

In answer to which I observe, that God, in this revelation of his will, accommodates his language to the capacities of the person to whom he makes known his gracious designs. Thus he had frequently done to the Jewish prophets. When he revealed to those holy men the calling of the gentiles, it was often under such images as were borrowed from the ancient sanctuary, with which they were well acquainted. He informed them, that "an altar should be erected in the midst of Egypt;" and that from the rising to the setting sun, "incense should be offered with a pure offering." Such ideas were familiar to them, and, therefore, spiritual things and future events were revealed to the prophets and the church of old under these images. So the angel who appears to Mary speaks in a similar way. He might, if he had pleased, have described Jesus Christ as the Mediator who should reconcile heaven and earth. He might have represented him to the virgin mother as a universal Monarch, according to the oracle of Daniel; as a spiritual King, who should reign over the hearts and consciences of men; and as Lord of the universe, having all authority in heaven and in earth. These things, however, he does not mention, because it was expedient that she should be gradually led into the mysteries of the kingdom of God. He, therefore, speaks of the re-establishment of David's kingdom, which was at that time the object of the nation's hope, and most familiar to the mind of a Jew. "The Lord God," says Gabriel, "shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever," Luke i. 32, 33. Now, as the eternal Sonship of Jesus is one of the most sublime and mysterious doctrines in the whole book of God, we have no reason to be surprised if the