

And in contemplating the wonder and mercy of the doctrine of the atonement through the sufferings and ignominious death of the Son of God himself, we should not justly feel or express surprise if the symbol of our redemption, the Cross, has a charm for many a Christian mind. We should grieve, and we should blame our brethren, if we discerned in this partiality anything like a superstitious veneration—anything that would indicate a tendency to worship the creature rather than the Creator. And though a large portion of the flock of Christ have gone much beyond a sober and edifying reverence in their passion for the image of the cross, we must be slow to impute blame, or indulge suspicion, if we find amongst those with whom we would “take sweet counsel,” a desire for the constant and prominent presentation of that image beyond what our own feelings would prompt. If it be wrong to hazard any superstitious and perilous results by an excessive veneration for the image of the Cross, we must not allow ourselves to think that the total absence of it, as a sign and remembrancer of the great atonement for the sins of the world, would be well or wisely insisted upon. On this point let me urge a kindly Christian tenderness and forbearance.

While I would press upon the Synod a close attention to those practical matters which serve to extend the ministrations and promote the influence of the Church, and urge a special consideration of the means by which the personal condition of the Clergy may be improved, there will be subjects brought before you, affecting fundamental principles, from the discussion of which you cannot be relieved. A prominent one is the question of Patronage. Upon this, views will, in some quarters, be entertained, in which, it is to be feared, personal considerations will be allowed to supersede ancient and established principles. Without any desire on my own part to have an undivided or uncontrolled authority in clerical appointments, I am anxious for such a settlement of the question as will best ensure the singleness and purity of the ministerial character, and induce on the part of congregations a reverence for the office of the ministry, rather than mere partiality for the individual who exercises it.

It has been an essential rule in God's Church that ministers