

of these *doubtful* things, and concedes liberty of thought and action. We ought to do the same.

Now to take a practical example of what I mean, I may mention the *use of the Cross* in or out of a church, or the *making the sign of the Cross on the person*. I confess I take a very broad view myself of this cross wearing or cross making. As a matter of plain, historical fact, we all know that in the very earliest ages of Christianity, the disciples of our Lord used crosses—pray remember not crucifixes—and in coming in and going out of their houses, while sitting down to their meals or getting up, while meeting each other in the streets, when lying down to rest or rising up, made the sign of the cross. (I am giving you as nearly as I can remember the very words of Tertullian in the second century.)* It was to these poor disciples of Jesus, escaped from the general degradation and filthiness of the surrounding heathenism, their constant *reminder* of Whose servants they were, of Him in whom they believed, and of what He had left behind to them to carry after Him—a *Cross*. And a very terrible cross it often proved, a cross of suffering and shame, a cross of daily persecution and of martyrdom. Now, I do not suppose that they—any more than you or I—had the faintest idea that there was any inherent virtue in wearing a cross, or making the Sacred Sign. It was no Means of grace. But beyond a doubt thousands and thousands of the most faithful followers of our Lord, from that time to the present, have found it edifying to themselves. Some of you may have read how the pious Presbyterian mother of the famous Hugh Miller, in the North of Scotland, taught her little son with his prayers to make the sign of the cross. Now, my Brethren, here is a *doubtful matter*, and I for one am quite willing to let Christian people exercise their liberty about it, and as a rule I find that this is the view taken by most sensible Christian men among us. I know that many of us have been accustomed to associate what we

* Ad omnem progressum atque promotum, ad omnem aditum et exitum, ad calcitum, ad lavaera, ad mensas, ad lumina, ad cubilia, ad sedilia, quacumque nos conversatio exeret, frontem crucis signaculo terimus.—*Tertullian. de Corona*, § 3.