

his gratuitous, unmerited love; although we are justified freely by grace and not for our own works and deservings—*faith* is the medium through which that grace is imparted to us. Salvation is freely offered to us; but unless we heartily believe that Christ's merits are a full and sufficient satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, we cannot be admitted into that covenant of grace, nor be made partakers of the benefits of Christ's atonement and intercession. Faith, upon the proffer of this merciful forgiveness, will entitle us to those privileges; and by faith—and its necessary and correspondent fruits—we are ensured of eternal salvation.

To the doctrines of the Gospel, therefore, contained in the Holy Scripture and summed up in the Apostles' Creed, we are commanded, as were all those who experienced the compassion of our Lord whilst on earth, to make this hearty and undissembled confession, *Lord, I believe*:—and when we discover in the revelations of God recorded in his holy word, *things hard to be understood, and past finding out*, we are required, instead of *seeking to be wise above what is written*—instead of doubting where we cannot clearly discern, and rejecting what we cannot comprehend—to bow, in entire submission, to the God of Truth, and seek his guidance and illumination, with this humble prayer, *Lord, help mine unbelief*.

The Creed is a clear and comprehensive epitome of the doctrines which, through Christ, are essentially necessary to salvation; and although the Holy Scriptures, as containing *all* things necessary to salvation, are, in a more extended sense, our Creed, yet it was expedient to sum up the articles of *indispensable* belief into a brief compendium, that they might thereby be more readily learned, more easily understood, and more effectually retained by all the professors of the Gospel—and that these being thus compressed and learned, might be, as it were, “*for a sign upon their hand and as frontlets between their eyes*.”

This Creed, though commonly called the Apostles' Creed, was not *their* composition; and although of very early compilation and manifestly containing the substance of *their* belief, it does not appear to have been put into its present *form of words* by them. It was, indeed, customary for different Churches to have different Creeds; yet, nevertheless, at a very early age, *that* summary of belief became generally adopted which is since called the Apostles' Creed:—an appellation to which it is well entitled from its perfect agreement with the doctrines of the Apostles contained in the Scriptures, as also from its exact correspondence with the confessions of all catholic Churches which, in the extended meaning of the word, make up the *Apostolic Church*. Besides, this Creed has been received in all ages with the greatest veneration and esteem: the ancient Christians testify their reverence for it by the most marked and majestic expressions; and in former, as well as in later times,