not prophets only. ‘That John himself is  
one of these *servants* below, docs not  
affect this general meaning) **what things  
must** (by the necessity of the divine  
decree: see Matt. xvii. 10, xxiv. 6, xxvi.  
54al.) **come to pass shortly** (i.e. *before long.*‘The context, the repetition below, *“for the  
time is at hand,”* and the parallel ch. xxii.6,  
followed, ver. 7, by *“Lo, I come quickly,”*  
fix this meaning here, as distinguished  
from the other of *‘swiftly,’* which is also  
precluded by the form of construction in  
the original. This expression must not  
be urged to signify that the events of  
apocalyptic prophecy were to be close at  
hand: for we have a key to its meaning  
in Luke xviii. 8, where our Lord says,  
*“Shall not God avenge His elect, which  
cry unto Him day and night, even if He  
is* **long-suffering** *with them? I say unto  
you that He will avenge them* **shortly**:”  
where long delay is evidently implied.  
Hengstenberg, repudiates this, and says it  
is self-evident that these words can only  
be adduced here “by a wrong method of  
interpretation.” But surely the two cases  
are exactly parallel: and his strong language here, as elsewhere, proves nothing.  
His own interpretation of the words, natural as he seems to think it, is forced  
and unwarrantable. He (in common with  
many others) takes them to mean that the  
events spoken of would very soon *begin* to  
take place, The axe, he says, lay at the  
root of the Roman Empire when John  
wrote this, as it did at the root of the  
Persian Empire when Daniel wrote. But  
this interpretation is not borne out by the  
Greek. The words cannot signify “which  
must soon *begin* to come to pass,” but,  
“which, in their entirety, must soon come  
to pass.” So that we are driven to the  
very same sense of **shortly** as that in  
Luke xviii. above, viz. to *God's speedy  
time*, though He seem to delay: in  
spite of the scorn which Hengstenberg  
pours on this meaning. His maxim, that  
a Prophet, speaking to men, must speak  
according to men’s ideas, is quite worthless,  
and may be confuted by any similar prophetic saying, even by the one which he  
brings in its favour, Hagg. ii. 7: and his  
complaint, that thus we make the Seer and  
even the Lord Himself like bad physicians  
who delude their patients with false hopes  
[so, in the main, Stern also], is unworthy  
of a Christian Expositor, after our Lord’s  
own plain use of the same method of  
speech again and again in His prophecies  
in the Gospels and in this book. It remains to observe, that these words cannot  
with any fairness be used as furnishing  
a guide to the interpretation of the prophecy. They are far rather to be regarded as a prophetic formula, common  
with Him to whom a thousand years are as  
one day, and used in order to teach us how  
short our time, and the time of this our  
world, is. See on the whole, Fbrard’s  
able note, and his remarks on the  
absurdity of Hengstenberg’s pressing the  
words in favour of his præterist. scheme);  
**and He** (*Jesus Christ*, not *God*, see ch.  
xxii, 16: the subject is changed, and the  
relative construction abandoned. So almost  
all Commentators) **signified [it] sending  
by His angel** (the Angel mentioned is  
the same who informs the Seer in chap.  
xvii. 1, 7, 15, xix. 9, xxi. 9, xxii. 1, 6,  
which latter place takes up this; ib. 8  
ff.; and who is spoken of by our Lord  
ib. 16. It is remarkable that this angel  
docs not appear as the imparter of the  
visions until ch. xvii. Some indeed, as  
Ewald, have fancied that they trace his  
presence in ch. Iv. 1 and throughout: but  
ch. Xvii. 1 is too manifestly the introduction to a new appearance for this to be the  
case; and previously to that the Seer receives his information from different persons.  
Our Lord Himself opens the Apocalyptic vision; but it is another voice which  
calls John up to the place of heavenly vision,  
ch. iv. 1. In vii. 13, one of the four and  
twenty elders speaks to him: in x. 8, it is  
the former voice again which addresses  
him, and in ib. 9, it is the angel who  
stands on the earth and the sea that gives  
him the book. Only in the great close of  
the prophecy, opening with ch. xvii., does  
one angel stand by him; referred to, as  
here, under the name **the angel**. In the  
visions of Daniel and Zechariah an angel  
mediated: Dan. viii. 16, ix. 20, x. 10 ff.,  
Zech. i. 1, 19, al.) **to His servant John**(on the whole question of the writer of the