that are in heaven who hath searched out?”

**13.]** The whole verse seems to have  
intimate connexion with and reference to  
Prov. xxx. 4, “Who hath ascended up to  
heaven, or descended?” and as spoken  
to a learned doctor of the law, would recall  
that verse,—especially as the further question is there asked, ‘ Who hath gathered  
*the wind* in His fists?’ and ‘What is  
His name, and what His Son’s name?’  
See also Deut. xxx. 12, and the citation,  
Rom. x. 6—8.

All attempts to explain away the plain sense of this verse  
are futile and ridiculous. The Son of Man,  
the Lord Jesus, the Word made Flesh, *was  
in, came down from*, heaven,—and was  
*in heaven* (heaven about Him, heaven  
dwelling on earth, ch. i. 52), *while here*,  
and ascended up into heaven when He left  
this earth;—and by all these proofs, speaking in the prophetic language of accomplished Redemption, does the Lord establish, that *He alone* can speak of *heavenly  
things* to men, or convey the blessing  
of the new birth to them. Be it remembered, that He is here speaking *by anticipation,* of *results* of His course and sufferings on earth,—of the way of’ regeneration and salvation which God has appointed by Him. He regards therefore  
throughout the passage, the great facts of  
redemption *as accomplished*, and makes  
announcements which could not be literally  
acted upon till they had been so accomplished. See vv. 14 ff., whose sense will be  
altogether lost, unless this **hath ascended  
up** be understood of His exaltation to be a  
Prince and a Saviour.

**which is in  
heaven]** See ch. i. 18 and note. Doubtless the meaning involves ‘*whose place is  
in heaven*;’ but it also asserts the **being  
in heaven** of the *time then present*: see  
ch. i. 52. Thus majestically does the Lord  
characterize His whole life of humiliation  
in the flesh, between His descent and His  
ascent. As uniting in Himself God, whose  
dwelling is Heaven, with man, whose dwelling is on earth, He ever was in heaven.  
And nearly connected with this fact is the  
transition to His being the fountain of  
eternal life, in vv. 14 ff: cf. 1 Cor. xv.  
47—50, where the same connexion is  
strikingly set forth.

To explain such  
expressions as “*to ascend up into heaven*,”  
&e., as mere *Hebrew metaphors* (Lücke, De  
Wette, &c.) is no more than saying that  
Hebrew metaphors were founded on deep  
insight into divine truth:—these words in  
fact express *the truths on which Hebrew  
metaphors were constructed*. Socinus is  
quite right, when he says that *those who  
take* ‘hath ascended up into heaven’ *metaphorically, must in all consistency take*‘he that came down from heaven’ *metaphorically also*; “the descent and ascent  
must be both of the same kind.”

**14.]** From this point the discourse passes to the  
*Person* of Christ, and Redemption by His  
Death.

The Lord brings before this  
doctor of the Law the mention of Moses,  
who in his day by divine command lifted  
up a symbol of forgiveness and redemption  
to Israel.

In interpreting this comparison, we must avoid all such ideas as  
that our Lord *merely compares* His death  
to the elevation of the brazen serpent, as  
if only a *fortuitous likeness* were laid hold  
of by Him. This would leave the *brazen  
serpent itself meaningless*, and is an explanation which can only satisfy those who  
do not discern the typical reference of all  
the ceremonial dispensation to the Redeemer.

It is an important duty of  
an expositor here, to defend the obvious  
and only honest explanation of this comparison against the tortuous and inadequate  
interpretations of modern critics. The  
comparison lies between the *exalted serpent of brass*, and the *exalted Son of  
Man. The brazen serpent* sets forth *the  
Redeemer*. This by recent commentators  
(Lücke, De Wette, and others) is considered impossible: and the *thing compared*is held to be only ‘the lifting up.’ But  
this does not satisfy the construction of  
the comparison. ‘The brazen serpent was  
lifted up: every one who looked on it,  
lived;’ this sentence, in its terms, represents.  
this other,—‘The Son of Man must be  
lifted up: every one who believes on Him,  
shall live.’ The *same thing* is predicated  
of the two;—both are lifted up; cognate  
consequences follow,—*body-healing* and  
*soul-healing* (as Erskine, On the Brazen  
Serpent). There must then be *some  
reason* why the *only two members of the  
comparison yet unaccounted for* stand  
where they do,—considering that the  
brazen serpent was lifted up not for any  
physical efficacy, but by command of God  
alone. *Now on examination we find this  
correspondence fully established*. The  
‘serpent’ is in Scripture symbolism, *the  
devil*, —from the historical temptation