

read words traced, in all probability, either at the time or very shortly after St. Paul lived in Rome! In many places crosses were the only marks upon the tombs,—an emblem then, which it needed Christian courage and constancy to own!"

And who shall say that it does not need like courage, and like constancy, really to own the Cross now?

#### Why should there be God-Fathers?

John.—I have just come in, Philip to ask if you will be so good as to stand godfather to our little one next Sunday; I see the Prayer-Book says that we ought not to put off having our children christened longer than the first or second Sunday after their birth, and ours will be a week old to-morrow.

Philip.—Why, John, to say the truth, I had rather not. I used to be ready to stand godfather to the child of any one who asked me, because it was a neighbourly kind of thing to do, but I never thought much about it. However, I was talking to a man the other day, who set it before me quite in a new light; he said there ought to be no such things as godfathers and godmothers, and so I am inclined to think now myself.

John.—I am sorry to hear you talk in this way, Philip, for it makes me afraid you have been listening to some of these new-fashioned teachers who are not satisfied with the good old ways, with having the Bible, and the Prayer-Book to explain it, but must be for making a religion for themselves. It seems to me that the time has come which St. Paul prophesied of in his 2nd Epistle to Timothy. Do you remember his words? "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lust shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and be turned into fables." However, if you do not like to stand for my child I will try to get some one else; but I would rather have had my own brother.

Philip.—Oh! I have not made up my mind about it, but it seemed to me that there was a good deal in what this man said. I shall be very glad if you can clear it up for me. First of all, he found fault with there being godfathers and godmothers at all, because he said no one could answer for another person.

John.—Supposing you happened to be away from home, and some one were to come and offer you a good situation, provided you, or some one for you, would promise that you should do your best to please your employer; should you not think it unkind if none of your relations or neighbours would make the promise for you?

Philip.—Of course I should.

John.—Well, the case of a child is something like this. A poor little infant cannot speak for

itself, any more than you could if you were away from home; and yet we know from our Saviour's own words that He loves to have little children brought to Him. But then it is not enough to have them baptized; if they grow up they must live like Christians, or else they will lose all the benefit of their baptism. And so it seems very fit that they should make a promise that they will do so. You see Baptism is in one point of view a covenant or agreement between God and man, and therefore there must be two sides or parties in it: God, on His part, mercifully promises to give eternal life, and the infant, by its sureties, promises to renounce what God hates, to believe what God teaches, and to do what God commands.

Philip.—Yes, but if I stand godfather to your child, how can I tell that when he comes to grow up, he will approve of having had the promise made for him.

John.—It will be his own loss if he does not. We must do all we can to teach him what a blessing he will lose if he does not keep his promise: but if, in spite of all we can do and say, he still persists in going his own ways, (which God of His mercy forbid,) his blood will be upon his own head.

Philip.—But how can I say for the child, "I will?" If he turns out ever so well, and lives ever such a good life, still there will be many times when he will break God's commandments.

John.—I think you mistake the meaning of the words "I will." To "will" to do any thing, means to wish heartily to do it; so that when the child by your mouth says, "I will," it is the same as if he said, "I wish with all my heart to keep God's holy will and commandments." We read that St. Paul approved of Christians' "readiness to will," even when it was doubtful whether there would be a performance suitable to it.

Philip.—Where do we read that?

John.—In the 2nd Epistle to the Corinthians, the 8th chapter.

Philip.—Well, you have made it clear so far, but there was another thing this man said the other day: he said, "Show me any thing about godfathers and godmothers in the Bible."

John.—There are many things which all Christians, from the time of the Apostles till now, have agreed to observe, of which there is no direct mention in the Bible. There is no passage of Holy Scripture which tells us to observe Sunday instead of Saturday, and yet you would think it very much like returning to the old Jewish law if any one were not to do so. So you see it is not altogether necessary that every thing which Christians do should be spoken of in the Bible. I recollect I was talking to our minister one day about keeping Saints' days, as it is ordered we should in the Prayer-Book, and he told me that nearly two hundred years ago there were some dissenters who found