

it has been assumed and used, on the most solemn occasions, as the standard of the Christian faith.

This form of sound words we should, therefore, repeat with a lively faith and with humble thanksgiving—with faith, as in the doctrines essential to salvation; and with devout gratitude for the infinite condescension of God our Saviour in thus furnishing us with the way and the means to eternal life. And this devout confession, *I believe*, although attached only to the first article and afterwards but once repeated, is, nevertheless, to be mentally annexed to every several article contained in this summary of our faith. More especially, whilst this confession is made with our mouths, we are to believe with our hearts unto righteousness—not to repeat it as a dry formulary to which we yield a mere historical and lifeless assent, but to resolve to regulate our practice according to the solemn profession we make therein. But the close alliance which should subsist between our conduct and this our confession—the correspondence of our lives to the momentous doctrines of which we here profess our belief, will more clearly appear from an examination of its several articles.

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth—is the first article of the Creed, and that on which we propose, at present, to make some remarks.

It is only necessary to stand still and consider the wondrous works of God in order to make the confession which constitutes this first article of our faith; for, to suppose that the stupendous fabric of the universe sprang up out of nothing of its own accord, or that its harmonious operations were directed by chance, is an absurdity which has always been regarded as manifesting a perversion of the understanding, and a deprivation of the reason.

Some philosophers of antiquity and some modern assertors of this unmerited title have attempted to contradict the universal opinion which, in language of striking sublimity, is thus expressed by Moses, *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth*—with a presumptuous arrogance, they have endeavoured to account for the origin of matter and the formation of the world without the intervention of a divine and omnipotent Artificer. Some, with that absurdity into which man must betray himself when he enters upon a subject so far beyond the stretch of human conception, have made the wild assertion that *matter is eternal*—that the rude mass out of which this beautiful world was formed had no beginning. Others, taking for granted that absurd position, have still more absurdly declared that this visible world, in which so much order and so many evidences of exquisite arrangement are visible, was the work of mere chance: that every thing in nature which we admire for their just proportions and exact regularity, were originally caused by the accidental junction of detached portions of matter. But, will not the most unenlightened and the most