

only form our judgment by the promises made to those who are in the bonds of the covenant—by the promise of pardon—by the promise of grace—by the promise of salvation to those who are born again to God, and fulfil the obligations of their new birth. And the Church has left us to the same rule; for while she declares with authority, that “children which are baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved,” she has charged her ministers not to perform the office of Christian burial for any who die unbaptized, lest they should utter expressions with respect to them which God has not sanctioned, or lead men to suppose that it is a matter of indifference whether they are baptized or not.

Once more, then, dear brethren, I entreat you to consider this accumulated evidence for Infant Baptism; and weigh well the judgment of the Church and the pattern of our Lord—who to teach us that children are capable of spiritual mercies, “*took them in His arms and put His hands upon them and blessed them*”—who, to show that they are objects of peculiar favor, informs us that “*in heaven their angels do always behold the face of the Father*”^{*}—who, to prove to us that they are acceptable members of the Church upon earth, declares that “*of such is the kingdom of God*”[†]—and who, to exemplify all this in his own sacred person, entered as a child of Abraham into the covenant, and received the sign and the seal of it on the eighth day from his birth, “*and they called his name Jesus.*” It was the name assigned Him by the annunciating angel, and was expressive of the office He came to fulfil, the Saviour of the world! He submitted to Circumcision as the child of man, He received His name as the Son of God. And this is the honor put upon holy Baptism; we are taken to it as the offspring of a corrupt nature and a sinful race—“the children of wrath,” and we there receive a Christian name, to remind us forever that therein we are made “members of Christ, the children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven.”[‡]

Yet let not my arguments be wrested or misunderstood; and while pressing upon you the necessity of Infant Baptism, and the danger of neglecting it, let it not be said that I encourage the vain confidence, that the mere act of Baptism will save you, without its purifying and practical effects. “*Circumcision verily profiteth,*” saith the Apostle, “*if thou keep the Law.*” And we may say the same of Baptism, if you obey the Gospel; and

^{*} Matt. xviii. 10.

[†] Mark x. 14.

[‡] Church Catechism.