

think. The clear-headed understand this. And this will be found especially true among those with whom symbols constitute nearly every thing, and abstract truth is regarded as next to nothing.

Still, it is said, Protestants do not put up crosses, as Roman Catholics do, to adore them. We do not accuse them of this, and yet, the respect, or reverence paid to such things, has its degrees. The Papist reveres the cross in a high degree. Some Protestants we know have revered it in a low degree: both we regard as in error, although both are not chargeable with the same amount of error. We put the simple question, why put up a cross at all? The answer of the Papist is ready, and it has the advantage of being explicit. All know what it is. On the other hand, the Protestant talks of it, as a matter of taste, an ornament, a thing that can do no harm, and may do some good; and above all, that the Gothic order requires it. Gothic, indeed; if we may be allowed a pun on such a serious subject. So, we doubt not, thought the Waldenses, when they beheld it blazoned on those banners which were waved by the faithful servants of the church, over many a ruined village, and many a desolated valley. Truly, the visible cross has been to millions, the sign of more than Gothic barbarity. How often have superstition, fanaticism and hypocrisy mustered their respective bands under it, and then led them on to deeds of unutterable ferocity. Now, this is one reason, and a very sufficient reason it is, why we dislike to see the cross on Protestant churches. It has, as we have already said, been made the sign and badge of Popish Rome. Let her keep it. The sign is all she has. In her hands, to the world, a dreadful sign. We have the thing signified.—We need not a cross of wood to teach us the glories of redemption. It can teach nothing of salvation, which we may not know as fully had we never seen it. The believing penitent thinks not of the cross of wood, but of the glorious personage who died upon it. What can a piece of wood tell of God's justice, truth and holiness? or of his law and its claims, and its penalty? of man's guilt and his impotency? or of the person of Christ, and his glorious work, and his ability and willingness to save sinners? These are the precious truths on which Paul had his eye when he gloried in the cross of Christ, and these are the truths which must be understood and embraced by all who, like him, shall glory in that cross. But what one of these does a piece of wood teach or illustrate? Preposterous folly! "To the law and to the

testimony," is the declaration of Protestants, and those who have gone to "the living oracles of God" for their knowledge of salvation, what can they learn, what do they need to learn on this matter from a cross of wood? While those who do not possess information drawn from the word of God, cannot obtain a single thought, or a single holy feeling from any symbol or relict. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself;" "This is my blood, shed for the remission of sins;" "The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin;" are but a few of a multitude of similar declarations which might be adduced, and we fear not to affirm, that any one of these received for the authority of God, will do infinitely more to enlighten and console the mind, than all the crosses in the world. Persons who make a show of wisdom or moderation, by uttering truisms, may tell us, that the best things may be abused. We deny that a cross in the hand of a liar, or on the top of a spire, was ever a good thing. We ask what good has it done, or can do? It were indeed difficult to answer this. But it would not be difficult to shew that it has done, and is still doing incalculable mischief. It is a grand instrument of superstition. This is enough to condemn it. Nor will it do to reply, that, according to our reasoning, all signs and symbols ought to be banished from the church, because they have been abused.—We shall meet the objection, here supposed, when once it is proved, that the cross was appointed by God to the church, as a sign or symbol. It is true, it answered *one* great end, the Saviour died on it. But this end answered, the thing itself was to have no place among the symbols of religion. The brazen serpent, put up by Moses, served an important purpose.—That purpose accomplished, and the value of the thing was at an end. But the Jews preserved it, and at length worshipped it. Many in the same way worship the cross. Yet, we are told, the cross on churches may produce pious thoughts and divine emotions. A pile of grass may do this, if the heart be right with God. But is it true, that in those countries, in which crosses every where meet the eye, the people are distinguished by piety and virtue?—Is it so in Italy, or in Spain? There, there is no want of crosses. The robber stabs you with a stiletto, the handle of which is embossed with the figure of a cross, and when he bends down to take your money, another cross, suspended round his neck, dangles in your face, and you are robbed amidst jingling of crosses and the sound of saints' names. It is indeed a thing