belongs doubtless in part to the individual  
character of the two Apostles, but is besides  
a strong testimony that the John who  
here writes needed no such designation in  
the eyes of those to whom he was writing.  
See this, and other evidence as to the  
authorship, urged in the Introduction.  
See on the seven churches below, ver. 11.  
**Asia**, as always in the New Test., is the  
proconsular province so called. It consisted  
of Phrygia, Mysia, Caria, and Lydia: under  
Mysia and Lydia including Ionia and  
Æolia, and the neighbouring islands of  
the Ægean. It was called proconsular,  
because it was governed by one of consular  
rank, under the title of proconsul): **Grace  
be to you and peace** (so St. Paul in all  
his Epistles except the three pastoral)  
**from Him who is and who was and who  
is to come** (a paraphrase of the unspeakable  
name *Jehovah*, resembling the paraphrase  
“I AM THAT I AM” in Exod.  
iii. 14, for which the Jerusalem Targum  
has, as here, “HE WHO WAS AND IS AND  
IS TO COME:” as has the Targum of  
Jonathan in Deut. xxxii. 39. It follows  
from what is remarked above, that the  
meaning of **is to come** is not here to be  
pressed as referring to any future *coming*.  
By doing so we should confuse the meaning  
of the compound appellation, which  
evidently is all to be applied to the  
Father. By some **He which is** is sup-  
posed to mean the Father, **which was**  
the Son [“*in the beginning* **was** *the  
Word*”), and **which is to come** the  
Spirit, as ever proceeding forth and descending  
on the Church), **and from the  
seven spirits which [are] before His  
throne** (Audreas takes these for the seven  
principal angels [ch. viii. 2]: so also many  
other Commentators. But this is highly  
improbable, as these angels are never  
*called* “**spirits**,” and as surely mere  
creatures, however exalted, would not  
be equalized with the Father and the Son  
as fountains of grace. The common view  
is doubtless right, which regards the seven  
as *the energies of the Holy Spirit:*—  
“Thou the anointing Spirit art, Who dost  
thy sevenfold gifts impart:” but rather  
perhaps to be regarded as expressing  
His plenitude and perfection, than to be  
separately assigned as [but query?] in the  
lines following of the hymn Veni Creator  
Spiritus. The key to this expression, which  
is an anticipation of the visions afterwards  
to be related, is ch. v. 6, where see notes:  
as also on ch. iv. 5. The **seven** can  
hardly be entirely without allusion to the  
*seven churches*, and to the *sevenfold*imagery throughout. The number seven  
denotes completeness, and was much noted  
by the Jewish Commentators as occurring  
in the Old Test. The seven spirits betoken  
the completeness and universality  
of working of God’s Holy Spirit, as the  
seven churches typify and indicate the  
whole church. The reference to Isa. xi.  
2 is but lamely made out, there being  
there but *six* energies of the Spirit mentioned.  
That to Zech. iv. 2, 10 is more  
to the point: see notes as above), {5} **and  
from Jesus Christ** (as we have before  
had the Father and the Holy Spirit mentioned  
as the sources of grace and peace,  
so now the Son, coming last, on account  
of that which is to follow respecting Him,  
which has respect to His threefold office  
of Prophet, King, and Priest: see however  
below), **the faithful witness** (see John  
xviii, 37, “*To this end came I into the  
world, that I should bear witness to the  
truth.*” It is to the general mission of the  
Redeemer to bear witness to the truth,  
and not merely to the apocalyptic portion  
of His testimony which is to follow, that  
this title must be referred. This book  
[ver. 2] *is the testimony of Jesus Christ*:  
But the *title* reaches far wider. Embracing  
as it does that *testimony* before Pontins  
Pilate, and indeed that of His whole life  
of witnessing to the truth, we can perhaps  
hardly say that it marks out his prophetic  
office with sufficient distinctness for us to  
believe it indicated here), **the first-born of  
the dead** (death is regarded as the womb  
of the earth, from which the resurrection