

thirty-nine articles of the English church; nor the fundamental articles of faith as *recorded in the Scriptures*, but those which are contained in what is commonly called the Apostles' Creed, of which an excellent writer has justly said, "As a summary of Christian doctrine, it is extremely indefinite and imperfect. It maintains a deep dead silence on the important and fundamental doctrines of the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, original sin, the atonement, justification by faith, and the nature and necessity of good works. The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, are merely spoken of as historical facts, without the slightest allusion to the design of those facts." Yet the bare repetition of this creed, and the acknowledgement of a belief *of it*, is the chief part of what is required by the Church of England to constitute an individual a true believer in Christ.

With regard to this Creed, it is but proper to observe, that it has long been acknowledged, even by Episcopalians themselves, to be a forgery. Lord King observes in his enquiry, (p. 57,) "As for that Creed which is commonly called the Apostles' Creed, all learned persons are now agreed that it never was composed by them, nor was it known within the first three hundred years after Christ." This, indeed, must be apparent to every candid mind, were it not acknowledged, from its remarkable deficiency in Scripture doctrine.

But do you suppose that this Creed, which candidates are required to say, and express a belief of, is ever seriously thought of by a majority of them? I cannot; for if so, they would not make such an unqualified affirmation, saying, "All this I steadfastly believe." I thus speak, because I could not myself; for the phrase in it "he descended into hell," is exceedingly objectionable, and is grounded on a total misapplication of the Psalmist's words, as used by Peter, in reference to the burial of Jesus Christ. The idea conveyed by the expression is, that after Christ was dead and buried he descended into the place of everlasting torment; an assertion which no part of Scripture will substantiate, and for which your best Episcopalian writers give no valid reason. Yet this your Church requires children and young persons both to say and believe, previous to their compliance with a plain command of Jesus Christ.

But in addition to this Creed, the candidates for Episcopal confirmation are required to repeat the Lord's prayer, the ten Commandments, and to answer the other questions of the short Episcopal Catechism—a Catechism in which the highly erroneous doctrine of baptismal regeneration is taught—a Catechism which is not to be compared to the Assembly's, or any of Dr. Watts's; and concerning which Baxter has said "there are omitted in this Catechism some of the essential attributes of God, without which he cannot be rightly known; as also the doctrine of man's fall; the person, office,