As the angel of the little one is he to whom he is committed by God, so is *the angel of the Church* that overseer to whose presidency the Church is, by our Lord,  
committed. And as those angels have in consequence  
the high honour of always having an audience of the  
Father, so these angels are always borne by Christ upon  
His hand.  
 Some regard the angels of the churches as *messengers sent by the churches to John*. But we have no  
account of any such persons being sent to the apostle.  
The angels were stationary in their especial sphere, and  
were persons of great influence, as is evident from the  
fact that *Jesus* in each case *holds them responsible for  
the state of the Church*.  
 Some regard them *as angelic beings presiding over  
churches*, as the angels of Daniel presided over nations.  
But this cannot be; for the angel of Smyrna is required  
to be “faithful unto *death*”(ii. 10). And angels do not die.  
 They are thought by some to be merely *representatives of the churches*. But it is evident, that they are  
quite distinct from the body of the Church. The lamp  
represents the body of the Church; and amidst the  
lamps Jesus walks. The star represents the angel: and  
the stars are carried by Jesus on His hand. As clearly  
as possible *he distinguishes the angel from the church*.  
“The seven *stars* are the *angels* of the seven *churches*,  
and the seven *lamp-stands* are the seven *churches*.”  
 The only explanation which meets with ease all the  
conditions of the case, is that which supposes them to  
be the presidents, superintendents, or chief ministers of  
the churches. They were bishops, not of a diocese, but  
of a city-church. The name given to these officers in  
the Epistles of Paul is of equivalent meaning to that  
employed here. He styles them “apostles.”1 The  
angels were local, stationary apostles.  
  
1 ’Άγγελος and ’αποστολος, both mean “one sent”; so do the  
equivalent Hebrew words, מלאך and שלוה.