book, see Introduction),

**2.] who testified  
of the word of God and the testimony  
of Jesus Christ, whatsoever things he  
saw** (these words must, in all fairness of  
construction, be referred to this present  
book, and not, as by some of the older  
Expositors, and recently by Ebrard, to the  
Gospel of St. John. The reasons given by  
Ebrard for such reference will not hold:  
see my Greek Test. Besides, the Evangelist  
distinctly tells us, John xx. 30, that  
in writing his Gospel, he did not set down  
**as much as he saw**, but only a portion of  
the things which Jesus did in the presence  
of His disciples, whereas in the case of this  
Revelation it was otherwise: he set down  
all which he saw, as a faithful transmitter  
of the Apocalyptic vision to the churches).

**3.] Blessed is** (or *be*, in the ordinary  
meaning of **blessed**: not necessarily referring  
on to eternal blessedness, as  
Hengst.) **he that readeth, and they  
that hear the words of the prophecy  
and observe the things written in it;  
for the time is near** (it can hardly be  
reasonably denied that in the terms, **he  
that readeth**, and **they that hear**, the  
Apostle had in his mind the one public  
reader and the many hearers. And so  
the great majority of Commentators. If  
the words are to be thus understood as  
above, they form at least a solemn rebuke  
to the most unjustifiable practice of the  
Church of England, which omits with one  
or two exceptions the whole of this book  
from her public readings. Not one word  
of the precious messages of the Spirit to  
the Churches is ever heard in the public  
services of a Church never weary of appealing  
to her *Scriptural* liturgies. Surely it  
is high time, that our timid rulers should  
gather courage to face their duties, and  
such an omission should be supplied.—  
Notice that not three classes of persons, but  
two only, are here indicated: he that reads,  
and they that hear and do.

**those  
things which are written therein** are the  
several exhortations to repentance, faith,  
patience, obedience, prayer, watchfulness,  
stedfastness, which are scattered up and  
down in the prophecy. The *time being near*makes the book of the more importance.  
and the blessedness of reading and observing  
it greater. The *nearness* spoken  
of is to be understood as alluding to the  
**shortly** of verse 1, which see. We know  
little now of relative nearness and distance  
in point of time: when the day of  
the Lord shall have opened our eyes to the  
true measure, we shall see, how near it  
always was).

CH. I. 4—III. 22] INTRODUCTION TO  
THE PROPHECY, in the form of a *sevenfold  
Epistle* to the seven churches of  
Asia, And herein, vv. 4, 5, *address and  
greeting*, ending with *doxology*. [Ebrard,  
who seems to love singularity for its  
own sake, objects to the above arrange-  
ment, because the sevenfold epistle has  
not yet begun, and prefers calling this  
a dedicatory title to the whole book. But  
the other view is far simpler and better.  
The sevenfold Epistle is clearly before  
St. John’s mind, and, full of the images  
of the vision which he had seen, he only  
interrupts it by solemn ejaculatory references  
to the glories of that vision and the  
sublime announcement of the Lord’s coming,  
and then hastens on to introduce it by  
a prefatory account of his own circumstances  
when the Epistles were entrusted  
to him, and of the appearance of the Lord  
who thus entrusted them.] {4} **John to the  
seven churches which are in Asia** (the  
form of address is exactly that in the  
Epistles of St. Paul: see Rom. i. 1 ff.,  
1 Cor.i.1 ff., &c. That St. Paul, in Romans  
and elsewhere, is careful to designate himself  
and his office, and St. John introduces  
himself without any such designation,