

CONVERSATION II.

SIGN OF THE CROSS.

Mr. N.—I am glad to see you again so soon. Since your last visit my wife and I have often talked about the baptism of our children, and I was able to repeat to her the substance of our conversation. It has greatly settled our minds in this matter. We were not aware before that such good reasons could be assigned for the office of sponsors.

Clergyman—There is no doubt, that these reasons were convincing to our forefathers, when, at the Reformation, they ordered so ancient and useful an office to be retained in the Church. It has come down to us, approved and practised by the Church of the New Testament from Apostolic times, and commended to our observance not only by the Church of England, but by nearly all the Reformed Churches on the continent of Europe, as well as by the Roman and Greek Churches. Its inherent usefulness and advantages have been acknowledged by good and wise men of every age. If it were nothing more than providing a substitute who, in case of the death, neglect, or incompetence of parents, would see after the religious well-being of their children, no unprejudiced person could reasonably object to it.

Mr. N.—I must honestly say, sir, that your arguments as regards sponsors are satisfactory and convincing to my mind ; but there is still another point on which I have felt scruples,—that is the use of the sign of the cross in baptism.

Clergyman—I do not wonder that you have felt scruples concerning it, considering the superstitious uses to which some have put the cross ; but if the sign be useful and edifying, why deprive ourselves of the proper use of it on that account ?

Mr. N.—Well, sir, it seems to me to be adding a device of man to an ordinance of God.

Clergyman—If the human device were put in place of the Divine Ordinance, or on an equality with it, there would be