

### SECTION III.

IF JESUS CHRIST BE NOT THE TRUE GOD, OF THE SAME ESSENCE WITH HIS FATHER, HE AND HIS APOSTLES HAVE LED US INTO A COMPLICATED AND PERNICIOUS ERROR.

#### CHAPTER I.

THE PRINCIPLES WHICH WE OPPOSE, OBSCURE, DEPRECIATE, AND DESTROY THOSE EXALTED IDEAS WHICH JESUS GIVES US OF HIS FATHER'S LOVE, AND OF HIS OWN COMPASSION TO SINFUL MEN.

THE general reason of the leading proposition in this section is, The sacred writers of the New Testament have *not* spoken of Christ as of a mere creature, though they were perfectly well informed as to his true dignity and real character. But it is necessary that I should be more particular. In order, therefore, to prove and illustrate the proposition, I shall endeavour to show, That the Socinian hypothesis obscures, depreciates, and destroys those exalted ideas which Jesus Christ gives us of his Father's love, and of his own compassion to sinful men; that it so weakens the idea, which is given us in the New Testament, of the greatness of the mystery of godliness, that one cannot help suspecting the apostles of a design to deceive us by bombastic expressions; that it deprives Jesus Christ of his honour, by making him possess, in a metaphorical sense, those titles which are given him in one that is proper; that it supersedes the

necessity and vacates the death of Christ; and, that it renders the language of Scripture obscure and false, absurd and impious.

I affirm, then, that the Socinian hypothesis obscures, depreciates, and destroys those exalted ideas which Jesus gives us of his Father's love, and of his own compassion to sinful men. It is manifest, that the grand benefit and the highest evidence of the Father's love consist, in giving "HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON," John iii. 36; and in delivering him up to death for us. This gift, according to the Holy Ghost, includes all others. For the apostle says, "He that spared not his own Son, how shall he not with him also freely give us ALL things?" Rom. viii. 32. But if Jesus be by nature a mere man, or a mere creature, the gift must be of incomparably less value than the salvation of mankind; and, so far from wondering that God has purchased our salvation at so *dear* a rate, we have reason to be surprised that he should procure it at so *small* an expense. For however holy and excellent we may suppose Jesus to be, yet we must allow that an innumerable multitude of immortal beings, who love God with all their hearts, and serve him with all their powers, will be, in the day of their consummation, a more delightful object in the eye of Omniscience than Jesus Christ, if he be a mere creature. The salvation of mankind, therefore, is more precious than the life of Christ; especially when it is considered, that in losing his life he did not lose his holiness. But the comparison here does not only lay between Christ and the multitudes redeemed by him; it extends also to the *temporal* life which he lost for them, and that *eternal* life which they acquire by him. The result, then, of such a comparison must be, that the gift of Christ,

as a mere creature, is of much less value than the salvation of mankind.

But, if Jesus Christ be GOD-MAN, the intimate union of the humanity with his Divinity may well be conceived to render his life and blood infinitely precious. Of this we may assure ourselves by reasoning from the less to the greater. A clod of the valley, for instance, is of no worth or dignity; we do not care how many blows it receives; it makes no difference to us whether it be preserved or destroyed. But if it be united to a spirit, the union will immediately confer a dignity upon it, so as to give a proportional value to its actions or sufferings on the behalf of any one. Then suppose it exalted to an union with the Divine essence, and its intimate relation to God will render its vicarious obedience and sufferings of infinite worth. Or thus: If the sufferings of a person of quality be of more value than those of a peasant; if those of a king's son than those of a person of quality; and if those of the king himself than those of his own son; it follows, if we proceed in this gradation *ad infinitum*, and can find a person whose dignity has no bounds, his sufferings will be of infinite value. Such, according to our hypothesis, is JESUS CHRIST; for he is "GOD manifest in the flesh," 1 Tim. iii. 16. In all his sufferings, and in the depth of his humiliation, he possessed the glories of the GODHEAD, which ennobled and dignified, beyond conception and beyond bounds, all that he did, and all that he underwent for the salvation of sinners. Such a Saviour being the gift of the Divine Father to miserable men, must be a present of infinite value, and could proceed from nothing short of infinite love.

But, after all that can be said for the contrary

sentiment, a man is but a man; and we should exalt the mercy of God at a childish rate, were we to exclaim, "Unspeakable love! unbounded mercy! which gave the temporal life of a *mere man* for the eternal salvation of mankind!" Nor would an exclamation of this kind be much more pertinent on the Arian hypothesis. There must necessarily, therefore, be a more exalted meaning in these and similar expressions: "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his ONLY BEGOTTEN SON into the world, that we might live through him," 1 John iv. 9. "God so loved the world, that he gave his ONLY BEGOTTEN SON," John iii. 36. There must, I say, be a more exalted meaning in them than that which is given to them by our opponents.

When Paul says, God "spared not his OWN SON," Rom. viii. 32, the meaning is, that he gave us *the life* of his Son. Then, reasoning from the greater to the less, he concludes, that God will give us all other blessings; because the apostle considers the life of Christ as more valuable and more precious than all things besides. But is there any proportion, let common sense be the judge; is there any proportion between the temporal life of a man like ourselves, or of any mere creature, and the eternal felicity of all the redeemed? Or, can anything be more weak, inconclusive, and false, than the apostle's reasoning, if the principles of our adversaries be true?

They will say, "God manifests his love, by giving us eternal life *with* his Son."—I reply, The assertion includes two things; everlasting life, and the way in which it is granted, that is, by the ministry of Jesus Christ. The *former*, being vouchsafed to guilty and miserable creatures, and is undoubtedly an evidence of Divine love; the *latter* is but very weakly expressive

of any such thing. For it cannot surely be considered as a *great* and *wonderful* effort of God's love, to give the temporal life of *one* man, for the eternal life of *millions*.

Let me illustrate the point. In the deliverance of the ancient Israelites from Egyptian bondage, two things may be remarked. God redeems them from the slavery under which they groaned; and, previous to their deliverance, he commands them to kill the paschal-lamb, and to sprinkle its blood on the doorposts of their houses. The love of God to the tribes of Jacob, in granting them deliverance, is greatly to be admired; for they were reduced to a sad extremity, and had long desired to be relieved. But we should think ourselves much abused, if any one endeavoured to persuade us, that the love of God to them appeared in a *wonderful manner*, because the blood of a *lamb* was a sign to the destroying angel to spare their firstborn, or because the sacrifice of the *passover* was a means, in the hand of God, of working out their deliverance. Should any one exclaim, "Behold, how God loved the Israelites! he so loved them, that he put a *lamb*, nay, *many lambs*, to death, that he might redeem them from slavery!" would you not think him delirious? But here I shall be reminded, "That the life of Christ, as a mere man, is incomparably more precious than the life of a sacrifice under the law."—Suppose it be; yet, as the life of a lamb bears no proportion to the temporal deliverance of the Israelites, the temporal life of Jesus, as a mere man, or a mere creature, can bear no proportion to the eternal life of mankind. Nay, in the *former* of these two cases there is *some* proportion, and a comparison may be formed, but none at all in the *latter*. For, as the life of a lamb is temporal, so was the life of

an Israelite, which was redeemed by it; and it must be allowed, that between temporal and temporal there is some proportion. But the life of Christ, as a mere creature, is temporal, and of a limited worth; whereas the life he purchased for us is eternal, and of infinite value; between which there is, there can be, no proportion.

“The love of God appears,” it will be said, “not in giving a man, simply considered; but in giving one that is his *own Son*.”—But is Jesus the Son of God in a *proper*, or in a *figurative* sense? If the *former*, it must be by eternal generation, which is that for which we plead. If the *latter*, I desire to be informed, Whether it be an extraordinary and an astonishing effort of Divine love, to give a man for our redemption, who is the Son of God only by a *metaphor*? Suppose a sovereign were obliged to destroy a great number of his subjects, to assert the rights of justice, and maintain the honour of his laws; except some person be found worthy of being admitted as their substitute, who, by laying down his life, shall deliver them from death. Suppose, further, that this prince, being moved with compassion, should engage to give the life of his own son for their redemption; you could not but conceive the highest idea of his mercy and love to his offending subjects. But if, afterwards, you should be well informed, that he did not give his *own* son, and be also assured that he *never had*, properly speaking, a son of his own; but, that all the mystery of this astonishing love, which made such a noise in the world, consisted in this: he adopted one of his subjects; took him out of a state of extreme indigence; educated him like the son of a prince; determined to give him up to death, as a ransom for his perishing subjects; and then, if it were possible, to reward his sufferings, by making

him the heir of his crown ; in such a case, it would be immediately said, Though the conduct of this prince is very extraordinary, and though his clemency is worthy of admiration, in pardoning attainted rebels, and in redeeming those who deserved to perish ; yet it is a childish hyperbole to exclaim, “ Behold, how he loved his kingdom ! He so loved it, that he gave his *Son*, his *own* Son, his *dearly beloved* and *only begotten* Son, to die for his offending subjects !”

Still more fully to illustrate the point, we may borrow an instance from the sacred Scriptures. The offering up of Isaac, our adversaries themselves allow, was a type of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Isaac, the delight of his father, and his only son, was bound, in order to be sacrificed by Abraham himself, notwithstanding all the yearnings of parental love. Thus he became a lively type of Christ ; of Him, who is the only begotten of the Father, and in whom he takes infinite and eternal delight. Him did the Father deliver up to sufferings and sorrows, to agonies and death. The types which prefigured the death of Christ, all agree in representing him as suffering in our stead ; as the ancient sacrifices were substituted in the place of those for whom they were offered. Every type, notwithstanding, had its particular relation, by which it is distinguished from others. Thus the blood of the paschal lamb, being sprinkled on the door-posts of the Israelitish houses, secured the inhabitants from the sword of the destroying angel : so the blood of Christ, being sprinkled on our hearts, preserves us from the stroke of Divine justice. But the offering up of Isaac, being without the shedding of blood, cannot have this resemblance with Jesus Christ. We must, therefore, look for another, which consists in this : as Abraham offered up his only

son, so the Divine Father delivered up to death his only begotten Son. Suppose, then, any one were to persuade and convince you, that Abraham did not offer up his *only* son, nor his *own* son ; but took the son of Eliezar, gave him the name of Isaac, and, if you will, put on him the clothes of Isaac ; you would immediately forbear to wonder at the obedience and faith of the renowned patriarch, in making no scruple to sacrifice his own and only son. We have been wont to look for the *image* only in a type, and for the *reality* in its accomplishment : but, if we believe our adversaries, we must invert this order ; we must look for the reality in the *type*, and the image in its *accomplishment*. According to this new mode of interpretation, Abraham performed a great and wonderful act of obedience, by which his faith in the promises and his love to God have been rendered illustrious to all generations ; for he offered up his *own son*, his *dear* and *only son* ; and this he did in reality, not in appearance only. But God, in delivering up Jesus to death, gives us only a *servant*, whom he *calls* his Son, that there might be a greater appearance of love in his dying for us : so that these and similar expressions, “ He spared not his own Son,” are used with little propriety ; are vain and delusive.

To advance the dignity of Jesus Christ, it may, perhaps, be said, “ He, whom God gave to be our Saviour, is the heir of eternal life.”—But if he obtained this exalted honour, in consequence of his sufferings, and as a reward of his death, (though it may be said, God crowns his servant to reward his patience,) yet it still remains a truth, that he gave us no other than a *servant*, for the redemption of men ; a servant who was bound to fulfil the Divine law for *himself*, being then but an “ unprofitable servant.”



The sentiment of our adversaries is no less injurious to the love and compassion of Christ, as revealed in the gospel. On their hypothesis, it is depreciated, obscured, and lost. If he really suffered in *our* sense, he underwent, for a season, the weight of the Divine curse; his very soul was penetrated by the sword of eternal justice; and he felt the desertion of his Father, with a grief proportional to the ardour of his own love. Thus his love to sinners is equal to the terrors of God's avenging justice, under the stroke of which he agonized, bled, and died. But if he suffered only in the sense of our adversaries; if he suffered without bearing the sins of men, or sustaining the punishment deserved by them; there was nothing in his death deserving of our astonishment, in regard of his love to us, nor anything very heroical in it. On this supposition, Codrus, king of the Athenians, would be as worthy of praise as Jesus Christ. For that prince, putting himself at the head of his army against the enemy, and being persuaded, by the answer of some oracle, that if he himself were not slain in the battle, his subjects could not gain the victory, threw aside his royal apparel, put on ragged clothes, went into the camp of the enemy, and frustrated their design to save him, by provoking a soldier who slew him. The love which this Athenian prince discovered for his subjects, by this instance of his concern for their welfare, is equal, more than equal, to that of Christ for believers. The *former* freely gave up his life, with a view to preserve his country from slavery, though uncertain as to a future state of existence; but the *latter* laid down his life in absolute certainty of living again after three days, and of reigning for ever with his redeemed.

On the hypothesis opposed, we have more reason

to admire the love of God to Jesus Christ, than that which the Father has manifested to us by him. God, indeed, in the forgiveness of our sins, and the salvation of our souls, manifests his love and mercy to us; and this we ought to acknowledge with gratitude and joy. But in the recompense he makes to Jesus Christ, for having suffered death, by making him the depository of all spiritual gifts; by granting him the power of bestowing eternal life, and of inflicting eternal death; and by conferring upon him names of the highest dignity and expressive of Divine authority, he manifests his love to him in an unparalleled way, in such a manner, and to such a degree, that Christ has no reason to grudge the pains he underwent, and the blood that he shed, in order to arrive at such a state of honour and happiness. Nay, he could not have done so well for himself in any other way, nor so much to his own advantage. So that, instead of saying, "God so loved *the world*, that he gave his only begotten Son;" we must say, "God so loved *Jesus Christ*, that, after he had honoured him with the title of *his Son*, he gave him the world, and put all things in subjection to him." Instead of saying, "He that spared not HIS OWN SON, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things;" we must say, "It is no wonder that he who promises to give us *eternal life*, has given us the life of *Jesus Christ*."

"But Jesus Christ," they will say, "is the *master*, and we are the *servants*; it must, therefore, be an extraordinary act of love, for a master to give himself up to death on purpose to ransom slaves, and such slaves as were his enemies."—Here it is necessary to consider the love of the Father, and the love of the Son, in a separate view. The Father gives, not him-

self, but Jesus Christ, to die for us ; and Christ, it is manifest, cannot be called *master*, with regard to God. In that respect, he is as much a servant as any of us ; he being God's own creature, and subject to his laws. God, therefore, does not give a master, but his own *servant*. He is, indeed, the most perfect of all that ever bore the character, yet he is but a servant, and must be so for ever. So that, though the love of God is manifested, in saving his enemies from deserved ruin, yet the excellence of that love is far from appearing in the gift of a *servant* ; a servant that owes his existence to a sovereign act of Divine power, and all his blessedness to the communications of Divine favour ; a servant who, in the redemption of sinners, loses neither his holiness, happiness, nor glory ; who loses his life but for three days, by which loss he obtained the empire of the universe ; and who, consequently, sacrifices no great matter on his part. For if he be a mere creature ; if, in suffering, he have nothing to fear but death itself ; if, by his sufferings, he obtain eternal felicity for those he redeems ; and if he is to be highly exalted after his abasement, where is the mighty effort of his love ? Those who devoted themselves for the preservation of their country, in the certainty of dying, and the uncertainty of living after death ; obtaining for a recompense only an imaginary glory, which could not abate the horrors of dissolution ; offered much greater violence to themselves than Jesus Christ did in all that he underwent. Nay, there are few men in the world who would not be ready to suffer a similar death on the same conditions. Where is the man who, if it were in his power, would not be willing to purchase eternal happiness for innumerable millions of his fellow-creatures, by suffering the pains of

crucifixion, if he were sure to rise again the third day, and to enjoy, as the reward of his sufferings, immense felicity, everlasting honours, and dominion over all creatures? It must, therefore, be granted, that Jesus Christ is *not* a mere man, and that he did *not* suffer a death like that of other men, who have fallen martyrs to the truth; but that he is really a Divine Person, and, being incarnate, died under the stroke of eternal justice, as the substitute of the guilty, that he might redeem the wretched, and save sinners from the wrath to come. For, let our adversaries make use of what evasions they will, they cannot overturn the doctrine of our Saviour's Divinity, without essentially altering the Christian religion; destroying the true sense of the ancient types; and so depreciating the love of God to sinners in the gift of his Son, and the compassion of Jesus in dying for them, as to render the strongest and finest expressions of Scripture, respecting Divine love, little better than arrant bombast, or mere flights of imagination.

Of this they seem to be conscious, when called to explain themselves on the subject of our heavenly Father's love, which so strongly characterizes the covenant of grace. "God," say they, "was the Father of just men under the Jewish economy; but he did not appear to be so. This is the reason why he is seldom called *Father* in the Old Testament. Nor is he so called there because he designs to give us eternal life; but because he created us, and bestows upon us the good things of time."—The Socinians make the wonderful love of God to consist in his giving us *eternal life*, and, in so doing, they speak agreeably to their own sentiments. But the writers of the New Testament speak a different language. They represent the infinite greatness and

astonishing excellence of God's love, as appearing in the gift of HIS OWN SON. This they consider as the *grand evidence* that God loves mankind. For thus they speak, and thus the Redeemer himself speaks, "God so loved the world, that he gave HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON. In this was manifested the love of God, because he sent HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON. He that spared not HIS OWN SON," John iii. 16; 1 John iv. 9; Rom. viii. 32. This, on the principles of our opposers, is an insurmountable difficulty. When they prove God's love to men, by his giving them *eternal life*, we understand them very well; but when they endeavour to prove it, by the Father giving to us *his Son*, we can discern but little propriety or truth in what they say.

They, indeed, tell us, "That God, in giving his only Son to be a sacrifice for our sins, engages himself to us, by a pledge of inestimable value; and promises, not only to forgive our transgressions, but also to give us eternal life. And by the manifestation of this great love to us, when we were his enemies, he effectually draws and reconciles us to himself. And, as he will not forgive our sins but by means of his Son, who gave himself for them, he thereby engages and subjects us to his Son; and, at the same time, declares how much he abhors those sins, which must be expiated by his Son's blood, and what an aversion we also ought to have for them."—Such reasoning is only calculated to conceal the weakness of the cause it is intended to defend. For, not being able to prove the greatness of God's love to mankind, in that way which the apostles take to exalt it, that is, "by the gift of HIS OWN SON;" our adversaries prudently collect such considerations as are, exclusive of its *grand evidence*, best fitted to discover the Father's

affection for us. These considerations are, the remission of sins, and eternal life; our being enemies to God, when he formed the design of saving us; and those inducements to holiness, which are drawn from the method in which our sins are forgiven. But these considerations, however great and noble in their proper places, leave the difficulty before us in its full force. For our inquiry is, Whether God presents us with a great, a wonderful, an incomparable gift, when he gives the life of a *mere man* for our salvation? *This* is the question before us; nor will the followers of Socinus ever be able to satisfy either themselves or others upon it.

“God,” say they, “in giving his Son, engages himself, by a pledge of inestimable value, to give us eternal life.”—But can it be said of a mere man, how holy soever he be, that he is a pledge of *inestimable value*? Or, can the gift of his *temporal* life, which he parts with only for three days, be considered as a perfect security, that believers shall enjoy *eternal* happiness? Nay, supposing Jesus to be by nature the most exalted of all mere creatures; would it be logical, would it be rational, thus to argue? If God, in his great love, delivered up *one* mere creature to death, we may safely conclude he will deliver *millions* from it. If he delivered up one to *temporal* sufferings, he will certainly deliver vast multitudes from *eternal* torments. If he gave a person *infinitely inferior* to himself, to endure the pains of crucifixion for us; he will undoubtedly grant us *the enjoyment of Himself*, to make us completely and everlastingly happy. How different the apostle’s manner of arguing, in a passage before cited! “He that spared not HIS OWN SON, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all

things?" Rom. viii. 32. Whoever duly considers how Paul speaks of *God's own Son*, of *us all*, and of *all things*, cannot but observe he supposes it quite evident, that there is *no proportion* between Jesus Christ and all the redeemed, though taken collectively; nor between the gift of Him, and the grant of all other blessings. But such a way of speaking is absolutely unaccountable, is highly absurd, on the hypothesis opposed. "God engages himself, by a pledge of inestimable value, to give us eternal life." What! was it the capital design of the death of Christ, that it should be a *pledge* of our future felicity? As if God had caused Moses to die many years before he did, that his dissolution might be a pledge to the Israelites of their departure out of Egypt, and settlement in the land of Canaan!

"By his great love to us, when we were his enemies."—But where is this *great* love? Is the life of a *mere man* so precious? especially of one who, by dying, exchanges a state of sufferings and sorrows, for a state of honour and joy, which he obtains for himself and all his disciples?

Our opponents say, "And as he will not forgive us our sins, but by means of his Son, who gave himself for them; he thereby engages and subjects us to his Son."—This very nearly discovers, what they are ashamed to own, and yet would be obliged to confess, were they to reason consequentially from their own principles. The consequence I mean is, That the death of Christ is more beneficial to himself, than it is to us; and, that God has done more for him, on *that account*, than he does for us. We ought, therefore, no longer to say; "God so loved *the world*, that he gave his Son;" but, "God so loved *his Son*, that he gave him the world." For they will by no means allow, that

the death of Christ *redeems us to God*. They peremptorily affirm, and insist upon it, that God is not reconciled to sinners by Jesus Christ. Hear their words : “ It is not true, that God, being provoked against mankind, was reconciled by Jesus Christ; for quite the contrary may be asserted; that is, God being appeased towards mankind, reconciles to himself, by Jesus Christ, men who were provoked against him.”—If, then, Jesus does not reconcile us to God, does not make our peace with him, we might, for aught that appears to the contrary, have done tolerably well without him. For as to our natural aversion to God, he could easily have removed it, by the operation of his grace on our hearts, without the mediation of Christ. But as for Jesus, being a mere man, he could not have enjoyed a supernatural glory and power, if he had not signalized his obedience by his death. The fruit, therefore, which we reap from his sufferings, is very small ; but the benefits which he receives from them, are very great ; because it is in virtue of his obedience to death, that he becomes the head of men and angels.

“ He, at the same time declares, how much he abhors those sins which must be expiated by his Son’s blood; and what an aversion we also ought to have for them.”—But if Christ be a mere man, or a mere creature, his death can have but little force to convince us how much sin is the object of God’s abhorrence. The inference, in this case, will rather be, There is no reason that we should make any great scruple of committing sin ; seeing it may, with so much ease, and at so small an expense, be expiated : for the blood of *one* man is sufficient to atone for the sins of *millions*.