17—21. ST. JOHN. 463   
   
 19 And this is ‘the Y record of John, when the Jews sent te.v ss.   
 priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art   
   
 thou? 2 And &he confessed, and denied not; 2 Jué con- #1   
 fessed, I am not the Christ. 21 And they asked him, , \* . 25.   
 What then? Art thou "Elias? And he saith, I am Mal. iv.   
 Matt. xvii.   
   
 Y render, testimony. Z render, and he.   
   
 into Scripture, by adopting only-begotten (ver. 25), who had collected about him   
 God: a consequence which ought to have such multitudes (Matt. iii. 5), and had   
 no weight whatever where authority is awakened popular expectation that he was   
 overpowering, but may fairly be weighed the Messiah (Luke iii. 15). Who art   
 where this is not so. I therefore retain thou?] The emphasis should be on the   
 the commonly received reading, only-be- thou. “The question is asked with reference   
 gotten Son. which is in the bosom] to the popular doubts respecting him; in   
 ‘The expression must not be understood as an unbelieving and inquisitorial spirit,—   
 referring to the custom of reclining on the compare Matt. iti. ff., had already   
 bosom, as in ch. xiii, 23: for by this ex- taken place. Even among the learned, as   
 planation confusion is introduced into the well as among the people, there were con-   
 imagery, and the real depth of the truth siderable differences as to the prophecies   
 hidden. The expression signifies, as respecting the Messiah : see ch, vii. 40—   
 sostom observes, Kindred and oneness of 52. 20.] He openly and formally   
 essence :—and is derived from the fond confessed. This emphatic notice of his de-   
 and intimate union of children and parents. claration seems to be introduced not with   
 The present, which is, as in ch. iti. is any view of removing too high an esti-   
 used to signify essential truth, without mate of John’s work and office, some-   
 any particular regard to time. he] times supposed, but rather to shew the   
 In the original this pronoun is very importance of his testimony, which was so   
 marked: He, and none else: an emphatic publicly and officially the   
 exclusive expression. declared Better Messiah was come (see ch. v. 833—35);   
 than ‘hath declared, as A. V. On the and the way in which he depreciated him-   
 sense, see Matt. xi. 27. self in comparison with Him who came   
 I, 19—If. 11.] Inrropvuction oF after him, 21.] Our earliest MS.   
 CHRIST TO THE WORLD: BY THE WIT- (the Vatican) reads here, “ What then art   
 NEss OF JoHN (vv. 19—40): py HiMsELF thou?” equivalent to What sayest thou of   
 (ver. 41—ii. 11). thyself? ver. 22. Art thou Elias?   
 19—28.] The first witness borne by The whole appearance of John remindes   
 John to Jesus: before the deputation them of Elias :—see Matt. ili. and com-   
 from the Sanhedrim. 19. the Jews] pare 2 Kings i. 8. Besides, his announce-   
 St. John alone of the Evangelists uses this ment that the Kingdom of God was at   
 expression ;—principally as designating the hand, naturally led them to the prophecy   
 chiefs of the Jewish people, the members Mal. iv. 5. Lightfoot cites from the Rab-   
 of the Sanhedrim. It is an interesting binical books testimonies, that the Jews   
 enquiry, what this usage denotes as to the expected a general purification or baptism   
 author or date of our Gospel. Prof. Bleek before the coming of the Messiah (from   
 has satisfactorily shewn that no inference Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, and Zech. xiii. and   
 can be deduced from it against the Jewish that it would be administered by Elias.   
 origin of the author, as some have en- And he saith, I am not] The right   
 deavoured to do; but it is rather con- explanation of this answer seems to be the   
 firmatory of the belief the Gospel was usual one,—that the deputation asked the   
 written after the Jews had ceased to be question in a mistaken and superstitions   
 politically a nation,—and among Gentiles; sense, meaning Elias bodily come down   
 —the author himself contemplating these from heaven, who was expected to forerun   
 last\_as\_his readers, priests and and anoint the Messias. (Our Lord seems   
 Levites] This was a formal deputation ;— to refer to the same extravagant notion in   
 priests and Levites, constituting the two Matt. xi. 14, If ye will receive it, this is   
 classes of persons employed ahout the ser- Elias, which shall come.) In this sense,   
 vice of the temple (sce Josh. iii. 3), are John was not Elias; nor indeed in any   
 sent (Matt. xxi. 23) officially to enquire other sense, was he Elias ;—but only (Luke   
 into the pretensions of the new Teacher i. 17) in the spirit and power of Elias.