

of idolatry ; it is no dereliction of their Christian principle. But all are not sufficiently enlightened to do this ; from custom or some other cause they still have a regard for the idol, and eat it, “ as a thing offered to an idol.” In so doing they sin. Such persons, therefore, must refrain. Here then, are two classes ; the enlightened and strong, who can eat without sin, — the unenlightened and weak, who cannot eat without sinning. But ought there to be two practices in the Church, — some of the brethren frequenting the idolatrous festival, and some avoiding it ? This would hardly do ; because it would plainly be exposing the weaker brethren to an unnecessary temptation. They could not well understand why others should be permitted this indulgence, and themselves be forbidden ; and thus, emboldened by their example, they would take the indulgence and commit sin. Accordingly, the Apostle advises that, in all brotherly love and Christian consistency, the strong should deny themselves this gratification, for the sake of the weak. His expression is very clear. “ For if any man see thee who hast knowledge, sit at meat in the idol’s temple, will not the conscience of him that is weak be emboldened to eat what is offered to the idol ; and so, through thy knowledge, thy weak brother perish, for whom Christ died ? When ye thus sin against the brethren and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore if meat cause my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I cause my brother to offend.”

The occasions for displaying the same generous disregard of selfish considerations, for the benefit of others, frequently occur ; and the instances of such disinterestedness are not so rare in the Christian world as to be mat-