(4.) John i. 18. “No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” Θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἐφακεν πάντως ὁ μονογενὴς υἱὸς, ὁ δὲ εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς, ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο.

Here, instead of ὁ μονογενὴς υἱὸς, “the only-begotten Son,” we find in some important authorities the reading ὁ μονογενὴς Θεὸς, “the only-begotten God.” This strange reading (for so it will seem to most Trinitarians as well as to others) has not yet been adopted in any edition of the Greek Testament; but it deserves notice, since it is defended by a critic so worthy of respect as Dr. Tregelles. Michaelis also appears disposed to regard it as the original reading; †

ing thrown themselves prostrate before him,’ as the words strictly interpreted imply.”—Campbell in loc. See also Méyer’s note.

* “And they, worshipping him, returned to Jerusalem with great joy.”

and Lachmann, as Dr. Tregelles assures us, would undoubtedly have received it into his text, had he known all the authorities by which it is supported.

The evidence of manuscripts and versions for and against the reading in question may first be stated. The testimony of the Fathers will require a particular discussion. It should be premised that the words νιός (Son) and Θεός (God), in the abbreviated form in which they are written in the most ancient manuscripts (\(\Upsilon\eta\), \(\Upsilon\circ\)), differ in but a single letter, so that one might easily be substituted for the other through the inadvertence of a transcriber.

The reading Θεός, then, is found in the manuscripts B C* L, 33; that is, in the Vatican manuscript, of about the middle of the fourth century, in the Ephrem manuscript (\(\alpha \, \text{prim} \, \text{manu}\)), probably written before the middle of the fifth, in another highly valuable manuscript of the eighth century, remarkable for its general agreement with the Vatican, and in a manuscript of the eleventh century, written in cursive letters, but preserving a very ancient text. As to versions, it is supported by the Peshito Syriac, as hitherto edited, the Coptic, the Ἱθυῖα, and the margin of the Philoxenian or Harclean Syriac.

On the other hand, the reading νιός is that of the Alexandrine manuscript (A), probably written not long after the middle of the fifth century, and of the manuscripts X and ∆, written in the ninth century, but often agreeing with the most ancient documents, in opposition to the later. It is also found in the other uncial manuscripts E F G H K M S U V, ranging from the middle of the eighth century to the tenth, and in several hundred manuscripts in cursive letters, mostly later than the tenth century, but some of them of much value from their usual accordance with the best authorities. The ancient versions which exhibit it are the Old Latin or Italic, the Vulgate, the Cure-
tonian Syriac,* the Philoxenian Syriac (in the text), the Jerusalem Syriac, and the Armenian.

So far as the evidence has yet been stated, it will probably be admitted that the common reading is best supported. But it is on the testimony of the Fathers that the advocates for the reading Θέος appear chiefly to rely. The following is the account given by Dr. Tregelles of this branch of the evidence.

"As to fathers," he says, "the reading [Θέος] may almost be called general, for it is that of Clement of Alexandria, Irenæus, Origen, Eusebius, Epiphanius, Lucian, Basil, Gregory of Nazianzum, Gregory of Nussa, Didymus, Basil of Seleucia, Isidore of Pelusium, Cyril of Alexandria, Titus of Bostra; as also of Theodotus (in the second century), Arius, Marcellus, Eunomius, etc.; and amongst the Latins, Hilary, Fulgentius, Gaudentius, Ferrandus, Phæbadius, Vigilius, Alcuin, etc." The reading νιός "is found twice in Origen, in Eusebius, Basil, and Irenæus (though all these writers have also the other reading, and in general they so speak of Θέος in the passage, that νιός must have proceeded from the copyists):—the Latin writers in general agree with the Latin versions in reading filius. . . . . . . Θέος, as the more difficult reading, is entitled to especial attention; and, confirmed as it is by MSS. of the highest character, by good versions, and by the general consent of early Greek writers (even when, like Arius, they were opposed to the dogma taught), it is necessary, on grounds

* This name has been given to a very ancient and valuable Syriac copy of part of the Gospels,—one of the Nitrian manuscripts recently added to the British Museum,—which is soon to be published (if it has not been already) by the Rev. William Cureton. It is "a version," as Tregelles remarks, "far more worthy the epithet of 'venerable' than that which is called the Peshito as it has come down to us." ("Account of the Printed Text of the Greek New Testament," p. 137; comp. pp. 160, 161.)