

and a cow—every nameless atrocity was perpetrated by a system that made merchandise of the bodies and souls of human beings ; and a chief justice (?) insulted his title by deciding that a black man had “no rights which a white man was bound to respect.” And yet such an organized iniquity hid behind law, as legal ; hid behind custom, as respectable ; hid behind commerce, as profitable ; hid behind ethics, as moral ; hid behind even philanthropy, as benevolent, and behind religion, as pious ! And to-day the drink habit, and the still worse drink traffic, find similar hiding-places ; but the time will come when men will look back and wonder that ever in a “Christian nation such arguments and apologies could be allowed to shelter evils so outrageous.”

Hung Fung, the Chinese sage, nearly a hundred years old, being asked by the emperor what was the great risk of the empire, answered, “The rat in the statue ;” and he explained that the rat hides in the hollow, painted, wooden statues, erected to the memory of dead ancestors ; and he cannot be smoked out, because that would desecrate the statue ; and cannot be drowned out, for that would wash the paint off ; and so the vermin can find secure refuge in the sacred enclosure. Everywhere social evils are the rat in the statue. Many a sin gets into the Church itself, and cannot be smoked out lest we defile the Church, nor drowned out lest we wash off from the Church the paint of respectability.

It has been hinted that this radical, respectable evil of withholding from God and His cause, is furthermore entrenched behind positive *resistance* to the plain teaching of Scripture. A senator of the United States shocked the sentiment of the community by declaring that the Golden Rule and the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount cannot be carried out in politics ; but it is a fact that the body of professed Christians *do not believe Bible teaching on the subject of giving*. A tree is known by its fruit, and faith is proved by works. What our real creed is, character and conduct reveal. Were Christ’s precepts really received by us, our whole present system of giving would give place to another ; and our present object is to deal fearlessly and faithfully with this whole question, studying only to show ourselves approved unto God. Missions are to-day threatened with a collapse, from the dry rot in the floor timbers of our financial system !

Paul committed to the Ephesian elders the crown of the beatitudes : “Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, ‘It is MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE.’” That is the law about which the whole conception of Christian giving must crystallize. Life has a double aspect : getting and giving—the receptive and the impartive sides. Both represent good, but giving is the higher. Yet it is obvious that there can be no giving until there is getting ; but it is as true that the ultimate *object* of getting is to be found in giving. To enjoy what we receive is lawful, but not if it be final ; we receive in order to impart, and the highest joy comes only when the blessing passes on to others. It is in the course of impartation that the stream develops and deposits its richest residuum.