

THE MORAL PRINCIPLE OF THE TEMPERANCE MOVEMENT.

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"Wherefore, if meat cause my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I cause my brother to offend."—1 Cor. VIII. 13.

THERE is something admirable in the disinterestedness of spirit which dictated this declaration.

It is the entire abandonment of selfish considerations for the sake of others' good. It in this respect exemplifies the meaning of our Lord's precept, *Love thy neighbor as thyself*. It is the application of the principle elsewhere expressed by Paul in various forms:—*Let no man seek his own, but every man another's good. In honor preferring one another. No man liveth for himself.*

The question alluded to was one of peculiar interest at that time, when the new converts to Christianity had but just left their old religions, and were still connected with relatives, friends, and neighbors, who remained attached to idolatrous worship. Mingling with them in the intercourse of common life, it would not be easy to avoid contact with matters of religious form, and involving questions of religious obligation. For example, if a friend invited them to an entertainment, and set before them meat which had been offered to an idol,—what should they do? Might they, as Christians, innocently partake of it? It was plainly a question of great practical interest. The Corinthians, asked advice of the Apostle respecting it. Paul, in reply, lays down the principle, that an act is to be judged of by its effect, not on themselves alone, but on others also. If they partake of the meat with the clear understanding that there is no such thing in existence as a false god, then they may do it innocently; it is no act