is explained; because only that portion was symbolic.  
The lamps were a visible material reality. But their  
significance was a secret, they were emblematic of a  
spiritual reality on earth. *They are not called* “*symbols*,”  
*but* “*mystery*.” Our Lord’s explanation is very important. *Whatever is symbolic is covered with the veil of  
mystery*. As then the book in general is called by God  
“the Apocalypse,” or “the unveiling,” IT IS NOT SYMBOLIC. Symbols there are in it, but many of them are  
explained. Symbols there are, but *wherever* they are  
found, *there is a veil over them*. I conclude, then, that  
the Apocalypse is not “a book of symbols,” *but to be  
taken literally*, wherever absurdity does not result.  
 These stars are rulers, despised on earth, shining in  
heaven; rejected by the world’s governors, but owned  
as part of the furniture of God’s temple above. They  
are appointed by Christ, and not by men. They are  
not created by each Church’s vote, retaining their place  
and power so long only as they please the Church, and  
by virtue of their so doing. And, as they are not  
created by the churches, so neither do they cease to  
exist, if displeasing to them. Christ upholds. His  
supply of grace and His appointment made them what  
they are, *and to Him they stand or fall*.  
 “Angels,” be it observed, is their *literal designation*.  
It is given as the explanation of the *mystic* “*star*.”  
 These are the messengers of *Christ*. “As my Father  
*sent me*, even so *send* I *you*” (John xx. 21). They are  
ministers of the Priest of the heavenly sanctuary.  
 They are entitled “angels of the churches,” as  
Hengstenberg remarks, because they were sent of God  
to the churches, to be guardians of them. And he very  
appropriately compares with the expression before us,  
the one used by our Lord concerning guardian angels—  
“In heaven *their angels* [angels of the little ones] do  
always behold the face of my Father” (Matt. xviii. 10).