

THE ^{\$5.00}
C A S E
OF THE
Cross in Baptism
CONSIDERED.

Wherein is Shewed,

That there is nothing in it, as it
is used in the *Church of England*,
that can be any just Reason of
Separation from it.

Nathanael Resbury By *Nathanael Resbury*
Galat. VI. 14. God forbid that I should glory, save in
the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

L O N D O N,

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The Case of the Cross in Baptism Considered

Nathanael Resbury, 1684

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THE
CASE
OF THE
CROSS
IN
Baptism, &c.

THE Matters in Dispute betwixt Us and our
Dissenting Brethren, may generally seem to the
unconcern'd stander by, of so slight and Incon-
siderable Moment, that he must needs wonder
how in the World the Controvercie should come to have
arisen to that Deplorable height, which in this last Age
it hath done. And although the *Case* which will fall
under our present Debate, seems to have admitted of the
most specious scruples and given the best scope of rea-
soning, of any other thing that hath fallen under ques-
tion amongst us since the Reformation; yet even here
also, the *Immeasurable* Byass of Prejudice, and Fervency
of Opposition, hath too apparently manag'd the Argu-
ment. So that the Pleas against it have not seem'd to

*Author's
Signature*

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L. 5. c. 20.
Inferiora Ar-
gumenta Con-
gruuntur ju-
mbat. Incon-
veniens. In-
veniens. In-
veniens.

weighty as they have been numerous, as if the Objectors had an Eye to that direction in *Quartilian*, they would be sure to answer all the weaker Arguments, which though weak in themselves, yet by standing together may lead a Mutual assistance to one another; like Articles of Impeachment, none of which singly would perhaps affect the accused Person, but all together may amount to accumulative Treason.

My business therefore in handling this Case, shall not be to follow every nice Scruple, or trivial Objection (as where the Cross in Baptism hath been charg'd with the breach of every particular Precept in the Decalogue) not to concern my self in any thing, which either by long Induction of consequences hath been far fetch'd, or with great difficulty drawn in, to make a show of Argument, but, as briefly and plainly as may be to sum up all that hath ever seem'd of any Moment in this matter, and that under this twofold Head.

I. That the Sign of the Cross hath been so notoriously abus'd to the worst purposes of Superstition and Idolatry in the Church of Rome; that the retaining of it still amongst us, makes us partakers of the Superstitions and Idolatry of that Church.

II. That it seem's the introducing of a New Sacrament, which having not the warranty of our Lord and Master Christ Jesus, must needs be a very Offensive invasion of his Rights, whose Royal Prerogative alone it is to institute what Sacraments he pleaseth in his Church.

Under these two Heads I think may be fairly comprehended all those Objections our Brethren have offer'd against the Sign of the Cross in Baptism, at least all those that are any thing Material. Inasmuch that if the difficulty of these could be remov'd, we might fairly hope, none of the Sober and Conscientious Dissenters, but

would

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would think themselves oblig'd to submit to the use of it, rather than maintain the Separation upon this account.

And this shall be endeavour'd with all the Candor and Clearness that becomes the design of this, and the rest of those Discourses that have been Publish'd of this kind, viz. to Convince and not Reproach or Provoke any; to Effect (if possible) the happy agreement, and consequently enlarge and strengthen the interests of good Men. And for this purpose I have thought fit not to quote the writings of particular Persons, but rather to represent the Objection, as what is in general avow'd and agreed upon by the whole Party.

And although it is not likely that any thing should be here offer'd, that hath not been already with great Learning and Integrity made use of, by the many authors of our Church; yet perhaps, the bringing this under one view, without the Warmth or Salt of an Adversary may not prove altogether Vain and Ineffectual.

I. I begin therefore, with the first Objection, viz. That the Sign of the Cross hath been so notoriously abus'd to the worst purposes of Superstition and Idolatry in the Church of Rome, that the retaining of it still amongst us, makes us Partakers of the Superstitions and Idolatry of that Church.

I must readily acknowledg that the Material Figure of the Cross hath been indeed abus'd to very Idolatrous purposes in the Church of Rome, and even the aerial Sign of it to Purposes superstitious and ridiculous enough, and if what we do in using this Sign in Baptism, were really chargeable with Popery, it would be a sufficient reason to detest and Reject it. The Objection therefore at the first view looks plausibly enough, when it thus chargeth this Ceremony of the Cross; Paganism it self being hard-

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ly more Odious, nor in Truth (for some very good Reasons among wise Men,) more Ridiculous and Intolerable. There is scarce any part of *Papery*, properly so called, but is so plain a deprivation of Christianity it self, such a contradiction to the Rules, such a defeat to the great purposes and ends of our *Holy Religion*, that it deserves well enough the good Mans justest abhorrence, which he may reasonably express, when he finds himself in any real danger of the Snare. But then, we must consider, how safe and natural a thing it is for Persons (that otherwise mean honestly enough) to humours a Just and Reasonable Offence against *Papery*, into groundless Suspicions upon things which have no such Tendency at all in them: And upon these first Suspicions not only to startle, and grow alittle shy and nice, but to determine themselves in resolv'd & unmovable Prejudice, that have had Effects ill enough. For upon this, designing Men have made their advantage upon every trifling occasion, giving out the word, and laying the charge of *Papery*, upon what it hath been their humour or interest to desire a change in. And this probably we shall find to have happen'd in this *Case* in hand. The accusation hath been drawn against it that it is very *Papish*, and the Prejudices which this Accusation hath begot in some honest Minds, are so strong that they seem invincible. How unreasonably therefore this charge is laid against our use of the *Sign of the Crofs* in Baptism may appear when we have considered these three things.

I. That the use of this Sign was much more ancient, than the first Corruption and Depravation of the *Church of Rome*.

II. That the use of it, as it is ordain'd and appointed in our *Church*, hath not the least affinity with the use of it, as it is in the *Romish* Rituals.

III. Last,

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III. Last. Although it cannot be deny'd but the *Church of Rome* hath greatly abus'd this Ceremony to very ill purposes of Superstition, yet doth not this make it unlawful to continue the Reform'd use of it still amongst us that have professedly separated from the Corruptions of that *Church*.

I. Consider we that the use of this Sign of the *Crofs* was much more ancient than the first Corruption and Depravation of the *Church of Rome*. When I speak of the first Corruption and Depravation of the *Church of Rome*, I would be understood as to those things that have put that *Church* under the Imputation of what we now call *Papery*. For that there were some deprav'd Customs crept into the *Church* in general (and so that of *Rome* perhaps as well as any other) in very early days, is Evident from what St. *Paul* Rebukes in the *Church of Corinth*, and from what our Saviour himself in his Revelations to St. *John*, Condemns in the Seven Churches of *Asia*. So that, when I say the use of the *Crofs* was more ancient than the first Corruption and Depravation of the *Church of Rome*, I mean, more ancient than any of those Corruptions in her by the reason of which, we have justly esteem'd her an *Apostatiz'd Church*, more ancient than either the Introduction of Images, their Multiplication of Sacraments, their pretensions to Supremacy and Infallibility, or any of those Superstitious Rites in Worship, by which we distinguish that *Church* as *Papish*, and brand it as false and *Antichristian*.

As to this therefore, I know none of our Dissenting Brethren, however for a slight Argument they may talk of the *Mystery of Iniquity* beginning to work betimes, and in the first Ages of the *Church*, that yet do professedly charge any *Signal* Apollai upon the *Church of Rome*, at least for the first four hundred Years after *Christ*: not

By which Phrase the *Apostate* in *Truth* meant, the *Seven* workings of the *Harlots* of that *Age*.

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to the Age wherein St. Austin Flourish; but that it was a Church that might be Communicated with at that time, notwithstanding that Father complain'd of the Superstition of Ceremonies even then, which (as least for the Number of them) began to be very burdenson. And yet, for an Hundred or two of Years before this, we find in the Writings of Tertullian such mention of the use of this Sign, that makes it very plain, it had been a Customary thing long before his time also, and probably, even amongst those of the Apostolical Age it self. There are those indeed that would make that Father the first that brought in the use of this Ceremony into the Church, having receiv'd it from the Montanists of whom he seems to have been particularly fond. But the frequent and familiar mention he makes of the Sign of the Cross in many of his Books renders this Conjecture very improbable. Tertullian tells us it was grown so much in use in his time, that upon every motion of theirs, at their going out and coming in, when they put on their Garments or Shoes, at the Bath, or at Meals when they lighted up their Candles, or went to Bed, whatever almost they did in any part of their Conversation, still they would even wear out their Foreheads with the Sign of the Cross; which though he confesseth there was no express Law of Christ that had enjoynd it, yet Tradition had Introdue'd, Custom had Confirm'd, and the Believers Faith had observ'd and maintain'd it.

This doth not look as if it had been a thing newly invented by Montanus, and brought into the Church by Tertullian, as being himself too great a Favourer of that Sect. Although, were it thus indeed, yet this sheweth that the Practice of it was receiv'd among the Faithful, some Ages before the Depravation and Apostacy of the Romish Church. But he is not our single Author in this mat-

Plurimum crucis
signatio
est Tertul.
de Corin. 2. 1.

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matter: for, Origen who Flourish not much above CC. Mont. 2. in
Ejsem. 38. Years after Christ, and not XL Years after Tertullian, makes mention of those who upon their Admission into the Church by Baptism, were Sign'd with this Sign. And St. Basil not much above one Hundred Years after him, gives this usage the Venerable Title of an Ecclesiastical Constitution, of six Law of the Church, that had prevail'd from the Apostles Days, that those who believed in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, should be Sign'd with the Sign of the Cross.

But of all the Fathers, St. Cyprian, who was before St. Basil, and very near if not contemporary with Tertullian himself, not only speaks most familiarly of the use of this Sign, but hath some Expressions in this matter, that would seem very harsh and unwarrantable now; and yet, the Authority of that Father, hath sav'd him hitherto from being brought under question about it. He tells us in one place, that in fronte cruce signantur, qui Dominum promerentur, i.e. they are Sign'd in the Forehead with the Cross who are thought worthy of the Lord, and in another place, Omnia sacramenta peragis, et Compleas every Sacrament, and per cruce[m] baptismi sanctificatur, Baptism is Sanctified by the Cross. I will not stand accountable for the Justifiableness of these passages, were they to be allow'd no kind of Latitude: but, as to the purpose for which they are cited they seem pertinent enough: that is, to Argue the antiquity of this usage (and that in the Sacrament of Baptism too) the Phrase so frequently occurring in the writings of those ancient Fathers, that fronte signati, being sign'd in the Forehead, seems a known and usual Periphrasis for being enter'd into the Faith of Christ and the Body of his Church by Baptism.

After all which, what need I Instance in St. Cyril, St. Am-

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Ambrose, or *St. Austin*? Who sprinkle their writings with the Common mention of the Obligation upon offenders frame Arguments of this very bad Christians to live as becomes them, from this very badge they wear upon their Foreheads. *St. Austin* wittily enough glorying in the Confidence of a Christian as to a *Crucifix* d *Sacrament*, that he willingly imprints the Sign of it upon that part of himself which is the proper seat of *Blissing*.

I shall only add this remark further, that after the time wherein this Custom had been so Univerfally receiv'd into the Christian Church, and some of the Fathers had so liberally exprest themselves in it, we may observe that the first Christian Emperour, *Constantine the Great*, had his Directions probably from heaven it self to make this Sign, the great Banner in his Wars, with this Additional encouragement, that by this he should overcome. That this *Dream or Vision* (call it which we will, for Histories mention it differently) was from Heaven, and a thing of great reality, is Evident, from the success of that Princes Arms under it.

The Authors of the *Centuries* allow a considerable Signification in that Sign as given him from Heaven, as the future Standard he should fight under, viz, that God had admitt'd him by that Sign of the Cross, and the Motto added to it, by this thou shalt overcome, concerning the Knowledge and Worship of the true God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, in Memorial of which he took care to have it Painted on his Banner, that it might be as the Symbol of the Christian Religion.

Now we would suppose that our Blessed Lord would by so immediate a Revelation from Heaven, Countenance such a Rite as this, already receiv'd and made use of in the Church, giving it to *Constantine* both as a Symbol of his Profession, and Pledge of his future Victories, if he had referent it before as Superstitious or any

See my paper
Crucifixi, sed
de pueris sig-
num esse, ut
sua signum ha-
verunt. Augu-
stus Galat. 6. 14.

v. 177. n. 4.

111. Annot. 13.

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any way Unwarrantable. This kind of Standard the Roman Emperours successively had born before them in their Wars: may, it is recorded that *Julian* himself (probably from what he had made some former Observations of,) could not forbear defending himself with this Sign, upon a mighty fright he was seiz'd with, while in the use of Magick Arts he went to have consulted with the Devil. This *Mazianzen* calls his craving aid and refuge of *Julian*, him whom he had Persecuted. Which, (by the way) might give us the modestly and caution of showing our selves too petulant against what it hath pleas'd our Lord Jesus in a Revelation from Heaven to give the Figure of, and the Holy Spirit also to signalize sometimes by ever renew'd miracles, which those that consult Ecclesiastical Histories of best Authority cannot but be convinc'd of.

So that, we find the use of it very ancient, and the Effects of it very Memorable, *Cajetan* himself (no very fond Man of Rituals) calls it *Primitivæ Ecclesiæ Symbolum ejus fiduciæ quam in Christo & cruce ipsius, & passivæ ponant*: a Symbol the Primitive Church us'd to denote that Confidence they had in Christ, his Cross, and Passion.

I confess it would be a fond thing to endeavour, with some of the *Romish Church*, to trace up the Antiquity of the Cross, to the first Creation of Man, and to fall along downward to the Actual Death of our Blessed Lord. They can spy out the Cross, in the Figure of a Man's Face, by the placing of the Nose betwixt the two Eyes, and much more in the Position of the whole Body of the Man with his Arms extended. They can discern it in the Sword in *Paradise*, and in the Cross stick that *Noah's Dove* brought back into the Ark, &c.

And indeed some of the Fathers bend their Imaginations somthing that way, and would fancy the Figure of

Thomson
Hyst. 1. 5. c. 3.

Orig. Cent.

Exercit. in Ba-
rtholomæo.

See the notes of
Laur. de bar
upon Tract.
advoc. Mer-
cator. 1. 5. p.
178, 179.

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the Cross in *Mosef* his stretching out his Arms whiles the Israelites were fighting with *Amalek*, in the *Paschal Lamb* when the *Spirit* went through it, &c. which, however they were conceits too much suiting that way of allegorizing that some of them were fond of, yet doth it at least confirm what I am now upon, I mean the ancient Reception of this Sign into the Primitive Church. Nay, I may further add, that in some of the passages they have of this kind, the hint they take may not deserve perhaps to be absolutely exploded, as if there were no weight or moment at all in it. I will crave leave to instance particularly in one thing which some of the Fathers do a little insist upon, and that is, that *Mark* in *Ezek. 9. 4.* that was to be set upon the Foreheads of the Men that sigh, &c.

This *Mark* in several of the ancient Versions is supposed to be the Hebrew *Tau*, which *St. Hierom* tells us was, in the Samaritan Character, like our *T*, and so made the figure of the Cross, from whence he collects that this was *signum crucis quæ in Christianorum frontibus pingitur, a taken of that Cross that is imprinted upon the Forehead of the Christian*. If *St. Hierom* be not mistaken in the Samaritan Character, his conjecture in the Application of it, is not very unjustifiable; because, as all the promises are in *Christ Jesus, yes, and in him Amen*: So, all the Prophecies of old, where they concern'd any signal advantages or deliverances to the Jewish Church had the assurance of them frequently confirm'd by some hint or Remembrance of the *Messiah*, that was afterward to be reveal'd. Thus in that Confirmation that *Isaiah* was to give to *Ahaz* of his present deliverance from the Invasions of *Ephraim* and *Syria*, he gives him this Sign, behold a *Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son*. How could that great Event that was not to come to pass of so many Ages after *Ahaz*'s Death, affect him, who stood in need

2 Cor. 1. 20.

Nat. 7. 4.

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of so immediate Deliverance, but that it was brought in as an instance, (not only that as *God* could bring about such a wonder, as the Birth of a Child from a *Virgin*, could as easily relieve *Judah* in its present straits: but further,) he that had so gracious a design toward them, as to send the *Messiah* amongst them, would in the Prospect he had to that, show now his particular regards for the Church at this time. In Analogy to this, might this passage in *Ezekiel*, look toward that mark which Christians in after Ages should wear upon their Foreheads, as a present Symbol of the escape of those that should be found sighing for the Abominations that were then done in *Israel*. And to this probably, may that *Seal of the Living God* have some Reference, which was to be set upon the Foreheads of the Servants of *God*. *Revel. 7. 2, 3.* For, as they are there reckon'd up by the number of twelve times twelve, to signify that they are the true and genuine off-spring of the twelve Apostles; so, the *Seal* Vid. Mat. in of the Living God upon their Foreheads, may point at the Figure of the Cross, to betoken them (though under the Prophetic Denomination of the Jewish Tribes) to be of the Christian Church. This I would not be supposed to lay any great stress of Argument upon, only offer the Conjecture to the Candor of the Reader.

And thus, having shewen the Antiquity of this Sign, as it was receiv'd into the Church long before the Corruptions of Poperie appear'd in the World; I know but of one thing can be urg'd to take off the strength of what hath been hitherto said; and that is, that the Primitive Christians might probably take up this Custom of thus signing themselves, because they liv'd wholly amongst the Enemies of the Cross of *Christ*, the Jews making the Cross a Stumbling-block, and the Greeks Foolishness. So that, their design of doing it, was only to bear

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bear their Testimony to the Faces of both, that is, tho the Crois was scandal to the one, and scorn and laughter to the other, yet they would not be ashamed of this Crois but made it the Badg of their Profession. Whereas we live in an Age and Nation, where (thanks be to God) there seems no such occasion, because Christianity is the Religion we openly and universally profess.

To this I answer, that this Objection being thus made, doth at least suppose the usage of the Crois not to be a thing that is in it self evil, because if so, no good end or design in using it could hallow the Action; so that the Ceremony is not Evil in its self, but that upon some weighty reasons, it might be brought into the Church, if so, then we might reasonably think, that the injunction of Authority in this Case, might justifie the Practice of it. But much more, if the reason now alledgd might be a just occasion for the Church in its first Ages to take the usage up, God knows the occasion may be as urgent still upon an Equally sad account: and that is, the Prophane and Atheistical Contempt that is thrown, not so much upon the *Sign* as the *Doctrine* of the Crois, by the pretended Wits of our Age. He hath a very slender concernment for the interests of Religion, that is not sensibly toucht with those Blasphemous Rarilleries he may every where meet with, upon the whole Scheme of Christianity, especially that which we make the great Foundation of our hopes and trust, *viz.* the Merits of our Saviours Crois and Passion. That the use of this Sign, if ever it was reasonable upon such a score as this, it is so now. And *St. Cyprians* Caution is strong and pertinent enough at this time of the day against all the Wit and Pride of the daring and haughty Atheist, *Moniatur fronts,*

Ep. 56. ad Tharsentium.

&c. Arm your Foreheads that the Seal of God may be kept safe, q. d. Remember the Badg you took upon you in Baptism,

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tism, and so long as you have that upon your Foreheads, never be ashamed or laugh out of Countenance, as to the Memory of your Saviours Love, and the Foundation of your hopes lay'd in his Death and Passion.

And now, since it is so evident how Ancient a practice this hath been in the Christian Church: I would not have this part of the Argument pretended further than it was first design'd, which was only to show that this Ceremony hath nothing owing in it to that which we call *Fogery*, because it was establish'd in the Church so long before that *Mystery of Iniquity* had its being. And tho through the Antiquity of it (if warrantable at the first) it becomes so much the more Venerable, and might justly lay some restraints upon the modest Christian in his Censures against it; yet doth not this put it beyond the degree of an *indifferent Ceremony*, without which, the Sacrament of Baptism is declar'd by our Church as complete and perfected. Did the Antiquity of its practice make it necessary, it might prove as necessary almost in every Action of Life, as well as Baptism, because (as I have noted before) *Tertullian* tells us, it was once so used. No, it only gives us the warrant of doing it, because practis'd in the most incorrupt Ages of Christianity; and the necessity of keeping it still in use, lyes not so much in that it was the Custom of some Church, or Constitution of some Council in former days, as that it is the Custom of our Church now, and the appointment of our Governours. But,

Secondly, It is further considerable, that the use of the Crois as it is ordain'd and appointed in our Church, hath not the least affinity with the use of it, as it is in the *Romish Rituals*.

1. We do by no means allow any visible Images of a Crucifix'd *Jesus*, so as to have the least concern in any part

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part of our Worship. There is no mention of them in our Rubrick; there is hardly in any writings of the Doctōrs of our Church one passage to be found of that latitude, that Mr. Baxter amongst his calmest thoughts hath not adventur'd to say, that is, that a Crucifix well bestirreth the Imagination and Mind of a Believer; nay further, that it is not unlawful to make an Image (and gives the instance particularly of a Crucifix) to be the objectum vel medium excitans ad cultum Dei, an Object or medium of our consideration, exciting our minds to Worship God. The sense of our Church is truly express'd in this matter by Mr. Hooker, who tells us that between the Cross which Superstition honoureth as Christ, and that Ceremony of the Cross which serveth only for a sign of Remembrance, there is as plain and great a difference, as between those brazen Images which Solomon made to bear up the Cistern of the Temple, and that which the Israelites in the Wilderness did adore. Or between those Altars which Josias destroy'd, because they were Instruments of meer Idolatry, and that which the tribe of Reuben with others erected near the River Jordan so far other purposes. Ours is no other than a meer transient, or (as others express it) aerial figure of the Cross, which comes not within the wisest notion of an Image; or if it were so, is so very transient, that it abides not so long as to be capable of becoming any Object or medium of Worship, any further than any words we use in Worship may do.

2. The use even of this transient sign, bears no kind of Conformity or likeness with the use of it in the Church of Rome. They use it upon numberless occasions beside Baptism. If they enter in, or go out of Church, or a Friends Houfe; when they say their Prayers, or are present at any Religious Solemnity. If startled at Thunder, taken in a storm, frighted with a spectrum, or are surpriz'd

Christian div.
resid. Enclij. p. 575.
ibid. p. 576.

Enclij. Pol. l. 5.
p. 348.

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priz'd with any kind of Fear or Astonishment, they bless themselves still, and take refuge under this sign of the Cross, which they will make upon themselves. If they visit the sick, administer the extreme Unction, or indeed perform any of their other Sacraments (so call'd by them,) the transient sign of the Cross must begin and close all. But then, in the Sacrament of Baptism, the use of this sign is so exceedingly different, as well in the nauseous Repetitions of it before and afterward, in the Forehead, in the Mouth, and upon the Breast: as also, the Monstrous Significations according to the divers places whereon it is impress'd, that nothing can be more. Beside that it is not us'd at the time, nor with the form of words that we use it with. So that, there is not the least agreement betwixt us and them, either in the use, or in the significancy of this Ceremony; and so no reasonable offence can be taken at it, upon any Symbolizing of ours with the Church of Rome in it. All this might be further confirm'd by giving a particular view of the Roman Ritual, as to what respects their office for Baptism; but this is done by a better hand upon another Case of this kind.

Lastly, Although it cannot be deny'd but the Church of Rome hath greatly abus'd this Ceremony to very ill purposes of Superstition, yet doth not this make it unlawful to continue the reform'd use of it amongst us, that have professedly separated from the Corruptions of that Church. It is a Principle that some of our Brethren imagine they are very well fortify'd in, from some instances in the Old Testament, viz. that whatever hath been abus'd to Idolatrous or Superstitious purposes, should so remaine be abolish'd. But perhaps they would find this much more a question than they have hitherto presum'd, if they would consider, that if this Principle were true,

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See Case about
the Ch. of Engl.
Symbol, writ
Rome, p. 10.
11. 12.

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it would go high to throw a scorn upon all or most of the Reformation that have been made from the Church of Rome, for they do not seem to have govern'd themselves by this Rule. Some of them in their publick Confessions declaring, that they might lawfully retain such Rites or Ceremonies as are of advantage to Faith, the Worship of God, or Peace and Order in the Church, *though they had been introduc'd by any Synod, or Bishop, or Pope, or any other.*

Conf. of Boloin.
Art. 15.

It is a Principle that would render Christianity impracticable, because no Circumstance, no Instrument, no Ministry in Worship, but may have been some way or other abus'd and defecated by Pagan or Romish Idolatries. It would make every Garment of what shape, or of what colour soever, unfit for use in our Religious services: for, not only the White, but the Red, the Green, and the Black, have been us'd (even for the significance of their respective colours) by the *Gentile*, or the *Romanist* to very superstitious purposes in divine Worship. It would condemn the Practice of those very Persons that would pretend this to be their Principle. For they have few of them carry'd it to that height as to abolish Churches, Founts, or other *Vestments*, but have thought fit to make use of them in the same services of Religion as formerly, though not in those modes by which they were abus'd to Superstition and Idolatry. All which they should not do, if either the Principle had any real Foundation in it self, or they acted in any due consistency with the Principle they pretend.

That which our *Dissenting Brethren* urge, (as they think) of the greatest force and pertinency in this matter, is the example of *Hesekiah*, who when he found the *brazen Serpent*, which God himself had directed to be set up for the Healing of those that had been stung with

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fiery Serpents, abus'd to downright Idolatry: He would not endeavour to recover it to the first design of its preservation, that is, to keep it standing only as a memorial of Gods Power and goodness, who had done such great and beneficial things amongst them by it: but without any more ado, takes it away from all further view of the People, breaks it in pieces, and calls it *Nekushtan*, i. e. let's the People see it was a *thing of Brass* and nothing else.

To this I answer, First, Although it is very natural to mankind to govern themselves more by example than precept, yet, Arguments fetcht from examples, generally are not the truest way of reasoning; and that partly upon this very account, namely, the proneness we have toward example, and Biass and Prejudice we may the easilier be drawn away with, upon that account. But chiefly, because in alledging examples, it is very rare that we can hit the Case perfectly right. It may be said of *Examples*, as it is of *Similitudes*; they seldom do *Currere quatuor pedibus*, they do not perfectly reach the thing intended to be prov'd, but are so widely different, or defective in some one or other Circumstance, that there is not that parity of Reason that ought to be; and the varying of Circumstances may much alter the Case. Which very thing apparently falls out in this very instance. For certainly, if the example be concern'd in any thing with respect to our practice, it may seem to prove nothing further than the necessity of taking away (not what hath been us'd only to Idolatrous purposes, but) what it self hath been, and at that instant is, a meer Idol. This was the Circumstance of the *brazen Serpent*, it was by Custom become a real Idol; it had been so for a long time, was so at that instant, when *Hesekiah* brake it to pieces: *to those days the Children of Israel did burn*

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Earn Incense unto it. So that, thus far perhaps this instance might affect us, that, were there any *Crosses*, or material image of our Saviour upon the Cross, now standing, to which People for some Ages had given, and for the generality did still give divine honour; it would then indeed concern the Government, in their Reformation from the Idolatries of the *Church of Rome*, to take away and abolish *this* and all other *Images* of this kind. This perhaps answers the pattern pretty much, and copieth out *Hesekiah's* wife and good Action; and this accordingly is entirely done in *our Church*; there being no such *Image* abiding now amongst us, to which any adoration is publicly avow'd, or that can be pretended to have such snare in it, as to hazard any general Idolatry. What proportion doth our *Aerial sign of the Cross* (toward which there is no intention, nor indeed any possibility of giving any divine Worship,) what proportion doth this bear to the material figure of the *brazen Serpent*, to which they had for a long time actually burnt *Incense*, did it to those very days, and gave such Evidence of their Inveracity in Idolatry, that there seem'd no moral likelihood of preventing it by any other course than breaking the *Idol* to pieces, and letting them see what a meer *lamp of Brass* they had been Worshipping? But then,

2. If Example were a good way of Arguing, we find by *Hesekiah's* practice in other things, he did not think it an indispensable Duty in him to abolish every thing that had been made use of to Idolatry, if they did not prove an immediate snare at that time; for, as to Temples which *Salomon* had erected for no other end but the Worship of false Gods in them, *1 Kings 11. 7.* *Hesekiah* did not make it his business to destroy them, as being in his time forlorn and neglected things, of which no bad use was then made.

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made. Although indeed King *Josiah* afterward (probably upon the decrease of Idolatry, and renewed use of those places) found it expedient to lay them wholly waste. *2 Kings 23. 13.*

And thus much I have thought fit to say as to that first Head of Objection against the sign of the Cross, as it is cry'd out against as a *Relick of Popery*, and had been so deprav'd by the Superstitious use of it in the *Church of Rome*. I cannot but acknowledg this to be the weakest part of their plea against it; and probably our *Brethren* know it to be so too: yet, because it is most affecting amongst common People, and seems to have made the deepest impression upon those that are not so well fitted for profound and solid reasoning, I have chosen to be the larger here, that even the meanest capacities may see that the Sign of the Cross, as we use it, was not introduc'd by the *Church of Rome*, but was of a much antienter date: That the use we make of it bears no Conformity at all with that *Church* in their using it: that by our different usage we keep at a sufficient distance; nay, perhaps are in less likelihood of falling into the Snare of their Communion, than if it had been utterly abolish'd: In a word, that that very Principle, upon which the charge of *Popery* is laid as an Argument against the Cross, is it self weak and fallible; nor are we bound by any Precept or Example in Holy Writ, to throw off the use of any one thing merely because the *Church of Rome* hath abus'd it. It hath prov'd a mighty inconvenience to the Church, that People have been thrown into so precipitant a Zeal of removing themselves to the utmost extremities from the *Church of Rome*, that they have been almost afraid to determine in any action or circumstance of Divine Worship, lest it should some way or other, have been Prophan'd and made unwarrantable by their practice.

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This is that gave rife to the mitchievous Enthufafms in *Germany*, that ended in fuch bloody and barbarous Practifes, as well as fenfelefs and ridiculous Principles taken up and maintain'd by the Anabaptifts there. I am loth to mention the horrid confufions of our own Age and Nation, which yet perhaps we were wrought up into by this very humour; I mean, a reffelefs fondnefs for fome additional refinements ftill, which our *Church* had not thought fit to make.

I cannot but inwardly reverence the Judgment, as well as love the Temper, of our firft Reformers, who in their firft Separations from *Rome*, were not nice or ferupulous beyond the juft reafons of things. Doubtlefs they were in earneft enough, as to all true Zeal againft the Corruptions of that *Church*, when they feald the well-grounded offence they took at them, with their warmeft blood; and cheerfully underwent all the hardfhips that Primitive Chriftians fignalized their Profefion with, rather than they would intermix with *Rome*, in any uſage of Worſhip, or Article of Faith that had the leaft favour of Idolatry, Superftition, or falſe Religion at all in it. And yet theſe Holy and Wiſe Men, when they had the Power and Opportunity of Reforming, wholly in their Hands, being equally jealous of *Enthuſiaſm* as they were of *Superftition*, would not give themſelves up to thoſe fantaſtick Antipathies aſto abolifh this or that Ceremony, merely becauſe it had been in uſe amongſt the *Papifts*, if ſome other very ſubſtantial Reaſon did not pur in its claim againſt it. And verily, had they not Governed themſelves in theſe temperate and unbiaſt methods of Reformation, they would not ſo eaſily have juſtified themſelves to their Adverſaries, or the World; or have made it ſo evident (as by their wife management they did) that what was done by them was from the
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mere urgencies of Conſcience and Reaſon, and not the wantonnefs of Change and Innovation. So that, where any mean honeſtly (as I doubt not but many of theſe do, that Diſſent from us in this particular Circumſtance of the Crofs in Baptifm) they ought to have their Reaſon very well awake, that the mere charge of *Papery* upon any diſputed point, may not ſo prejudice them in their enquiries into things as to leave no Room for debate and mature Conſideration.

Secondly, The other head of Objection againſt the ſign of the Crofs in Baptifm is, that it ſeems the introducing of a new Sacrament, which having not the warranty of our Lord and Maſter Chriſt Jeſus, muſt needs be a very offenſive inuſion of his Rights, whoſe Royal Prerogative alone it is, to inſtitute what Sacraments he pleaſeth in his *Church*.

This Objection ſeems to point at a twofold argument. The one, with reſpect in Common to all theſe Circumſtances in Worſhip, which for Decency and Order, are appointed by the Governours of the Church, but not antecedently preſcrib'd and enjoy'd in the word of God. For, to do this, our Diſſenting Brethren have generally affirm'd it a bold and unwarrantable inuſion upon our Lord and Maſter, who was faithful to him that appointed him, as alſo Moſes was faithful in all his Houſe, that is, in preſcribing to the Jews all their modes and uſages in Worſhip, from which they were not to vary or deviate, to add or diminiſh in any one Circumſtance.

This I ſhall take no further notice of, than as it may neceſſarily intermix it ſelf with the queſtion particularly in hand about the *Croſs in Baptifm*, partly becauſe I would keep as ſtrictly as may be to this diſtin't Caſe, and eſpecially, becauſe this Caſe [of doing nothing in or about the Worſhip of God, but what is expreſly preſcrib'd

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ferib'd and appointed by him in his word] hath been another's province; fo that, I fhall only fay, the Customs of the Jewifh Church it felt, (which our Brethren would make their main Inftance in this matter,) do make directly againft it. They did unquestionably take up fome ufages wherein *Mofes* had given no antecedent directions, which yet it is evident were not unlawful upon that account, becaufe our *Bleffed Lord* did not only not blame or accufe them of Encroachment or Superftition, but himfelf praçis'd & emply'd with them; this, amongst many other things, hath been clear'd up in the Inftance of their Synagogue Worfhip, and upon another occafion may be further infifted on by and by. Befides, it is plain, this was no Rule amongst the primitive Chriftians in the firft ages of the Gofpel, nor to add, the Inexpediency and Unfitnefs of this Rule to the very Oeconomy and Difpenfation of Chriftianity, which was to diffufe it felf amongst all Nations, and all kinds of People, who did fo infinitely differ from one another, both in their Customs, and in the Significations of thofe Customs too, that it muft have been a vaft and bulky *diffelt* of Laws indeed, that muft have fuited all Countries, were every Circumftance and Punifhio in divine Worfhip to have been antecedently preferib'd. All this hath been with fo much clearnefs made our by feveral Hands, that I am apt to think at this time of the day, our Brethren do not expect or ftand in need of further Conviction in this point, and feem in fome meafure agreed that this Poftion of theirs will not hold water.

It is the other part of the Objection therefore, that will fall more directly under our confideration at this prefent; and that is, that our uſing the *ſign of the Crofs* in Baptifm, doth ſeem to run into the nature of a new Sacrament. And this is that they mean, when they tell

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Sacrament. And this is that they mean, when they tell us, it is an outward viſible ſign of an inward inviſible Grace, whereby a Perſon is dedicated to the Profefſion of, and Subjection to the Redeemer. That it is a dedicating means to conſecrate us to God; that it ſignifies our covenanting engagement, and is as a Badg and Symbol of the Chriftian Religion; that it represents Chriſt dying on the Crofs, and ſignifies our being liſted under Chriſt; that it is an addition to Baptifm; that it adds another Sacrament to Baptifm: And that it is uſed as an engaging Sign, in our firſt and ſolemn covenanting with Chriſt, and the duties whereunto we are really oblig'd by Baptifm, are more expreſly affixt to that aery Sign than to the Holy Sacrament. With many other Expreſſions of this kind, which we may find interperſed in the ſeveral writings of the Nonconformiſts, where they take occaſion to diſpute this Ceremony. This of the Croſſes having at leaſt the ſemblance of a Sacrament, is indeed the only Objection the Presbyterian Brethren inſiſt upon in their exceptions againſt ſome paſſages in the preſent Liturgy.

As to this therefore, firſt, I muſt needs ſay, I have ſometimes wonder'd that the word Sacrament it ſelf, hath been ſo well agreed upon amongst us. The Fathers have uſ'd it ſo much at large in their writings that it would ſometimes be difficult to underſtand what they mean by it: and our Brethren, upon the ſame reaſons by which ſeveral other exceptions have been made, might have diſallow'd and rejected it as a word by no means Scriptural, but Pagan and Heatheniſh. However, ſince by a long reception of the word into the Church, it ſeems agreed on all ſides, what the Senſe and Acceptation of it ſhould be; my buſineſs will be to ſhew, 1. What we are agreed in as to the Notion of a Sacrament, and then 2. to make it plain, that as our Churches never did deſign or

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intend, by the use of the *Cross* in Baptism to make any *new Sacrament* of it; so, in the nature of the thing, it hath not any *semblance of a Sacrament*, according to the Notion of a *Sacrament* that both sides are agreed in.

First, As to our being agreed in the Notion of a *Sacrament*, I must presume our *Church* in her publick catechism, hath given that definition of it, which no reformed *Church*, but approves and allows of. That is, that it is an outward and *Visible Sign* of an inward and *Spiritual Grace* given to us, Ordain'd by *Christ himself*, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a Pledge to assure us thereof. It is true, the *Assembly of Divines* in their larger Catechism do in that question of their's [*what is a Sacrament?*] put in an expression or two, that point at some Opinions, wherein they may be no more agreed amongst themselves, than they are with some of our *Church*. But then, in their next question [*what are the parts of a Sacrament?*] they give us the same account with that of our *Church-Catechism*, only a little vary'd in the words, *viz. The parts of a Sacrament are two, the one, an outward sensible sign used according to Christ's own appointment: the other, an inward and Spiritual Grace thereby signifi'd.* by all which it is evident, we are well enough agreed in the Common acceptance of the word *Sacrament*. And therefore,

Secondly, I proceed to shew, that as our *Church* never did design or intend, by the use of the *Cross* in Baptism, to make any *new Sacrament* of it, so, according to the common Notion wherein we are agreed as to the word *Sacrament*, there is not any *semblance of a Sacrament* it can justly be charg'd with.

And here I might, not without some reason, insist, that as we are agreed in the Definition of a *Sacrament*, that both the outward Sign both signify an inward *Spiritual*

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Grace, and also must have its express institution and appointment from *Christ*, we, that never suppos'd the use of the *Cross* in Baptism could confer Grace, nor have ever made the least pretext to any Divine appointment for it, ought not to be charg'd as introducing a *new Sacrament*, when it hath no pretensions to any one thing that is of the Essence of a *Sacrament*. But I am willing to follow the Argument as they have laid it. They say therefore, that however, we do not call or account it an *Holy Sacrament*, yet so far as we bring a Ceremony into the *Church*, which in the Significations of it seems tantamount to a *Christian Sacrament*, we do thereby usurp the Prerogative of our great Lord and Master, setting up our Posts against his Post, and our Threshold against his Threshold.

This they say we do partly, 1. as we make the *Cross* a sign brokening our Faith, and *Christian courage*, when in applying it to the *Baptis'd Person*, we say we do it in token that hereafter he shall not be allow'd to confess the Faith of *Christ Crucif'd*, &c. And partly 2. when by an intire Representative of our *Church* it is determin'd, that by the sign of the *Cross*, the *Baptis'd Person* is dedicated to the service of him that dy'd upon the *Cross*.

First, they say that by making the sign of the *Cross* in token that hereafter, &c. we may such Significations to it, that run it into the nature of a *Sacrament*, using it as an outward *Visible sign* of an inward *Spiritual Grace*. As to this, we must ingeniously confess, that we make use of no Rite or Ceremony in our *Church*, but it is with this design, that it should be Significant of some thing or other. It would be an odd piece of pagantry indeed, to use this or that gesture or action in our Religious services, that should have no Signification at all in it, and to account it therefore *Insincere*, because it were *Im-*

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perment. It is the Significance of it, that makes it useful or proper, and if there were nothing of that in it, it would be very disallowable. But then, though our Ceremonies are significant, and any of them us'd as Memorative Signs to put us in mind of any Duty or Obligation toward God, they are not therefore an outward Visible sign of an inward Spiritual Grace; that is, they are not in the nature of any seal or assurances from God of his Grace to us, but hints and remembrances of some Obligation we are under with respect to God. And that this kind of significant usages have been all along arbitrarily taken up, without any Imputation of introducing a new Sacrament, may be made out, both from the practice of the Jewish Church, notwithstanding the punctual prescriptions deliver'd to them by Moses. From the practice of the Christian Church, and that, both in the very first ages of it, and also in all the later Reformation that have been made.

First, take we a view of the Jewish Church; and here in,

1. We may observe that in their very Passover, about which, both thing and Circumstances, they had such express directions by Moses before they went out of Egypt; yet did they in some ages following considerably vary, not only in their time of keeping it, which having been originally appointed on the Tenth, they chang'd it to the Fourteenth day of the Month: but in the gesture too. In the first institution of it, they were to eat it with their loins girded, their shoes on their feet, and staff in their hand, and all as a token of the haste they were then in. This gesture of eating the Passover, it is not so certain how long it continu'd in the Jewish Church after their coming out of Egypt, as it is unquestionable it was chang'd into a discombing posture (that is, a posture where-

wherein they took their ordinary meals) long before the days of our Saviour, and that so warrantably too, that our Saviour himself us'd it. And yet, this very posture they had taken up (if we will believe an Expositor that was no great friend to the Ceremonies of our Church) had its Signification too; for he tells us that they did it in sign of their rest and security otherwise than they had in Egypt.

2. Another instance in the Jewish Church might be that of the Altar of Witnesses, which Phineas, after he had made a jealous enquiry upon, approv'd of, as a standing memorial that they on the other side Jordan profess the true God, had Relation to the other tribes, and a Right to the Service of God in the Tabernacle of the Congregation.

3. But that which seems to come nearest us is what the Jewish Authors do frequently take notice of, and that is, that as to those whose Office entitl'd them to the Anointing (which by all that doth very evidently appear, were only Kings and Priests) although the Anointing Oyl, as to its confection and ingredients, and the manner of doing it (as one would think) were particularly enough prefer'd by God; yet did the Jews amongst themselves bring in the use of a Significant sign in doing it, which seems no where disallow'd, or charg'd as an invasion of Gods Holy Institutions: this was, to Anoint the Heads of their Kings with the figure of a Crown, and their Priests with the figure of an Headdress. Matth. II. Melchisedec. If a Synagogue knew ω or the Greek \times . Not to add, that the Synagogues Worship, the Rites of Marriage, the form of taking Oaths, and the like, things that had great Significations in them, had not the express Institution of God for their warrant, and yet were well enough receiv'd in the purest times of the Jewish Church, and comply'd with by our Saviour himself.

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which they us'd as a sign of expelling the Evil Spirit, and breathing into them the good Spirit; this seem'd to signify more the Grace of God, than Duty of the Christian, and yet not suspected as any Sacrament. Thus the Baptiz'd Persons stripping of his Garment in token that he put off the Old Man which was corrupt according to his deceitful Lusts, doth it not look ill as a Sacramental as our Cross in Baptism? Yet we find it anciently practis'd without any jealousy of invading the prerogative of Christ, in instituting Holy Sacraments. To say no more, what think we of the *trine immersion* once accounted a pious usage in the Church, whereby the Person being thrice dip't or put under water, at the mention of each Person of the Trinity, was suppos'd to be Baptiz'd in the belief of that great Article. So Tertulian expresseth it, *Nam nec senes, sed et ad singula nomina, in Personarum singulari tingimur. We are dipped not once but three times, at each name, and so are Baptiz'd into the three Persons.* And besides this Signification of the three Persons by this threefold immersion, which Tertulian, and not only he, but St. Ambrose have mention'd, there are others of the Fathers that have suppos'd, the Death, the Burial, and the Resurrection of our Saviour, together with his being in the Grave three days, was signify'd by this custom. And yet, was this so far from being accounted any Sacrament of it self, or a Sacrament within that of Baptism, that the Church hath thought fit to lay *Immersion* aside, for the generality; and the *threefold Immersion* much sooner, particularly in Spain, and that upon a reason that made the *single dipping* as significant as the *Trine* had been when it was in use, *viz.* to distinguish themselves from the *Arians*, who had taken occasion from this *threefold dipping* in Baptism, to assert the three distinct substances, pretending a Testimony from the *Catholic*

Advers. Prax.
nam Aquila, in
lib. de Coron.
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Catholic Church by this usage. Much such a reason (by the way) the Reform'd Churches in Poland govern'd themselves by, when in a general Synod they decreed against the Posture of sitting at the Lords Supper, because that Custom had been brought in first by the *Arians*, who, as they irreverently treat Christ, so also his sacred appointments. Which leads to a view of the Church in all its later Reformation.

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2. Is it not very evident, that in none of our later Reformation, may even in those of our Dissenting Brethren themselves, but they do in their most Religious Solemnities, some things that are very Symbolical; Actions that have great significations in them?

1. There giving to every Baptiz'd Infant a new Name, which both they and we do call the *Christian Name*; this seems to betoken our being made new Creatures, and entered into a new State or Condition of Life, which still they seem to aim more expressly at, in their general care to give the Child some Scripture Name, or some name that should signify, some excellent virtue or Grace, some Religious duty owing to God, or some memorable benefit receiv'd from him. Here we have an outward Visible sign, and this too sometimes of an inward Spiritual Grace, and yet this no more accounted a new Sacrament, or a Sacrament within that of Baptism, than we do our Sign of the Cross; and indeed there seems just as much reason for the one as for the other, and no more.

2. Those Arguments which some of our Dissenting Brethren, have us'd in Plea for the posture of sitting at the Lords Supper, do shew, that besides what they urge from the posture wherein our Saviour himself celebrated it, they apprehend some Significancy in the gesture, that renders it more accommodate to that ordinance than any other; for, some of them plead for the posture of sitting, as being most properly a *Table-gesture* and doth best of all

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all express our fellowship with Christ, and the honour and privilege of Communion with him as Co-heirs. Now in this matter let us consider; our Lord hath no where expressly Commanded us to perform this Sacrament in a sitting posture; much less hath he told us that he ordain'd this gesture in token of our fellowship with him; so that, we see this gesture of sitting (by the Tenor of their Argument) made an outward Visible sign of an inward and Spiritual Grace; and this, not from any antecedent express institution of Christ; which notwithstanding, this posture of sitting is not accounted by those that frame the Argument, any new or additional Sacrament to that of the Lords Supper.

Appl. for Church-wards

3. Lastly, Those of the Congregational way have a formal Covenant, which they insist upon, that whoever will be admitted into any of their Churches, must engage themselves in; this is of that importance amongst them, that they call it, the Constitutive Form of a Church, that which makes any particular Person Member of a Church. Yea, and (as another expresses it) that wherein the Union of such a Church doth consist. We will suppose then, this Covenant administered in some form or other, and the Person admitted by this Covenant into an Independent Church declaring his consent by some Action or other, such as holding up his Hand, or the like. Let me ask them, What must they of that Church think of this Rite, or Ceremony of holding up the hand? will they not look upon it as a token of his consent to be a Church-Member? Here then is an outward Visible sign, of What? of no less (according to their apprehension of things) than a perfect new State and Condition of Life; that is, of being embody'd in Christ's Church, engag'd to all the Duties and enstated in all the privileges of it. Will they say that this way of admission, either the form of words wherein their Covenant is administered, or the Ceremony

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of holding up the hand, by which this Covenant is taken and assented to, was originally ordain'd by Christ? or do they themselves esteem this of the nature of a Sacrament? or did the Presbyterian-Brethren, in all their Arguments against this way, charge them with introducing a new Sacrament? So that, from all influences imaginable, both of the Jewish and Christian Church, and that, both Primitive, and later Reformations; even from the particular practices of our Dissenting Brethren, it is very Evident, how unreasonable a thing it is; that though we sign the baptiz'd person with the Sign of the Cross in token, that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the Faith of Christ of Crucifix &c. We should be accus'd as introducing a new Sacrament, or adding the Sacrament of the Cross to that of Baptism.

But then, they tell us secondly, we seem to own it our selves, when in an entire Representative of our Church (such as we suppose a Congregation to be) it is actually determin'd, that by the Sign of the Cross, the Person Baptiz'd is dedicated to the service of him that dy'd upon the Cross; and what can be more immediate (saith one of our Brethren) than in the present dedicating all to use the sign, and express the dedicating Signification? It is confess'd that the 30th. Canon doth say the Cross is an honourable badge, whereby the Infant is dedicated, &c. And the stress of the Objection in this part of it lieth in the word dedicated that is, because the Sacrament of Baptism is it self a Seal of Admission into Covenant, and Dedication to God, and the Christian Religion; therefore, by using a Symbolical Ceremony of humane institution, whereby we profess the Person Baptiz'd, dedicated to the service of him that dy'd upon the Cross, we have made a new Sacrament, and added to that of Baptism, to dedicate him in our own invented way as Christ hath in that which he hath instituted.

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I. To

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1. To this I answer, that surely the word *dedication*, is of a much larger Signification, than that it should be confid'd merely to the Interpretation, that *our Brethren* would put upon it. The meaning of *dedication* properly is, the *appropriating of any thing or Person to any peculiar service*, such as a Church, or Temple for the Worship of God: any Person to the profession the true Religion, to the Ministry, or to any kind of attendance at the Holy Altars. This is the strictest sense of *dedication*; but then, in a larger sense we may suppose it apply'd to any strict or conscientious discharge of all the Duties, and answering all the ends of the *first dedication*. Thus, suppose a Man ordain'd to the Ministry, whereby he is properly *dedicated* to the work and service of the Gospel; he may by some solemn act of his own, *dedicate* himself to a zealous and faithful discharge of *that Office*; and this, after some time that he may have apprehended himself *hitherto* not so diligent in the trust that had been committed to him. This cannot be call'd in any sense a new ordination; but it may with reason and sense enough be call'd a *dedicating* of a Man's self more particularly to the service of God, in the discharge of that Ministry he was ordain'd to. And therefore,

2. In this sense the Convocation ought in all justice to be understood, when they, in explaining the intention of the Cross, tell us, *it is an honourable badge whereby the Infant is dedicated to the service of him that dy'd upon the Cross, &c.*

And yet, I must needs say, it seems hard measure upon the Church of England, that if those in a Convocation should not have apply'd the word *dedication*, to what might be most strictly the sense of it, that this should be so severely expounded, that no other declarations of their meaning, and intention must be accepted of, than what merely the strict and critical sense of *that word* will

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will bear. Surely there are many expressions in the *Fathers*, that may seem more distant from that sense we are willing to take them in; and we should be very loth to yield them up as the Authors or Defenders of some dangerous Opinions in the Church of Rome, because some phrases of theirs in the rigour of them, may be prest to a kind of meaning that may seem to favour them. There is a necessary allowance to be given to some schemes of Speech, and meaning of words, or else we should be in a perpetual wrangle and dispute about them.

However, there doth not need even this sort of Clarity for this word *dedicated*, upon which such weight of Argument hath been lay'd. For, as in all Authors it hath been variously used, so is it properly enough apply'd in *this Canon*, for the design for which it was us'd; and the declaration is plain and intelligible enough to the candid and unprejudic'd mind. The word *dedication* (as they use it) may properly enough signifie a *Confirmation* of our *first dedication* to God in Baptism, and a declaration of what the Church thinks of the Person Baptiz'd, what she doth expect from him, and what Obligations he lieth under by his Baptism. And as a *medium* of this declaration, the sign of the Cross is made, being as expressive as so many words, what the Infant by his Baptism was design'd to; the Apostle himself having commended the *whole of Christianity* under that term and denomination of the *Cross*. Now that our Church did design this *declarative dedication* (by the use of this sign) and none other, is very evident, in that, though the word *dedicated* is used in the explication of their sense in *that Canon*, yet, do they there refer to the words used in the *Book of Common Prayer*. By comparing therefore the *Canon* and the *Office for Baptism* together (the *Canon* directing to the *Office*, and the *Hubrick* belonging to the *Office* directing to the *Canon*) we may observe what stress is to be laid upon

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on the word *Dedicated* that is, how far they were from designing the same fort of *immediate dedication* that is made by *Baptism*, and yet how by the *Cross*, we may properly enough be said to be *dedicated* too.

As to the *Sacrament of Baptism*, we are all agreed that by *that* we are *dedicated* to the *Service of Christ*, and the *Profession of his Gospel*; Now the *Church of England*, both in the *Rubrick and Canon* do affirm and own, that the *Baptism* is complete, and the *Child* made a *Member of Christ's Church*, before the *Sign of the Cross* is made use of; or if upon occasion it should not be made use of at all. It is expressly said, *We receive this Child into the Congregation of Christ's Flock*, and upon that, *do sign it with the Cross*. So that the *Child* is declar'd within the *Congregation of Christ's Flock*, before the *Sign of the Cross* be apply'd to it. Beside, that in the *Office for private Baptism*, where the *Sign of the Cross* is to be omitted, we are directed *not to doubt*, but that the *Child so Baptiz'd is lawfully and sufficiently Baptiz'd* the *Canon* confirming it, that the *Infant Baptiz'd is*, by virtue of *Baptism*, before it be sign'd with the *Sign of the Cross*, receiv'd into the *Congregation of Christ's Flock*, as a *perfect Member thereof*, and not by any power ascribed unto the *Sign of the Cross*.

If therefore, we be *dedicated* in *Baptism*, and the *Baptism* acknowledg'd complete and perfect, before or without the use of this *Sign*, the *Church* cannot be suppos'd ordaining so needless a repetition as this would be, to *dedicate* in *Baptism*, & then to *dedicate* by the *Cross* again, but that which they expressly by the *Cross*, must be something very distinct from that *dedication* which is in *Baptism*; that is, the one is a *Sign of dedication*, the other is the *dedication* it self, as distinct the one from the other, as the *Sign of Admission* is from *Admission* it self, and a *signification of a privilege*, is from an *Instituted means of Grace*. It
seems

seems a thing decent and seasonable enough, that when it hath pleas'd God to receive a person into his favour, and given him the *Seal of it*, that the *Church* should give him the *right hand of fellowship*, solemnly declaring and testifying he is receiv'd into her *Communion*, by giving him the *Badg of our Common Religion*. So that, this is plainly no other than a *Declaration* the *Church* makes of what the *Person Baptiz'd* is admitted to, what engagement he lies under when capable of making a *visible Profession*. It expresseth what hath been done in *Baptism*, which is indeed not a *Sign of Dedication* but *Dedication* it self, (as I have already said) as also the *Cross* is not *dedication* it self, but a *Sign of it*. Which *Declaration* is therefore made in the name of the *Church* in the plural number, *We Receive this Child into the Congregation of Christ's Flock*, and do sign him with the *Sign of the Cross*, &c. Whereas, in *Baptism*, the *Minister*, as the immediate agent of *Christ*, by whom he is *Authoriz'd* and *Commissionated*, in the singular number (as in his Name) pronounceth it, *I Baptize thee in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost*.

As to what is urg'd above, that *nothing can be more immediate, than in the present dedicating, also to use the sign, and express the dedicating signification*; they must know, it might have been *more immediate*, either to have plac'd this *Sign* before *Baptism*, or to have appointed some such form of words, in applying it as the *Church of Rome* doth; or if it had been pretended to be of *divine Institution*, and necessary to make the *Sacrament of Baptism* complete and perfect.

And thus, I presume, I have run through the main debate betwixt us and our dissenting brethren as to this *Case*. Wherein, I hope, I have neither misrepresented their objections, nor let pass any material strength in them, nor in replying to them, used any one provoking or offensive word. Would they but read and weigh this and the other Discourses of this kind, with the same calmness of temper,

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