

19.—OFFEND NOT OUR BROTHER WITH DECORATIONS.

“With regard to church decorations, which may be innocuous in themselves, I must earnestly warn my younger brethren of the Clergy especially, against pushing them to dangerous extremes. To take one familiar example, the emblem of the Cross, which is unquestionably the most ancient and appropriate of Christian devices—suppose that the use of it is the cause of offence to a weak member of your flock. What is our duty, as a Christian man and a Pastor of the flock? To insist upon the ornament as unoffensive and retain it to gratify your taste, and so alienate your brother or wound his weak conscience, or to yield your predilections to his scruples? You admit that no principle is involved; no law of the Church or precept of the Gospel enjoins that crosses should be set up over the holy table or on the wall; and surely the spirit of tender charity that was the rule of the large-hearted Apostle will prompt you to decide, ‘I will set up no cross while I live, lest I make my brother to offend.’”

Let us thankfully accept this message as giving us the true position and teaching of our Church. Let us preserve it and use it as a shield of defence against the fiery darts of the Romanists and Anglo-Romanists. It will enable the faithful to give from a high authority—one of the Fathers of our Church—a reason concerning “the hope that is in you”—1 Pet. 3 : 15.

S. H. B.