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trast as strong as it could be made. Here we have a righteous man, measured by a negative standard, making virtue repulsive, even hideous.

"And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes into Heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner.'"

Humility could not be carried further. It is expressed in four phrases.

"The publican stood afar off." His sense of sin was so oppressive that he was afraid to come near.

His guilt was so deep that he would not lift so much as his eyes unto Heaven. "He smote upon his breast"—so heartfelt was his repentance.

And he gave voice to his plea for forgiveness, "Be merciful to me a sinner."

What a wonderful word picture is here presented. Dr. Parkhurst is quoted as saying that "Penitence is heaven's latch key;" it is everywhere described as the condition precedent to forgiveness, and forgiveness is the beginning of a Christian life.

NO OTHER HOPE SO GREAT

No other religion offers the hope that Christ holds out to man. No matter to what depth the sinner has fallen, salvation is within his reach. If he will but turn and start upward, he will find a helping hand.

Here again one sees the difference between the negative golden rule of Confucius and the positive golden rule of Christ.

It is not sufficient that one shall abstain from sin; that merely insures against wrong doing. The harmless man may have the kind of perfection that we admire in a graceful statue, but a sinful human being has possibilities that an inanimate statue does not possess. Sins can be forgiven and the energy of a new born soul can make the whole being glow with love and power for good.

The marble hand may be beautifully chiseled, but it cannot be extended in helpfulness; better the hand that can aid, even though it be wrinkled with age and calloused with toil. The foot of stone may be the highest expression of art and grace, but it runs on no errands of mercy; better the foot that is worn and bruised by walking if it but tell the story of employment in the Master's cause.

NO YARDSTICK FOR MAN

The difference between other things can be easily measured; there is an ascertainable ratio between the cheapest and the costliest gems, between the poorest and the finest fabrics, between the worth of the average specimen in animal and vegetable life and the worth of the most valuable.

But there is no yardstick, no measure of meter or mile, between man at his worst and man at his best. He may fall so low as to be in some respects but little better than the brutes about him, or he may rise, if he will, to a height only a little lower than the angels. Not only is this possible, but what is more startling, he is hourly traveling in one direction or the other.

Therefore, the direction must be considered, as well as the altitude at which one stands. Those who are descending will reach the bottom in time; those who are ascending will in time reach the top. One can turn at any point on the way—that is what repentance means.

The Pharisee was moving downward in spite of his self satisfaction. The publican was at the very bottom, but he had laid aside the weights that held him down and was ready.

All the world cannot raise a man until his heart is cleansed; all the world cannot keep him down if, through repentance, he begins the

ascent on God's ladder. Christ has made it possible for him to "mount to its summit, round by round."

ONE OF THE GREATEST OF THE VIRTUES

By WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN

BIBLE TEXT—LESSON FOR FEBRUARY 18

(Luke 19:1-10)

And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho.

And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich.

And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature.

And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him; for he was to pass that way.

And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house.

And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.

And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be a guest with a man that is a sinner.

And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord: Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.

And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham.

For the Son of man is come to seek and save that which was lost.

It was with a rich man with a conscience that Jesus dealt when, passing into and through Jericho on his way to Jerusalem, he beheld Zacchaeus and called him to Him.

The story of Zacchaeus is very different from that which Luke gives us of the rich young ruler who asked Jesus, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

Zacchaeus was not only rich, but he was a chief publican—a member of a very unpopular class—and it is evident, from Luke's account, that he was no more highly respected than other publicans, or tax gatherers.

He was small in stature—so small that he was not able to see Jesus because of the crowd. The determination that, manifested in business, had brought him wealth stood him in good hand at this time. Knowing the route that Christ was to travel, he ran on before and climbed up into a sycamore tree. Then came one of those unexpected opportunities that must not be overlooked in making up the record of a life.

THE INFLUENCE OF CIRCUMSTANCE

Let us turn aside from the narrative for a moment to consider the influence of circumstances on a life.

If Zacchaeus had been a large man, or even a man of average size, he would have stood with the throng and would have attracted no attention. There would have been nothing to distinguish him from the others or to indicate a greater zeal than that displayed by the multitude.

So it seems that his stature was a circumstance that played a very large part in the incident which forms the center of this lesson. It had doubtless been a disadvantage to him to be small and, on this occasion, he may have been inclined to reproach himself upon his size. But his weakness became an element of strength; his misfortune was converted into advantage of great value.

Necessity is often our best friend. We do things because we have to do them and, in the doing of them even from necessity, we often secure that which we would not have had but for the seemingly unfavorable conditions that coerced us.

OPENING THE WAY FOR BLESSINGS

It would be unfair, however, to leave the zeal and intelligence of Zacchaeus entirely out of the ques-

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