

belong is apt to fall from that pedestal. It is a dangerous thing, but in the very early church there undoubtedly was a man who was the minister, who was the leader, in each individual local church. And that is the system which in most types of church government you find present, because what is everybody's business is nobody's business, and there is necessity of having a leader.

Well, I think this first chapter brings--the first chapter together with the ~~other~~ <sup>next</sup> three--brings it out very clearly. We read in verse 20 an explanation of the golden candlesticks in which the Son of ~~the~~ man was standing, when John saw Him, and we read in verse 20 the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right ~~hand~~, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels ~~of~~ of the seven churches, and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

Now that translation, the angels of the seven churches, what are the angels ~~of~~ of the seven churches? In Greek the word angelus means a messenger and it is the word regularly used of angelic messengers, but it is equally used of human messengers, and exactly the same thing applies in the Old Testament. The word (12 1/2) which means a messenger is the word which is used for an angel, he is an angelic messenger. The same word is used. Should this be translated angel, or should it be translated messenger? Well, we'll say one of two things is true here. We either are told that these seven churches of Asia ~~each~~ had a guardian angel, an angel who is over that church, or we are told that each of them has a leader, a messenger, who is to study the word of God, present it to the people, and try to lead the people forward in their Christian life. Which is it? Well, we read on in the next three chapters, and here we have letters to the angels of the churches, and here we find the angels of the churches praised sometimes, but strongly criticized sometimes, and when we read it, we read things said about these angels which represent them and the churches with which they are connected, we find things said about them which simply do not fit an angelic being .

Look at chapter 3.14...