

the torments of the martyrs were, I will not say *equal* in duration and degree, but in many instances greatly *superior*. Nor on the part of the *suffering person*; because Christ had incomparably more strength and holiness than the martyrs. It must then have been on the part of *God*, who ministered abundantly more consolation to the martyrs than he did to Jesus Christ. But why so, if he did not look upon him as the sinners' substitute? Considered as the Son of God, he was always, even when he hung on the cross, the object of his Father's infinite love; consequently, if God had viewed him under that character only, he would, in the time of his sufferings, have been a partaker of joys vastly superior to those which the martyrs possessed.

It may, perhaps, be said, "Christ was perfectly holy, and entirely innocent when he suffered death; not so the martyrs."—They were, however, innocent with respect to the cause for which they suffered. Besides, the sense of a man's innocence does not use to aggravate his sufferings, but rather to support and comfort him under them. This Jesus himself declares, when he says, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake," Matt. v. 10.

Equally unavailing would it be to say, "Jesus was the first in suffering such afflictions; and they who set the example generally suffer most."—It is not the fact that he was the first martyr. He himself tells us, that the prophets were persecuted before him; and encourages his disciples, by this very consideration. And though this might serve to justify a small difference, between a number of sufferers; yet it cannot possibly account for that amazing disparity which is found, if we only consider external things, between the fortitude of Christ and that of the martyrs. It

was not long after the death of Jesus that Stephen was stoned. The great number of martyrs, therefore, whom he had seen die for the truth could not have raised his patience and courage to that heroic pitch, which he discovered on the occasion. Yet those virtues shone with a much brighter lustre in him, than they did in his dying Master, if we only regard outward appearances. The latter is immersed in sorrow; the former is elevated with joy. And when surrounded by his cruel enemies, he cried out, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God," Acts vii. 56. One is afflicted beyond measure in his thoughts of God, and says, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me," Matt. xxvii. 46. The other is transported with gladness, at the sight of his ascended Lord; and the joy which sparkles in his eyes, and shines in his countenance, renders his face like that of an angel. Who, now, on the Socinian hypothesis, can account for this astonishing difference?

Some, indeed, have supposed, "That the body of Christ, being formed immediately by the Holy Ghost, was more sensible of pain than the bodies of other men."—But who is able to prove that a body must be more sensible of pain, because it was formed by the Holy Spirit, and is the residence of perfect holiness? Besides, Jesus did not suffer in his body, when he was in the garden of Gethsemane. His sufferings were then of a mental kind; yet so great were they that he sweat blood. Nay, he expressly declared, that his soul was sorrowful, exceeding sorrowful, sorrowful even unto death; when no human hand was upon him, when no human enemy was near him, and before he suffered the least pain in his body, except what was occasioned by the agonies of his

mind. The frowns of his Father, who was then asserting the rights of his violated law, were chiefly felt by him through the whole of his passion; these penetrated his very soul. It evidently appears, from the history of his sufferings, that his bodily pains did not ruffle the temper of his mind. He had as much command of himself, in that respect, when he hung on the cross, as when in familiar converse with his disciples. Witness that saying to his mother; "Woman, behold thy Son!" and to the beloved disciple, "Son, behold thy mother!" John xix. 26, 27. Witness also his glorious promise to the penitent thief; "Verily I say unto thee, to day shalt thou be with me in paradise," Luke xxiii. 43.

To as little purpose would it be to suppose, "That his overwhelming sorrows were occasioned by the base ingratitude of the Jews."—To publish the word of life to ungrateful men, and to be recompensed with persecution and death, were common to him with multitudes of martyrs. Besides, this was far from being the first time that he experienced the ingratitude of his nation. Nay, he very well knew, long before, that this ingratitude would run so high, as to prove the cause of his death, and of this he had informed his disciples. The ingratitude of the Jews might add to his sorrow; but it could not be the principal cause of his anguish, either in the garden, or on the cross. Unless, therefore, we would make another gospel, we must acknowledge, that the desertion of his Father lay nearest his heart. He considered the time of his passion, as "the hour and power of darkness;" when insulting tongues and violent hands, the rage of hell and the wrath of God, were all united to plunge him deep in accumulated and consummate woe.

Once more: If the approbation of God usually

comfort those that suffer in a righteous cause, how came it to pass that Christ was not relieved by it? And if the certainty of possessing an eternal and blessed life, caused the martyrs to shed their blood with joy, should not the certainty which Jesus had, not only of living in consummate happiness for ever, but also of making others everlastingly blessed, fill him with unspeakable joy? What! shall men who are accustomed to love the earth, rejoice to leave it; while Jesus Christ, who is perfectly free from every sordid and sinful passion, while He who is the perfect pattern of every moral excellence, is seized with a thousand mortal terrors, just as he is going to heaven! This is, on the Socinian principles, absurd to imagine; impossible to be true.

To conclude; If Jesus died for us only in the sense of our adversaries, his death and that of the martyrs stand much on a level, in point of advantage to us. And if so, it is unaccountably strange that the Holy Ghost should put such a difference between the one and the other. "Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" We were not, indeed, *baptized* in the name of that apostle; but, if the doctrine of Socinus be true, Paul and Jesus must have *died for us* in the same sense, and for the same end.

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## CHAPTER V.

THE SENTIMENTS OF OUR ADVERSARIES RENDER THE LANGUAGE OF SCRIPTURE OBSCURE AND FALSE, ABSURD AND IMPIOUS.

THIS is the last of those propositions which we engaged to prove in this section; and the principal

mean to show, That Christ and his apostles have led us into a complicated and pernicious error, if the sentiments of our opposers be true.

Those passages of Scripture which we shall produce on this occasion, are such as refer, either to the original state of Jesus Christ, or to his pre-existence, or such as reveal his eternal Divinity; of all which in their order.

Of the *first* sort are the following. “What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? I am the bread which came down from heaven. No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven. He that cometh from above, is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father. I proceed forth, and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first, into the lower parts of the earth?”\*

In these, and similar passages, as they are explained by our opponents, we can discern neither wisdom nor propriety, neither truth nor common sense, but quite the reverse. For all that we find in Jesus Christ, considered as a mere man, is, that he had a soul created immediately by the power of God; that his body was formed in the womb, by the agency of the Divine Spirit; that he received, in an extraor-

\* John vi. 62, 50, 51; iii. 13, 31; 1 Cor. xv. 47; John vi. 38; xvi. 28; viii. 42; Eph. iv. 9.

dinary manner, those gifts of the Holy Ghost, which were necessary to discharge the work of his ministry ; and that he was invested with his office, and sent of God to perform it among men. But if Jesus may be said, “ To have proceeded from God ; to have come down from heaven, and to have been with God, in the beginning ;” because his soul was created immediately by the power of God ; the same things may be affirmed of men in general. For every man has a spirit that returns to God who gave it. Thus it might be said of any man, What and if ye see him ascend up where he was before ? And each might say of himself, I came down from heaven—I proceeded from the Father, and came into the world ; and now I leave the world and go to the Father. And so every one might have a share in those privileges and honours, which have been always considered as peculiar to Jesus Christ. And though the body of Christ was formed by the immediate power of the Holy Ghost, yet that is far from being a sufficient reason for these and similar expressions ; “ I came down from heaven—I came from God.” For Adam’s body was formed immediately by the hand of God, and yet the Scripture is far from speaking of our great progenitor after this manner ; so far from it, that the language used is of a directly contrary signification : for the Spirit of inspiration, speaking of Adam, says, “ The first man is of the earth, earthy ; the second man is the Lord from heaven,” 1 Cor. xv. 47.

“ Jesus Christ,” it will be said, “ was not only conceived in a Divine manner, but was also replenished with the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit ; and in that respect he may be said to come from God, and to come down from heaven ; because it is the work

of God to raise up a man in a supernatural way, and to endue him with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In much the same sense as when it is said, 'Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights,' Jam. i. 17. Or, as in that question, 'The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men?' Matt. xxi. 25. And in opposition to the meaning of those words, 'This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish, Jam. iii. 15.'—But these passages are far from being parallel, and are very unsuitable on this occasion. For there is a vast difference between speaking thus of certain *qualities*, which are not susceptible of local motion, and, consequently, cannot be said, but in a figurative sense, to go or come, to descend or ascend; and speaking thus of a *person*, who may, in a proper sense, be said to descend, or to ascend. Besides, it is plain from all the circumstances of these texts, that the expressions adduced, as examples, ought to be understood in a metaphorical sense; whereas the very contrary is evident, in relation to those passages which we have just produced, in respect of Jesus Christ. For who does not see a local ascension, an ascension *properly* so called, in these words, "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?" John vi. 62. And if the word *ascend* be literal, must not the immediately following words, "*where he was before*," be so too? When Jesus says, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father," John xvi. 28, who can reasonably doubt, whether he came from the Father and came into the world, in the same sense in which he speaks of leaving the world and going to the Father? If, then, he left the world, and

went to his Father in a proper and literal sense, he must, in the same sense, have come down from the Father.

Again : If they who receive the gifts of the Spirit, who are sent of God, and who are the peculiar work of his power, may be said to “ come down from heaven,” nothing could be more just than to affirm it of the apostles. For they were endued with supernatural and wonderful gifts ; they were divinely sent ; and they, both in regard to their regeneration and their qualifications for the apostleship, were, in a particular manner, the work of God. Yet the Scripture never says, They came down from heaven. John the Baptist, also, was holy in several respects ; and was, in various ways, the work of God ; for he was holy from his mother’s womb, filled with the Holy Ghost, raised up in an extraordinary manner, and sent of God ; yet the evangelists are so far from saying, “ He came down from heaven,” that they tell us he “ was of the earth.” For thus they represent the Messiah’s harbinger speaking of his Lord and of himself : “ He that cometh from above, is above all : he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth : he that cometh from heaven is above all,” John iii. 31.

The enemies of our Lord’s Divinity, being unable to satisfy either themselves or others, endeavour to extricate themselves out of those difficulties with which they are pressed, by supposing, and asserting “ That Christ, before he entered on his public ministry, ascended into heaven ; and, having received instructions relating to his important work, came down to perform the various duties of his office.” This they consider as the foundation of those various ways of speaking, by which Jesus is represented, as proceeding from the Father ; as coming down from above ; and as being the bread which came from heaven. All



which is quickly said, and sooner imagined; but let us examine this conjecture, and see whether it be not contrary to truth and probability.

Whence, then, had they this account? From any evangelist, or any of the inspired writers? If so, let them produce the passage. If Jesus did, indeed, ascend bodily into heaven, as they suppose, it was no small miracle; and, consequently, it ought not to rest on the bare assertion of our opponents. Nay, had it been a fact, it ought to have made a considerable figure in the evangelical history; which, nevertheless, is not the case. It must have been, however, of as much importance, as Elizabeth's visit to Mary; as the arrival of the eastern Magi; as the account of our Saviour's journey to Jerusalem at twelve years of age; or of his temptation in the wilderness. It was, at least, as necessary to our edification, that the sacred historians should have informed us of his being caught up to heaven, by the Spirit of God, as to represent him elevated by the devil, and placed on a pinnacle of the temple. It was, surely, of as much importance to tell us, that he had been for some time in heaven, as to inform us, that he sojourned at Nazareth. Was it necessary to mention the opening of the heavens at his baptism, and the descent of the Holy Ghost upon him? then, certainly, it could not have been impertinent to have told us that he was taken bodily into heaven.

Our opponents will have the abode of Moses on mount Sinai, while God was instructing him for his future service, to be a type of this supposed rapture of Jesus Christ, and of his abode in heaven with a similar view. But they do not consider how improbable it is, that the type should be so exactly recorded in the history of the Old Testament; and that its

accomplishment, which is of unspeakably greater importance to mankind, should lie hid under a veil of silence. To what principle can we attribute this omission on such an interesting occasion, in historians who relate matters of much less consequence? For, next to three or four grand facts, such as the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ; there was no one event in the history of our Lord, of greater importance to us, or more to his honour, than that which is in question before us. I do not except his transfiguration; an event which the evangelists relate with all its circumstances. Because, it was much more honourable to Jesus, and of much greater consequence to us, for him to ascend into heaven, to converse familiarly with his Father, than to converse with Moses and Elijah, on the mount of transfiguration.

What, then, can be said to excuse the silence of the evangelists, on this occasion? Did they propose to relate only such things as referred to the *humiliation* of Jesus; and, on that account, omitted an event which seemed to regard his glorification? But this is contrary to plain fact. They relate, with great particularity, many glorious and wonderful circumstances which attended the birth and life, the death and resurrection, of their Divine Master. What, then, can be said, to justify this extraordinary, unnatural, and incomprehensible silence?

But what necessity was there that Christ should ascend into heaven? for as the opinion of our opposers, in this respect, is not grounded on any report of the evangelists, they must needs establish it on some kind of *necessity*. "It was necessary," Socinus says, "that Christ should be conformable to Moses, who was his type. As Moses, therefore, was with God on the mount, so it was necessary that Christ

should be, for some time, with God in heaven. Besides, it was necessary that Christ should go up into heaven, to receive particular instructions, respecting the truths which he was to teach mankind."—As to the latter of these assertions, it may be observed, that local motion contributes but little towards our being taught of God. The apostles were perfectly instructed in the truths of the gospel and in the mysteries of the kingdom of God; yet they were not taken up into heaven, in order to learn what they should preach to mankind, or what they should write for the use of the church in succeeding ages. How, then, could such an ascension be necessary for Him who received the Spirit without measure; and who, being holy from his conception, astonished the Jewish doctors with his wisdom, when but twelve years of age? Nor did John the Baptist ascend into heaven to learn the will of God, or to receive qualifications for his office; yet, so soon as he saw Jesus approaching him, he exclaimed; "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" John i. 29. Which comprehensive words contain an epitome of gospel-truth. But why should the Master be at more pains to receive instruction than the servant?

"There was no necessity," it will be replied, "only so far as it behoved Christ to be conformable to Moses, who was his type. For as the latter was a mediator between Jehovah and the Israelites, so the former between God and believers. As the one informed the seed of Jacob of God's design to deliver them out of Egyptian bondage, so the other was to reveal the merciful counsel of God, respecting the redemption of mankind from everlasting damnation."—Is it not amazing that men of such celebrated parts and learning should reason after this manner? If, then, I do but

imagine, that there are such and such relations in the ancient types, I am fully warranted to make what additions I please to the evangelical history! I may, therefore, say, Jesus had an *impediment* in his speech, because Moses had; Jesus was a *shepherd*, because Moses was.

To which it will be said, "By no means. Because it is not what Moses was, or did, simply considered; but what he did, as a *type* that was to be accomplished in Christ. But he was with Jehovah on mount Sinai as a mediator and as a type."—But if it be allowable to over-stretch the relations which there are in the types, what is there that may not be maintained? Moses, for instance, ascended the mountain *twice*, to be instructed in the law and will of the Lord; must we, therefore, conclude, that Jesus went up twice into heaven on a similar account? Moses, when on the mount, *fasted* forty days and forty nights, and that once and again; must we from hence infer, that Christ went up into heaven a first and second time, and that he fasted twice, when there, for an equal space of time? The former, coming down from the mount, *brake* the tables of the law; and, descending from it a second time, brought other tables with him, which were preserved; was there anything similar in the conduct of Jesus? When Moses came down from the mount, so great was the *lustre* of his countenance, that the Israelites could not steadily behold him, till he had put a vail on his face; but will any one say, that the countenance of Christ shone when he came down from heaven, and that he also was obliged to vail his face before his disciples could converse with him? None will pretend to carry the parallel so far, between the Jewish lawgiver and his glorious Anti-type. Consequently, as the relations of the types

ought not to be carried to excess, it is unwarrantable, it is absurd, to ground the truth of a supposed fact, which is otherwise unknown, on such comparisons as may be justly esteemed the flights of imagination.

But, were we to admit the conjecture of our adversaries, their cause would receive but little advantage from it, because it would not be sufficient to justify those expressions which describe our Lord as *coming down* from heaven. For, supposing he did ascend into heaven, yet he was there but for a short space of time; he did not ascend thither, as to a place where he fixed his ordinary abode, that being peculiar to his second ascension. Why, then, should the Scripture say, He was to ascend "where he was before?" *Where he was before*:—can this be spoken of a transient abode in heaven for a few days? Paul was caught up to the third heaven; but was it proper to say, at his death, His immortal spirit is gone where he was before? Jesus went up to Jerusalem at the solemn feasts; could it be said of him, the second time of his going thither, He is gone where he was before? Would not such language intimate, that he had been used to make *his abode* at that renowned city, and so convey a false idea? Or, could it be said of Moses, the second time he went up to the mount, He is gone up where he was before? Besides, it is not common for the Scripture to say, Jesus *went up* to heaven; but, "He *came from* heaven; he *came down* from heaven; he *came from* God; he *proceeded from* the Father," and was to go to him, as he came from him. Which expressions plainly show, that he came down from heaven, as from his natural place; not that he went up into heaven by a miracle, to be there only for a few days. So, in reference to the apostle Paul's

rapture, the Holy Spirit does not say, He came from heaven ; he came down from heaven ; he came from God ; though this was a fact : because it is not so much his *descent from* heaven, as his *ascension thither*, that is the object of our admiration. According, therefore, to this peculiarity of our opponents, it would have been much more proper for the sacred writers to have told us repeatedly, that Jesus *went up* into heaven ; than for them so frequently to say, he *came down* from heaven. For, if the former be a fact, the latter cannot be doubted ; because we behold him on earth, preaching the word, and performing miracles ; but that he ascended to heaven, is what we did not know, and, therefore, should have been informed of it. When the heroes of ancient Rome were honoured with a triumph, it was common to say, They *went up* to the capitol ; because that was the most remarkable thing in the whole procession. But they never thought of saying, with an emphasis, They *came down* from the capitol ; because their descent from it was far from being so considerable as their going up to it. So of the Jews it used to be said, They *went up* to Jerusalem every year, from all the parts of their country to worship there. This was necessary to be known ; much more so, than that they *came down* every year from that metropolis, though the latter was equally true ; because it is not the principal thing, to which both Scripture and reason require that we should attend. Thus, if Jesus went up to heaven, and came down from thence, after having continued there a few days ; it was of incomparably more importance to us, to be informed of his *ascension*, than of his *descent* ; and yet the Scripture speaks frequently of the *latter*, not at all of the *former*.

But still further to confute the ungrounded con-

jecture, and illustrate the point; suppose we met with a stranger who should talk after this manner: I came from Japan, and I go to Japan. Ye shall soon see me return where I was before. I departed from Japan, and I landed in this country; not to do my own business, but the business of the king of Japan. Ye are of this country, but I am of Japan. I came from the king of Japan, and landed in this country; I also leave this country, and go to the king of Japan, for he sent me. Now that I am to return thither, what is it but that I was sent into this country? He who is of this country, speaks as the men of this country; but a man who came from Japan speaks as one of that empire. None of you was ever at Japan, except myself, who came from thence, and who reside, or who am in Japan.—Now, I appeal to our adversaries, and I take all mankind to witness, what is the natural impression which these declarations ought to make on our minds. Do they naturally raise in our minds an idea, that he who speaks thus is an *European*, who has been at Japan a fortnight, or a month only, and is quickly to return thither? Or, do they inform us, that he is a native of Japan, who had long resided there, and is speedily to return to his own country? It must, certainly, be proper for such an one to say, I came from Japan; I came forth from Japan; I am of Japan. But as for an *European*, who had been there for a few days, or weeks only, he would say, I have been as far as Japan; I have been at Japan; I have seen Japan.

Again: It is very observable, that the Scripture exalts Christ above all, because “he came from above.” This is a pertinent and conclusive reason, if he came from heaven, as from his natural place; but is far from being so, if he only came down from

thence, after having miraculously ascended thither. Or, if conclusive, we may for the same reason assert, that Paul is *above all*, because he partook in the same honour, having been rapt up into the third heaven. Nor does Jesus barely say, "I came down from heaven;" he also gives his reason for it. "I came," says the great Redeemer, "not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me," John vi. 38. He expressly gives the reason why he *came down* from heaven, but says not a word why he *went up thither*; which, on the principles of the Socinians, is absolutely unaccountable, is highly absurd. For it is as if Moses had said to the Israelites, "I *came down* from the mount, for such a purpose," without ever informing them that he *went up* thither, and conversed with God. In such a case they might well have replied, As the mount was not the place of your abode, we are surprised at your ascending that eminence; but we do not wonder at your coming down. Tell us first why you went up; and then you may let us know, if you please, why you came down."

The apostle forms an opposition between the first and the second Adam. "The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven," 1 Cor. xv. 47. By which it appears, that as the earth was the natural place of the first man, so heaven must be the natural place of the Second. And as these words, "The first man *is of the earth*," do not merely signify, that Adam was for a few moments in the earth, and was afterwards raised out of it; but that, before he was enlivened by the breath of God, he was in the earth, as in his original, or natural place: so these words, "The second man is the Lord *from heaven*," do not only signify that Christ came from heaven, after having been there a few days;



but that, before he descended to earth, he had been always in heaven, as in his proper and natural place. From all which it is evident, if Jesus be by nature a mere man, that various passages of Scripture are obscure and unintelligible. Nor will it be any difficult matter to prove, on the same hypothesis, that they are false, absurd, and impious. In order to which I would propose the following particulars to the reader's consideration.

The passages adduced show, with others of a similar kind, that Christ existed in heaven before his conception, as in his natural place. For what else can be the primary import of such expressions as these: "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? he came from above; he came down from heaven; the second man is the Lord from heaven?" John vi. 62, 38; 1 Cor. xv. 47. But this idea is false, if Jesus be a mere man.

Again: Our Lord has heaven for his original, in a much higher sense than any other man. For the Scripture opposes him to all others, because they are *from below* but he *from above*; they are of *the earth*, but he is *from heaven*. But this representation is not according to truth, if Jesus be by nature a mere man. For, as such, he cannot be from above, or from heaven, but either because he had God for his original; or because God sent him; or because he was replenished with Divine gifts; or because he was predestinated to the glory of heaven. But all these particulars agree to other men; for God is the immediate cause of their souls. He immediately produced both the body and soul of the first man. He sent the prophets and apostles, and endued them with extraordinary and miraculous gifts. He predestinated his people to the enjoyment of eternal happiness, and fits them, by the

sanctifying influences of the Holy Ghost, for the fruition of glory in the heavenly world. Consequently, as none of these characters are peculiar to Christ, but common to him with many other men; prophets, apostles, and thousands more, may be said to come from above; to come down from heaven; and to come from God, in the same sense in which those words are applied to Jesus Christ. So, on the other hand, if we believe our opponents, Christ is *from below*, and *of the earth*, in the same sense that we are. We are said to be *from below*, and to be *of the earth*, either because we have a gross, terrestrial nature; or because our bodies were first taken out of the earth. Jesus has also a corporeal nature, and his body was formed of matter which came originally from the earth, as well as ours. Nor would it avail to say, That it was refined and fashioned by the Holy Spirit. For the matter of which the body of Adam was made, received its human form from the immediate power of God.

In a word, Christ, on the Socinian principles, may be considered, either as a man, or as a messenger of God. Under the *latter* of these considerations, he came *from above*; he came down *from heaven*; because his call was immediately from God. But then if this were the only sense in which he came from God, he would have no pre-eminence above the ancient prophets. If we consider him under the *former* view, he must have come from heaven, either in respect of his body, or in regard to his soul. If the *latter*, because it was brought into existence by the immediate power of God; he has no advantage above men in general; for it is written, "The spirit shall return unto God who gave it," Eccl. xii. 7. If the *former*, because it was produced by Divine power; it is common to him with other men. If on

account of its being produced in a *miraculous* manner; it is an honour in which Isaac and John the Baptist shared. If because it was produced *without the intervention* of man; it is common to him with the first Adam.

This leads me to observe, that those passages of Scripture from which we argue, naturally suggest to our minds, not only that Jesus came from above and came down from heaven, in a much nobler sense than men in general, or than the first man in particular; but also, that it is in this very respect that he is incomparably superior to our common parent, the first Adam. According to that saying, "The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven," I Cor. xv. 47. But, if Jesus be a man, this must be false. For, as such, he comes of the earth, as our great progenitor did; and the first Adam came from heaven in much the same sense as the Second.

Again: The Scriptures teach us to consider Jesus as humbling and abasing himself, when he came into our world; because they represent him as coming from heaven, a place of perfect holiness and glory, to earth, which is the residence of impurity, disorder, and trouble. Thus it appears, that the passages we have examined are calculated, on the Socinian hypothesis, to raise *false* ideas in our minds.

The above declarations of the Holy Ghost, if understood according to the sentiments of our opponents, present us with a sense which is *absurd* and *ridiculous*. To prove this, we need only consider them in connexion with their comment. When explaining these words, "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?" John vi. 62, they pretend that this clause "where he was before,"

is to be understood *figuratively*. "Jesus means," say they, "that the Son of man had been in heaven before he ascended thither after his resurrection: not only because he was, long before that, continually in heaven, by meditation; but also because he had a knowledge of all celestial things, even the most Divine secrets; and all things which exist and are done in heaven, were so well known by him, that he saw them as clearly as if they had been before him; so that, though he was on earth, yet he was also in heaven."—But how absurd, how ridiculous, does this text appear, under the disguise of such a comment! What! are *to be* in heaven, and *to think* on heaven, synonymous phrases? Who ever used them as such? Why does Christ make use of a verb which signifies the time *past*, when he ought to express the time *present*? If, when he uttered these words, he intended to signify, that he was in heaven, in regard to his thoughts and meditations; why did he not say, What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he *now is*? What can be the meaning of these words, "Where he was before?" Or, what idea are we to affix to the term *before*? By what means are we to learn, that the Wisdom of God, who speaks literally, as all agree, when he says, "If ye see him ascend," concludes the literal sense in the middle of the sentence, and that the rest must be understood figuratively; even though these two phrases, *to ascend* and *where he was*, are so closely connected, that all mankind, one would have thought, must have taken them, either both in a literal, or both in a figurative sense? How can they avoid seeing an opposition between the place where Jesus was before his incarnation, and the place where he was when he uttered these words? If he was then upon earth, in a proper sense,

he must, according to these words, have also been in heaven, in a proper sense. What honest and sensible man ever expressed himself after this manner, I am going to Japan, where I *was before*; when he only meant, I am going to Japan, where I was in my *thoughts* and *desires*? Believers are exhorted to heavenly-mindedness, to set their affection on things above; but they are never said to ascend “where they were before.” For though we may say, Our hearts are in heaven, if our treasure be there; the metaphor plainly appearing; yet we cannot, without impertinence and nonsense, say, What and if ye shall see us ascend up where we were before? because there is nothing, in these expressions, but what leads us to consider them in a literal sense; and, therefore, the mind is shocked at the thought of a metaphor.

These words, “I came down from heaven,” as interpreted by them, are thus to be understood: “My flesh was formed by the wonderful counsel and power of God, and so it came from God himself; when, therefore, it is said, that Jesus Christ ‘came down from heaven;’ no more is intended, than that he came from God.”—But if so, what is the meaning of that saying; “The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is **THE LORD FROM HEAVEN?**” 1 Cor. xv. 47. Adam’s body, as before observed, was formed by the immediate power of God. He, therefore, came from God, in that sense; he, consequently, according to this interpretation, came down from heaven, as well as Jesus Christ. Besides, who that is not blinded by prejudice, and whose judgment is not perverted by a sanguine attachment to an unscriptural tenet;—who, I say, can forbear to see a very different meaning in these words, “I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that

sent me," John vi. 38, from what is contained in these, My flesh was formed by the wonderful power of God? For, in the *former*, there is a sending antecedent to a coming down; and a coming down, consequent to a sending; but in the *latter*, not a tittle of all this. The interpretation, therefore, which our opponents put on these passages of sacred writ, renders them absurd and ridiculous.

Once more: The language of Scripture, in the texts before us, according to the Socinian creed, is not agreeable to common modesty, nor to that respect we owe to the Deity; and, consequently, it must be *impious*. For, if Jesus be a mere man, he is *of the earth*, as well as the first man. He cannot, therefore, so often speak of "coming from above;" and of "coming down from heaven," in contradistinction to the original of other men, without being chargeable with immodesty; without being guilty of arrogance. Much less can it be said of him, as a mere man, "He is **THE LORD** from heaven." We do not use to speak thus of one who naturally belongs to the earth, and obtains the inheritance of heaven, and the title of **LORD**, only by grace. On the contrary, truth and modesty require that we should say, Jesus Christ being of the earth, is, by nature, earthly; but, by the favour of God, he is the Lord from heaven. Now, as one cannot be void of modesty, in this respect, without falling into impiety; because a person cannot assume such honours to himself, without infringing on the glory of God; so it is evident, that the language of Scripture is not only obscure and false, not only absurd and ridiculous, but also *impious*, if Jesus Christ be a mere man. The Arian hypothesis shall be considered in a following chapter.