view as far the more likely one. It has  
been taken by Origen, Jerome, and several  
more of the ancients, and by many among  
the moderns.

The attempt to defend  
the interpretation of *angels* as bishops by  
the analogy of the *legate of the congregation*,  
in the synagogue, appears to be futile,  
inasmuch as that officer held quite an inferior  
place, in no way corresponding to a  
bishop, or any kind of president of the  
church.

As regards the symbolism,  
*stars* are the symbols of the angels of the  
churches, inasmuch as angels are beings of  
light, Heb. i. 7 [from Ps. civ. 4], where see  
note; Job xxxviii. 4, where they are called  
the morning stars, The same symbolism  
is used in the prophets of Lucifer, the daystar,  
the son of the morning, Isa. xiv. 12 ff.,  
who would exalt his throne above the stars  
of God, ib. ver. 13; Rev. xii.4,9. See also  
Luke x. 18. That stars are also used to  
symbolize earthly authorities, is what  
might be expected from the very nature of  
the symbol, and should never have been  
alleged here as a reason against the literal  
interpretation of **angels**.

The churches  
themselves are represented by candlesticks,  
agreeably with the universal symbolism  
both of the prophetic and evangelic Scriptures.  
Compare Prov. iv. 18; Isa. lx. 1,  
3; Matt. v. 14, 16; Luke xii. 35; Phil. ii.  
15).

**CH. II. 1—III. 22.]** THE EPISTLES TO  
THE SEVEN CHURCHES. Views have considerably  
differed respecting the character  
of these Epistles, whether they are to be  
regarded as simply historical, or historico-  
prophetical, or simply prophetical. The  
point on which all, I presume, will be  
agreed is, that the words contained in these  
Epistles are applicable to and intended for  
the guidance, warning, and encouragement  
of the whole Church Catholic, and  
its several parts, throughout all time.  
The differing interpretations will here be  
only briefly alluded to. One account of  
them will be found in Vitringa’s (Latin)

Commentary, pp.27—58: and (but scantily,  
as most interpreters pass over this portion  
of the book slightly) in the introductions  
to the principal commentaries. See also  
Abp. Trench’s Appendix to his Commentary  
on the Seven Epistles, pp. 209—225.

Before commenting on each individual  
Epistle, I would notice the similar construction  
of all. This may be thus described.  
Each Epistle contains, 1. A command,  
to write to the angel of the particular  
church. 2. A sublime title of our Lord,  
taken for the most part from the imagery  
of the preceding vision. 3. An address to  
the angel of the church, always commencing  
with *I know*, introducing a statement  
of its present circumstances: continuing  
with an exhortation either to repentance  
or to constancy : and ending with a prophetic  
announcement, mostly respecting  
what shall be at the Lord’s coming. 4. A  
promise made to *“him that overcometh,”*  
generally accompanied with a solemn call  
to earnest attention, *“He that hath an  
ear, &c.”*

**1—7.]**—THE EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH  
AT EPHESUS. **To the angel of the  
church in Ephesus write; These things  
saith he that holdeth fast** (compare ch. ii.  
25, iii.11) **the seven stars in his right hand,  
He that walketh in the midst of the  
seven candlesticks of gold** (assertions of  
Christ’s being the Lord, the Governor  
and the Upholder of His Church, agreeably  
to the vision of ch. i.: coming in  
suitably in this first Epistle, as beginning  
the complete number): **I know** (am aware  
of: not as some explain it, *approve*.  
The context determines this to be the fact  
here, but not this word. The *works* might  
be *bad* ones, see John iii. 19) **thy works**(so in all the Epistles, except those to  
Smyrna and Pergamus), **and thy labour**(1 Cor. iii, 8, xv. 58, the same word), **and  
endurance** (**labour** and **endurance** [or,  
**patience**] form the active and the passive  
sides of the energizing Christian life.