting for something, waiting for somebody, waiting for some result - we are not very good at that. You are not very good at waiting for something hoped for when that something is your husband and dinner is ready and waiting and getting cold. You are not very sound in patience when you are already in the car, and the hoped for good that you expect is your wife who has not got ready yet. The power to wait, it is not a virtue for which we are at all distinguished.

Then, the second meaning of patience is power to endure, power to endure pain, for instance, - physical pain, mental agony, to endure and never utterly lose courage, and never altogether give up. Job is usually looked upon as the highest type of this sort of courage. Yet the patience of Job was an exceedingly defective patience. He endured his pain, it is true, and in some measure kept his faith in spite of it. But he was not very patient in it. He complained. He argued. He cursed the day he was born. I do not know that I have ever met one who suffered more than Job suffered, but I have known those who suffered more patiently.

Then, this patience not only means the endurance of physical agony, it means the endurance of opposition, of criticism, of being maligned, persecuted, hated ridiculed, fought and crucified. It means the power to keep right on and keep sweet when folks hiss instead of applaud, when they curse you instead of praise you.

Now, if patience means the power to wait and the power to endure, what a perfect example of patience is our Lord. How well He could wait. Look now long a time He waited before entering upon His ministry. He had only thirty-three years in which to live. During this short time
The patience of Jesus

He is to show men what God is like, and work the redemption of the world. But in spite of the fact that His life is to be so short, He spends thirty of those precious years hidden away in the obscure village of Nazareth. Knowing His great destiny, He is content to abide His time.

And when at last He enters upon His ministry, He is willing to take the slow method of revealing Himself to men. He will not even work such an obscure miracle as the turning of water into wine except at the definite time set for it. He awaits His hour. Of course He might have disclosed Himself in a glorious and spectacular way. To such a course He was tempted. The devil set Him on the pinnacle of the Temple and said, "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down." That was the easy way, the quick way. But Jesus was patient.

Jesus was patient with His disciples. It was not till He had spent long months with them, it was not till the cross was coming in sight that He asked them the great question, "Who say ye that I am?" It took Him almost all His ministry to disclose to His intimate friends the fact that He was the Christ of God.

And then how patient He was with their progress. Their stupidity and their slowness amaze us to this day. How many times they disappointed Him. John shows himself a narrow sectarian and wants to burn up a little misguided village. He forbids another man working because he does not work just like himself. And yet Christ never loses patience with John. Peter blunders and blusters and swears and lies. But Christ waits, knowing that the mustard seed of truth has been planted in his heart and that one day it is going to become a tree.

And as He was patient with the individual disciples, so He is patient with the world. Progress is slow, but Jesus Christ can wait, for His patience is the very patience of God. He can wait because He is sure that the right at last will win. He can wait because He is perfectly confident that one day He shall see the travail of His soul and be satisfied.

Do you remember that touching and pathetic picture in Revelation? It is the picture of a church rich and increased in goods, but it is a church that has excluded Christ. The church has excluded Him in whose name it was erected. But Christ for that cause does not wreck it. He does not even turn away from it in disgust. He is very patient. This is what He says: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." And this attitude of Christ patiently waiting, patiently knocking at the door of the individual heart, at the door of the church - this is His attitude through all the centuries. Christ our Lord is perfect in the virtue of patient waiting.

Then when you look at the other side of patience, the power to endure, we find Him no less perfect here. How much Jesus had to endure. Think of what He endured at the hands of His friends. Think how often they disappointed Him. Think how many times they misunderstood Him. His own brothers did not believe in Him. His own mother at one time thought He was crazy. His closest friends thought He had come to set up a temporal kingdom and were again and again quarreling among themselves as to who should have first place. The very last meal that they had together witnessed one of these petty and disappointing quarrels. And Christ had to do the servant's task of washing their feet, a thing that
they all felt themselves too big to perform.

And if Christ suffered at the hands of His friends, He suffered far more at the hands of His enemies. His ministry did not simply end with the crucifixion. It was one long crucifixion. He was constantly dogged by men who hated Him, who hung upon His words that they might find some method of accusing and of getting Him into trouble. He was misrepresented. He was dogged. He was scourged and thorn crowned. He was ridiculed and nailed to the cross. But He never lost His patience. "When he was reviled He reviled not again." So patient was He that those who saw Him crucified knew that it was He of whom the prophet spake when he said, "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb."

Now if Christ was perfect in patience, and if you and I are seeking to be like Him we too must seek to be like Him in this high regard. We need to pray for the attainment of that that Paul sought for his converts, that we shall be sound in patience. We can not be Christlike without it. It is in our patience, the apostle tells us, that we are to win our souls.

Not only is patience essential to Christian character, it is essential to attainment anywhere. Columbus would never have discovered America had he not been patient. Edison would never have banished the night and brought daylight around the world by the use of electricity if he had not been a man of great patience. If you are to attain in the making of money, if you are to attain in the securing of an education, if you are to attain in the prosecution of any great enterprise, you must have patience.

Now, if patience is essential in the attainment in/material world, it is doubly essential in the attainment of the spiritual. We recognize this law, that the higher the quality of creature to be developed, the slower the progress. It does not take long to grow a toad stool, but when you have grown it you haven't much. The low forms of life develop with great rapidity. Even a colt is able to run at a high speed before a child, so far as we can tell, has the least bit of sense in the world. A man is slower coming to himself, but he amounts to far more when at last he has arrived. So in our spiritual attainments progress must needs be a bit slow in proportion to the high ideal of perfection to which we struggle.

We need, therefore, patience in the seeking of spiritual attainment for ourselves. That is the reason Christ said that men ought always to pray and not to faint. We so often make it impossible for God to bless us because we do not keep on. It was the man who persisted that succeeded in obtaining bread for his friend who came at midnight. It was after the disciples had exercised the patience of ten days of prayer that the Holy Spirit was given.

And if we need patience in the dealing with ourselves, we need it still more in our dealings with others. Sometimes we seem to be making such slow progress in the remaking of the lives of those that are committed to our care. So often the results of our labor seem pitifully meager. We grow discouraged. We say, "I can never accomplish what I set out to accomplish." In return for our disinterested efforts we meet with criticism. We give over the fight. We quit. And we never attain.