

Notes.

SIGN OF THE CROSS IN BAPTISM.

By the Prayer Book of 1549 the child was to be signed with the sign of the Cross upon his forehead and breast at an earlier part of the service, when the ceremony of exorcism was performed. The priest said; "We make the figure of the holy Cross in the forehead, that thou mayest never be ashamed of God and Christ thy Saviour, or of this Gospel; take it also on thy breast, that the power of Christ crucified may be ever thy succour and sure protection in all things." It was customary in the primitive church for persons to sign their foreheads with the Cross on a variety of occasions, and there can be no doubt that the practice was at an early period observed at baptism.

The Puritans strongly opposed the retention of the Cross in baptism, and in 1608 made great endeavours to have it omitted. The XXXth Canon was drawn up to answer their objections, and was so satisfactory to Dr. Reynolds, the leader of the Puritan party, that he declared he would never oppose the ceremony any more. It reminds us: (1) That the primitive Christians rejoiced in the Cross, in spite of the ignominy which attached to it in the eyes of unbelievers, and that the Holy Scriptures include under it, not only Christ crucified, but the full effects and merits of His death and passion, with all the comforts, fruits, and promises which we receive or expect thereby; (2) That the honour and dignity of the Cross itself beget, even in Apostolic times,

a reverent estimation of the sign of the Cross, which Christians soon came to use in all their actions, as a sign that they were not ashamed of Him who died for them on the Cross; that they signed their children with the sign of the Cross in baptism, and that this was done both in the Greek and Latin Churches; (3) That although the Church of Rome had abused the sign of the Cross, the abuse of a thing does not take away the lawful use of it; and (4) That the Church of England, in retaining the Cross in baptism, had simply recurred to primitive usages, guarding, at the same time, against future superstitious error. In proof of this last point it urges that the Church of England teaches, firstly, that the sign of the Cross in baptism is no part of the substance of the Sacrament;" secondly, that "the infant baptized is, by virtue of baptism, before it be signed with the sign of the Cross, received into the congregation of Christ's people, as a perfect member thereof, and not by any power ascribed unto the sign of the Cross;" thirdly, that the Cross is retained "for the simple remembrance of the Cross which is very precious to all them that rightly believe in Jesus Christ," and "as a lawful outward ceremony and badge, whereby the infant is dedicated to the service of Him who died upon the Cross."

At the Cradle of the Race.

III.

In a previous number we touched upon the mission of the Apostles Peter and James as extended to "the tribes of Israel