

cumcision, which is outward in the flesh ; but circumcision—is that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter," &c. Yet circumcision was ordained by God as a sign of the obligation of the Jew to circumcise his heart. And the sign of the cross may, in like manner, impress upon us our obligation to "crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts." We are naturally more impressed by signs and acts, than by words alone. And so in all societies, the ceremony of initiation is usually accompanied by the use of signs and emblems, intended to impress on the members the fact of their membership, and the obligations they are under.

Mr. N.—But if the early Christians did well to honor the cross, when the cross was despised, should we not do well to abolish the sign, when the cross is worshipped ? Did not Hezekiah destroy the brazen serpent when it became an object of idolatry ?

Clergyman—Observe that the *material* cross, and the *sign* of the cross, are too different things, and the abuse of the one will not take away the lawful use of the other. We make no use of the *material* cross in *worship* ; we merely use the sign to signify that we belong to Christ, the crucified one ; and are bound, as his disciple, to bear the cross for him, (Luke XIV, 27). We place no virtue in its use, and pay no honor to it ; we regard it as an impressive sign and nothing else. May we not believe that Hezekiah, who destroyed the image of the serpent, would have retained the sign, if it had been capable of a like-edifying use ?

Mr. N.—Still, sir, for the prevention of possible evil, would it not be right to take it away ?

Clergyman—It is neither necessary nor right, nor wise, to run into one extreme for the prevention of another. There is no Christian institution that is not liable to abuse. Take the Lord's Day for example. Perhaps more sin is perpetrated during its idle hours than upon any other day in the week ; yet no Christian, (even apart from the Divine command), would be willing to give up its sacred rest and worship on account of the abuse to which it is liable. Our best course, and the principle upon which the Church has proceeded is, to reform the abuses of that which may have a lawful use. For instance, because some men abuse alcohol, should we therefore destroy and abolish it ? No. It has its uses in medicine and in the arts. Suppose that some Israelite had proposed to destroy the brazen serpent, which supported the laver in Solomon's temple, on