

“ Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor ; and if I have wronged any man of anything I restore him fourfold. ”

It was as if the converted publican would say :

“ Lord, to show my appreciation of Your gracious kindness in being my Guest this day, I am ready to make a sacrifice of what I value most ; so I here make over to the poor one-half the fortune I have honestly accumulated, and that not a penny of ill-gotten gains may remain in my possession, I engage to make four-fold restitution to every man that I have overreached. ”

Thereupon the Saviour blesses and accepts the sacrifices His host is making and, with the words : “ This day is salvation come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham, ” pronounces over the repentant Zachaeus words of absolution.

The Gospel story of this converted publican indeed stops here, but a pious tradition tells us that Zachaeus subsequently left his toll-booth for good, became a disciple of the Master, and died finally the Bishop of Caesarea.

How richly rewarded in the end was the revenue collector of Jericho for earnestly entertaining that first desire of merely seeing our Lord ! Of what little account, too, Zachaeus made the jibes and jeers of the multitude or the scornful laughter and biting jests of the priests and Pharisees, as he climbed the sycamore in his resolute determination to catch at least a glimpse of the publicans' reputed Friend. The little tax-gatherer had sought but the privilege of seeing the Lord, “ who He was, ” yet how much more than this earnest wish deserved did he receive. For our gracious Saviour, far from quenching, is so eager to bring to a bright glow the smoking flax that he who hoped only to see the Lord had God's eyes of mercy turned upon him, was addressed by name, and even chosen out of all the men of Jericho as His host ; for Jesus *had* to abide in the publican's house ; nowhere else would do. In return, moreover, for the cordial welcome He received, our Redeemer taught Zachaeus the worthlessness and danger of great possessions, strengthened him to cut off com-