They are stars in His *hand;* they are not on His *head*  
as His crown, for they are as yet on trial. Only those  
who are permanently found faithful, shine as the *stars for  
ever*. Unfaithful teachers are compared to “*wandering  
stars*, to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.”  
 The sharp sword out of His mouth is a singular, but  
most significant feature. The sword marks Him out  
the Avenger appointed by God. The sword is the  
notification of His readiness to execute judgment  
on offenders, whether of the churches, or of the world.  
For *judgment* must *begin at the house of God;* and the  
*first three chapters of the Apocalypse are the proof of it*.  
Be it observed, too, that this appearance of the sword  
comes immediately after the stars; as if to teach us  
that, on those set in so high a station, the demands of  
justice will be more severe. Nay, and we have the  
sword taking effect in its full sweep on one of the  
offending angels of the churches. What says Jesus  
of the steward who shall beat the man-servants and  
maidens, and associate with the worldly and the drunken? “The lord of that servant shall come in a  
day when he looketh not for him . . . . . . *and  
shall cut him asunder*” (Matt. xxiv. 50, 51; Luke  
xii. 46). Paul warns offenders of lower degree in like  
manner. To the Christian guilty of uncleanness he  
says, “The Lord is the *avenger of all such;* as we also  
forewarned you and testified” (1 Thess. iv. 6).  
 The sword is not to be taken as a symbol of the  
sharpness of His words, or as equivalent to the Word of  
God. The Word of God is the *Sword of the Spirit,  
not of the Son*. The voice of Jesus is described no less  
than the sword.  
 The sword is to fight with, and to slay. It has two  
great relations: as used against offending *subjects*, and  
as drawn against armed *foes*. In the first of these  
aspects, it is threatened to some amidst the churches.