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## \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\* The Letter-Box

INFANT BAPTISM.

The following letter was written simultaneously for the Catholic Record, London, and The Planet: The subject of a sermon delivered in a Baptist Church of Chatham by the

Rev. J. J. Ross, the pastor, was "the Sin of Infant Baptism." The preacher announced that the teaching he proposed to deliver would "hit" many of his own congregation,

as well as the other congreagtions of the city, and that in fact he had been asked and advised by members of his own congregation to leave the subject alone and not speak of it: but after deep thought and study he has arrived at the belief that "infant baptism is a sin," and he professed to be able to prove through biblica references that what he said is true.

He admitted that some Baptists do not agree with him in this belief, and stated that those who uphold infant baptism quote the words of Christ: "Suffer little children to come unto Me." The report does not state that he denied that this passage is inapplicable to the case, but it is to be presumed that he did so, for immediately afterward he is reported as having said: "If it is right to baptize a child either by sprinkling or immersion, it is also right for them to take Sacrament. No one will say that it is right for children to be allowed to take Sacrament, and if we reject one, we must reject the

We are told by the reporter of the sermon that "throughout it was from an argumentative standpoint, and for each statement which he made he produced biblical references to support his belief." There is only a single biblical reference in his sermon as reported to sust in his teaching, so that we are unable to say on what grounds beyond this he made the assertion. We know, however, that no valid proof of the kind can be We will therefore say a few words on the one passage to which he does refer as a proof of his position, after which we will state the Catholic position on the subject. The Rev. Mr. Ross says, according

o the report "He thought that a child should not be baptized until he or she was old enough to realize the meaning of Baptism. It is stated in the gospels that only believers shall be bup-

This is evidently a reference to the gospel of St. Mark xvi. 16: "He that be condemned."

444444444444444<del>44444444</del> Pay Mr Ross' notation, so that this is the only Scriptural passage referred to in the report of the sermon to show the sinulness of infant baptism, and if it does not show this, that gentleman sutterly without proof for his main There we two conditions here laid

down on the fulfilment of which salvation is promised-believe in Christ and shaptism-but there is not one word to imply what Rev. Mr. Ross infers from this text, namely, that actual belief must precede baptism in the case of infants.

If these words are to be strictly applied to infants they will not only mean that infants m tizes, but also that they cannot be saved at all, for they cannot have that actual belief which Rev. Mr. Ross requires from them, and the text tells us that they who have not that belief shall not be saved but shall be condemned. This consequence the Rev. Mr. Ross expressly repudiates when he asserts that "when an infant is born into this world, its life is pure and spotless . and has no need of baptism.

Thus the rev. gentleman refutes his wn interpretation of the only text which he can quote in favor of the pompous theory which he so confidently propounds, and which he acknowledges to be repudiated by all other Christian congregations in his city, and even by many of his own denomination.

As a matter of fact, which we intend to prove below, his doctrine is a purely modern invention which has no basis in Holy Scripture, and which the whole Christian world to this day repudiates, with the exception of a faction within a church which is itself but a very small fraction of

Christianity.

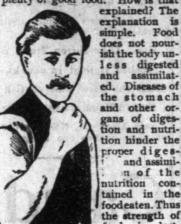
Assuming Mr. Ross' theory to be true, what mean the promises of Christ that the Church which He built upon a rock shall not be overcome by all the powers of hell? that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it? What means the comparison made by Christ Himself, that His Church or Kingdom should be like the mustard seed, the smallest of all seeds, in its beginning, which should grow up to be a tree, "greater than any herbs, so that the birds of the air come and dwell in the branches thereof? (St. Matt. xiii, 32). What means the prophecy of Isaias, nit to be a prediction of Christ's

Kingdom or Church: "And it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountain, and shall be exalted above the hill, and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of by C. H. Gunn & Co., Central Drug Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we shall walk in His paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem?" (Is. ii. 2, 3). Does the Rev. Mr. Ross' fraction of

which Muncer and Storck invented in Germany in 1523, by ripping and patching the teachings of Luther, alone possess the "faith once delivered to the Saints" by Christ Himself? To assert that this is the case

makes Christ and His Apostles mere buffoons and imposters when they assert that the church which Christ bles. established must be heard under pen-alty that they who disobey must be for full sized packages.

desired. Few people understand that the only source of physical strength is food, and that every one who has sufficient nourishing food should be strong. But there are thousands of puny people who have plenty of good food. How is that explained? The



tained in the foodeaten. Thus the strength of food is lost, Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery ures diseases of the stomach and its allied organs. It causes the perfect diges-tion and assimilation of food and thus it

tion and assimilation of food and thus it makes men and women strong.

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regarded as "the heathen and the publican" because they listen not to the voice of "the Church of the living God which is the pillar and ground of Truth." (St. Matt. xviii.. 17, 1 Tim. iii. 15).

According to the Baptist Year Book for 1872 the total number of Baptists in the United States and British America was then 1,557,449. (Appleton's Cyclopedia). The number England, Garmany, Switzerland, and other countries might perhaps multi-ply this by three, but when we consider that the different sects into which these are divided are numerous, such as Tunkers or Tumblers, Hook and Eye and Suspender Men-nenites, Babbatarian or Seventh Day Baptists, Particular, General, and Close and Open Communionists, believeth and is hap zed shall be it will be a liberal allowance if we saved, but he that believeth not shall suppose that the Rev. Mr. Ross' sect has one and a half million of ad-There is no other passage in Holy herents. We do not know exactly to which of the many sects of the Baptists he belongs, again that his peculiar one originated in 1523, we should have, by well known mathematical methods, the

total number of Baptists of that sect who have ever lived to be approximately less than fifty-seven and a half million, whereas the total number of Christians must have been over twenty-six thousand six hundred and nineteen millions since the time of Christ. It is surely a new example of the frog that would make itself an ox in

size, when the Rev. Mr. Ross claims that he and his modern sect have lone been successful in interpreting the teachings of Christ in regard to the baptism of infants.

What, then, is the real meaning of the passage of St. Mark's Gospel we have had under considera-

The words are addressed by Christ to His Apostles just before His Ascension into heaven, while He is instructing them on the manner in which they

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are to fulfil their mission. They are synoptical words referring to the whole body of instructions which He had given them while He was with them, and in fact St. John xxi., 15-24, and St. Luke in his gospel, xxi., 38-50, and in the Acts of the Apostles, I., 2-8, relate much more which Christ

spoke to them on this occasion. Some to them on this occasion.

St. Mark informs us in this synoptical discourse, that Christ told His Apostles to "preach the gospel to every creature." He certainly did not mean that this preaching was for infants chiefly but especially for adults. fants chiefly but especially for adults, or at least for those who were able

The belief and the baptism which are next spoken of are also intended for those who are capable of fulfilling what is commanded, and to the extent to which they are capable of receiving it. That is to say, adults must fulfil both precepts. As regards children, they must obey only so far as they are capable of obedience, inasmuch as no one can be bound by an impossible precept. But when children are infants, actual belief is impossible, and it follows that bap-

tism is sufficient in this case, We have dealt with this part of our subject somewhat lengthily that we might sift thoroughly the principal thesis of the Rev. Mr. Ross. must on this account be brief in regard to the proofs that infant baptism is a doctrine handed down from Christ's Apostles, as Christ's own

1. Rev. Mr. Ross is wrong in his assertion that children are born pure and spotless.

"By one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death; and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have (Rom. v., 12.) In the Greek original, man is thropos, which means a human being of any age or sex. Pantes, "all" have

sinned has the same meaning: "all persons" or "people." Therefore, children are included. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." (Ps. li., 5, Prot. version.) Here original sin is clearly stated to

lave passed upon mankind. "As by the offence of one unto all men to condemnation, so also by the justice of One unto all men to justification of life. For as by the disobedience of one man, many were made sinners, \* \* by the obedience of One many shall be made just."

"For if by one man's offence, death reigned through one, much more they who receive abundance of grace, etc. shall reign in life through One, Jesus Christ," (Rom. v., 17-19.) Hence, even little children have sinned in Adam, and therefore Baptism,

the sacrament whereby we are justified, is for them. 2. This is confirmed by Christ, who said to Nicodemus (St. Jno. iii., 5.) "unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter

into the kingdom of God." Here baptism is meant, and it must be received by all, for where we find unless a man" the Greek original has 'ean me tis," which signifies "unless any one." This means man, woman, or child, and therefore all are in need of baptism.

All in Samaria, "from the least to the greatest, followed Simon the magician until Philip preached Christ Then "they were baptized both men and women." (Acts viii.,

would have been the case if chi were not to be baptized. It would have been necessary, if Mr. Rosa be right, to have given warning of such a case, lest some one should take these words in their full and natural sense children being included, and thus Rev. Mr. Ross' sin would have been committed.

We find, also, that St. Paul bay tized the household of Stephanas in Corinth. (I. Cor., il., 26.) At Philippi, Lydia, and her house hold were baptized, and also the keeper of the prison in which St. Paul was confined, together with "all" his

household. (Acts xvi., 15, 33.) These and many other reasons which we cannot adduce at present show beyond doubt that infant baptism was used by the Apostles. We may add, however, one testimony in regard to the manner in which the Christian Church interpreted Christ's words from the beginning. Thus speaks St. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, who wrote about the year 170, and who was the disciple of Polycarp, the disciple of St. John the Evangelist:

"He (Christ) came to save all men who, through Him, are born again unto God; infants and children, boys, young men, and elders." This settles the question in regard to what the Apostolic teaching was

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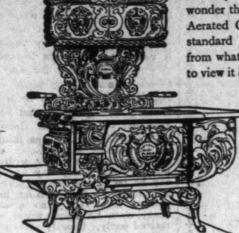
strange Banquet. Very shrewd in their business trate actions are the people of Turin, and as the following incident shows, the sense of humor is also strongly de-

veloped in them. In the local journals recently appeared an announcement that a large banquet would soon be given at which the only guests would be those husbands in Turin who did not live happily with their wives,

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