no man can be sure that he is bound to believe in Christ ' when preached to him ; nor can any man be justly con­demned for infidelity ; which is not only absurd in itself, but directly contrary to what we are taught by our blessed Lord, who assures us, (St. John iii. 18, 19, and 36 ; Rom. xiv. 9), that unbelief is the cause of condemnation. Lastly, if Christ died not for *all,* then it is certain that he cannot claim dominion *over all* in *consequence* of his *death* and *re~ surrection ;* but St. Paul says expressly, that “ to *this end* Christ both *died,* and *rose,* and *revived,* that he might be the Lord of the *dead* and *living."* The Arminians acknow­ledge, that though Christ died for all, there are many who will not be saved; for, say they, (Wells’s Divine Laws and Covenants, part ii. chap. iii.) the death of Christ did not literally pay the debts incurred by sinners, but only obtain­ed for them the gracious covenant of the gospel, by which all who believe in him, and sincerely endeavour to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, are entitled to forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

Sect.VI Of *the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ.*

The Apostles of Christ, in announcing his religion to men, laid great emphasis on the fact of their Master's resurrec­tion from the dead, as that which proved the divinity of his mission, and the acceptance of his work by God. That this fact really occurred, there can be no doubt. It may be laid down as a fixed principle, that no man, or body of men, will deliberately choose *evil* for its *own sake,* or enter zealously upon a tedious and difficult enterprise, from which no good can possibly arise, and from which unmixed misery is clearly foreseen as the necessary result of every step of the progress. Such, however, must have been the choice and the conduct of the apostles, when they resolved to preach a new religion founded on the resurrection of Jesus, if they did not certainly know that Jesus had risen from the dead. And this conduct must have been adopted, and, in opposition to every motive which can influence the human mind, have been persevered in by a great number of men and women, without the smallest contradiction hav­ing ever appeared in the various testimonies, which at dif­ferent times, and under the cruelest tortures, they all gave to a variety of circumstances, of which not one had its foundation in truth. He who can admit this supposition, will not surely object to the credibility of miracles. The resurrection of a man from the dead is an event so dif­ferent indeed from the common course of things, that no­thing but the most complete evidence can make it an ob­ject of rational belief; but as the resurrection of Jesus has always been said to have had God for its Author, it has an effect which does not exceed the power of the cause assigned, and is therefore an event possible in itself and capable of proof. It is a deviation from the laws of na­ture, but it is not contradictory to any one of those laws. That a great number of men and women should deli­berately form a plan of ruin and misery to themselves, without a prospect of the smallest advantage either in this world or the next, is as different from the common course of things as the resurrection from the dead ; and therefore in itself at least as great a miracle : but that they should per­sist in prosecuting this plan in the midst of torments; that they should spread themselves over the whole world, and everywhere publish a number of falsehoods, without any one of them contradicting the rest; that truth should never escape them either in an unguarded moment, or when lin­gering on the rack, and yet all their lies should be in per­fect agreement with each other; that they should every one of them court sufferings for a person whom they knew to be an impostor; that not one of the number—not even a single woman—should have so much compassion for a fellow- creature, as to rescue him from the flames by confessing a truth which could injure nobody—not even the suffering

deceivers themselves;—all this is not only different from the common course of things, but directly contrary to the most known laws of nature, and is therefore not miraculous, but may be pronounced impossible. Yet this impossibility we roust admit, or acknowledge, that as Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and was buried, so he arose again the third day, according to the Scriptures; and was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve; after that of above five hundred brethren at once; after that of James; and then of all the apostles; and that he was last of all seen of St. Paul, (1 Cor. xv. 3-9,) who by the vision was converted to preach the faith which till then he had persecuted.

Thus we are assured, that “ those who have fallen asleep in Christ are not lost, since he has risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order; Christ the first- fruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming; for all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of dam­nation." (1 Cor. XV. 20-24, and St. John v. 28, 29.)

Our blessed Lord having conversed familiarly with the eleven apostles for forty days after his resurrection, in­structing them in the things pertaining to the kingdom of God ; having extended their authority as his ministers, by giving them a commission to teach all nations, and make them his disciples, by baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and having promised them power from on high to enable them to dis­charge the duties of so laborious an office—conducted them as far as Bethany, that they might be witnesses to his as­cension into heaven. (See St. Luke xxiv. 49—43, and Acts i. 6-12.)

That our blessed Lord ascended into heaven, will scarce­ly be denied in the present age by any one who admits that he rose from the dead. The ascension was indeed the natu­ral consequence of the resurrection ; for we cannot suppose that a man would be called back from the grave to live for ever in a world where all other men fall in succession a prey to death. The purpose for which he died was to recover for the descendants of Adam every privilege which they had forfeited through his transgression; and if, as has been generally believed, mankind were by the terms of the first covenant to enjoy eternal life in heaven, some proof was necessary that Christ by his death and resurrection had opened the kingdom of heaven to all faithful observers of the terms of the second. Hence it was prophesied (Psalm lxviii. 18; cx. 1 ; Micah ii. 13) of the Messiah, in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed, that “ he should ascend on high, lead captivity captive, and sit on the right hand of God until his enemies should be made his foot­stool.” It was therefore of the greatest importance to the apostles to have sufficient proof of their Master’s exaltation to the right hand of the Majesty on high ; for otherwise they could neither have looked for an entrance into heaven themselves, by a new and living way, as the author of the epistle to the Hebrews expresses it, nor have preached Je­sus as the Messiah promised to their fathers, since they could not have known that in him these prophecies were fulfilled. But the proof vouchsafed them was the most complete that the nature of the thing would bear. The spectators of the ascension were many; for, according to the history of St. Luke, (Acts i. 12-16.) those who returned from the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem, and prepared themselves for the coming of the Holy Ghost, were in number about six score; and to such a cloud of witnesses the evangelist would not have appealed, had not the fact he was recording been very generally known. Yet these were perhaps but part of the witnesses; for since Christ had informed his disciples that he