into Scripture, by adopting **only-begotten  
God**: a consequence which ought to have  
*no weight whatever where authority is  
overpowering*, but may fairly be weighed  
where this is not so. I therefore retain  
the commonly received reading, **only-begotten Son.**

**which is in the bosom]**‘The expression must not be understood as  
referring to the custom of reclining *on the  
bosom*, as in ch. xiii, 23: for by this explanation confusion is introduced into the  
imagery, and the real depth of the truth  
hidden. The expression signifies, as Chrysostom observes, *Kindred and oneness of  
essence* :—and is derived from the fond  
and intimate union of children and parents.  
The *present, which* **is**, as in ch. iti. 18, is  
used to signify *essential truth*, without  
any particular regard to time.

**he]** In the original this pronoun is very  
marked: He, and none else: an emphatic  
exclusive expression.

**declared]** Better  
than *‘hath declared,* as A. V. On the  
sense, see Matt. xi. 27.

**I. 19–II. 11.] INTRODUCTION OF CHRIST TO THE WORLD: BY THE WITNESS OF JOHN (vv. 19—40): BY HIMSELF (ver. 41—ii. 11).**

**19—28.]** *The first witness borne by  
John to Jesus: before the deputation  
from the Sanhedrim.*

**19. the Jews]**St. John alone of the Evangelists uses this  
expression;—principally as designating *the  
chiefs of the Jewish people*, the members  
of the Sanhedrim. It is an interesting  
enquiry, what this usage denotes as to the  
author or date of our Gospel. Prof. Bleek  
has satisfactorily shewn that no inference  
can be deduced from it *against the Jewish  
origin* of the author, as some have endeavoured to do; but it is rather confirmatory of the belief that the Gospel was  
written after the Jews had ceased to be  
politically a nation,—and among Gentiles;  
—the author himself contemplating these  
last as his readers.

**priests and Levites]** This was a *formal deputation*;—  
priests and Levites, constituting the two  
classes of persons employed ahout the service of the temple (see Josh. iii. 3), are  
sent (Matt. xxi. 23) officially to enquire  
into the pretensions of the new Teacher (ver. 25), who had collected about him such multitudes (Matt. iii. 5), and had  
awakened popular expectation that he was  
the Messiah (Luke iii. 15).

**Who art thou?]** The emphasis should be on the  
**thou**. “The question is asked with reference  
to the popular doubts respecting him; in  
an unbelieving and inquisitorial spirit,—  
compare Matt. iii. 7 ff., which had already  
taken place. Even among the learned, as  
well as among the people, there were considerable differences as to the prophecies  
respecting the Messiah : see ch, vii. 40—  
52.

**20.]** He openly and formally  
confessed. This emphatic notice of his declaration seems to be introduced *not with  
any view of removing too high an estimate of John’s work and office*, as sometimes supposed, but rather to *shew the  
importance of his testimony*, which was so  
publicly and officially delivered,—that the  
Messiah was come (see ch. v. 33—35);  
and the way in which he depreciated himself in comparison with Him who came  
after him.

**21.]** Our earliest MS.  
(the Vatican) reads here, “ *What then art***thou**?” equivalent to *What sayest thou of  
thyself*? ver. 22.

**Art thou Elias?]**The whole appearance of John remindes  
them of Elias :—see Matt. iii. 4, and compare 2 Kings i.8. Besides, his announcement that *the Kingdom of God was at  
hand*, naturally led them to the prophecy  
Mal.iv.5. Lightfoot cites from the Rabbinical books testimonies, that the Jews  
expected a general purification or baptism  
before the coming of the Messiah (from  
Ezek. xxxvi.25,26, and Zech.xiii.1), and  
that it would be administered by Elias.

**And he saith, I am not]** The right  
explanation of this answer seems to be the  
usual one,—that the deputation asked the  
question in a mistaken and superstitions  
sense, meaning Elias bodily come down  
from heaven, who was expected to forerun  
and anoint the Messias. (Our Lord seems  
to refer to the same extravagant notion in  
Matt.xi.14, **If ye will receive it,** *this is  
Elias, which shall come*.) *In this sense*,  
John was not Elias; nor indeed in any  
other sense, *was* he Elias ;—but only (Luke  
i.17) *in the spirit and power of Elias.*