contained nothing but *mystery.* The difficulty respecting the incarnation, which forces itſelf upon the mind, is not how two natures ſo different as the divine and human can be ſo intimately united as to become one person ; for this union in itſelf is not more inconceivable than that of the ſoul and body in one man : but that which at first is apt to stagger the faith of the reflecting Chriſtian is the infi­nite diſtance between the two natures in Chriſt, and the comparatively ſmall importance of the object, for the attain­ment of which the eternal Son of God is ſaid to have taken upon him our nature.

Upon mature reflection, however, much of this difficulty will vaniſh to him who conſiders the ways of Providence, and attends to the meaning of the words in which this myſtery is taught. The importance of the object for which the word condeſcended to be made fleſh, we cannot adequately know. The oracles of truth indeed inform us, that Chriſt jeſus came into the world to ſave ſinners; but there are passages ſcattered through the New Teſtament@@\* which in­dicate, not obſcurely, that the influence of his sufferings ex­tends to other worlds beſides this : and if ſo, who can take upon him to ſay, that the quantity of good which they may have produced was not of ſufficient importance to move even to this condeſcenſion a Being who is emphatically styled love ?

But let us ſuppoſe that every thing which he did and taught and ſuffered was intended only for the benefit of man, we ſhall, in the daily admihiſtration of providence, find other in­stances of the divine condeſcenſion ; which, though they cannot be compared with the incarnation of the ſecond person in the bleſſed Trinity, are yet ſufficient to reconcile our underſtandings to that myſtery when revealed to us by the Spirit of God. That in Chriſt there ſhould have dwelt on earth “ all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily@@\*,” is indeed a truth by which the devout mind is overwhelmed with aſtoniſhment ; but it is little leſs aſtoniſhing that the omni­potent Creator ſhould be intimately preſent at every inſtant of time to the meaneſt of his creatures, “ upholding all things, the viſeſt reptile as well as the most glorious angel, by the word of his power@@\*.” Yet it is a truth self-evi­dent, that without this conſtant preſence of the Creator, nothing which had a beginning could continue one moment in being ; that the viſible universe would not only crumble into chaos, but vaniſh into nothing ; and that the ſouls of men, and even the moſt exalted spirits of creation, would inſtantly loſe that exiſtence, which, as it was not of itſelf, and is not neceſſary, muſt depend wholly on the will of him from whom it was originally derived. See Metaphysics, n⁰ 272—276, and Providence, n⁰3.

In what particular way God is preſent to his works, we cannot know. He is not diffused through the univerſe like the *anima mundi* of the ancient Platoniſts, or that modern idol termed the *substratum of space* (Metaphysics, n⁰ 309, 310.); but that he is in power as intimately preſent now to every atom of matter as when he first brought it into existence, is equally the dictate of sound philosophy and of divine revelation ; for “in him we live and move and have our being ;” and power without ſubſtance is inconceivable. If then the divine nature be not debaſed, if it cannot be debaſed by being conſtantly preſent with the vileſt reptile on which we tread, why ſhould our minds recoil from the idea of a ſtill cloſer union between the ſecond person of the ever bleſſed Trinity and the body and soul of Jeſus Chriſt ? The one union is indeed different from the other, but we are in truth equally ignorant of the nature of both. Rea­ſon and revelation assure us that God muſt be preſent to his works to preſerve them in exiſtence ; and revelation in­forms us farther, that one of the perſons in the Godhead aſſumed human nature into a personal union with himself, to redeem myriads of rational creatures from the miſerable conſequences of their own folly and wickedneſs. The im­portance of this object is such, that, for the attainment of it, we may eaſily conceive that he who condeſcends to be potentially preſent with the worms of the earth and the graſs of the field, would condeſcend ſtill farther to be personally preſent with the ſpotless ſoul and body of a man. Jeſus Chriſt lived indeed a life of poverty and ſufferirg upon earth, but his divine nature was not affected by his ſufferings. At the very time when, as a man, he had not a place where to lay his head; as God, he was in heaven as well as upon earth@@\*, dwelling in light inacceſſible ; and while, as a man, he was increaſing in wiſdom and stature, his di­vinity was the fulness of him who filleth all in all, and from whom nothing can be hid.

Perhaps the very improper appellation of *mother of God,* which at an early period of the church was given to the Virgin Mary, may have been one cauſe of the reluctance with which the incarnation has been admitted ; for as we have elsewhere obſerved (ſee Nestorius), ſuch language, in the proper ſenſe of the words, implies what thoſe, by whom it is used, cannot poſſibly believe to be true ; but it is not the language of ſcripture. We are there taught, that "Chriſt being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God ; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeneſs of man@@\*;” that “ God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons@@\*;” and that “ the word who was in the beginning with God, and was God, by whom all things were made, was made fleſh, and dwelt among men (who beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth@@\*:” but we are nowhere taught that, as God, he had a mother! It was indeed the doctrine of the primitive church@@\*, that the very principle of personality and individual exiſtence in Mary’s son, was union with the uncreated word ; and this doctrine is thought to imply the miraculous conception, which is recorded in the plaineſt terms by two of the evangeliſts ; for he was conceived by the Holy Ghoſt and born of a virgin@@\*; but, as God, he had been begotten from all eternity of the Father, and in order of nature was prior to the Holy Ghoſt. This is evi­dent from the appellation of ό λογος given to him by St John ; for the term being uſed in that age, both by the Jewiſh Rabbies and the heathen philosophers, to denote the ſecond divine ſubsistence, which they conſidered as an eternal and neceſſary emanation from the first, sometimes called and sometimes το *έν* ; and the apoſtle giving no intimation of his using the word in any uncommon ſenſe, we muſt neceſſarily conclude, that he meant to inform us that the di­vinity of Chriſt is of eternal generation. That the term λογος was uſed in this ſenſe by the later Platoniſts, and in all probability by Plato himſelf, we have ſufficiently ſhewn in another place, (ſee Platonism) ; and that a ſimilar mode of expreſſion prevailed among the Jews in the time of St John, is apparent from the Chaldee paraphraſe ; which, in the 110th pſalm, inſtead of the words “ the Lord ſaid unto my Lord,” has, “the Lord ſaid unto his word.” Again, where we are told in the Hebrew that Jehovah ſaid to Abraham@@\*, “ I am thy ſhield and thy exceeding great re­ward,” we read in the Chaldee, "my word is thy ſhield, and thy exceeding great reward.” Where it is ſaid, “your new moons and your appointed feaſts my soul hateth@@\*,” the paraphraſt hath it, “ my word hateth ;” and where it is ſaid, that “ Iſrael ſhall be ſaved in the Lord with an everlaſting ſalvation@@\*,” in the ſame paraphraſe it is, " Iſ-

@@@[m]\* Eph. i. 10. Col. i. 19, 20.

@@@[m]\* Col. ii.

@@@[m]\* Heb. i. 3.

@@@[m]\* John ii. 13.

@@@[m]\* Philip. 6, 7.

@@@[m]\* Gal. iv. 4, 5.

@@@[m]\* John i.

@@@[m]\* Horsley's Sermon on the incarnation.

@@@[m]\* St Matth. i. 18, &c. Luke. i. 2. &c.

@@@[m]\* Gen. xv. I.

@@@[m]\* Isaiah i. 14.

@@@[m]\* Isaiah xlv. 17.