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time of the fiercest persecution. The heat dries up the  
juices of the wheat-stalk, and then it is perfectly fit for  
the sickle.  
“ Drying up” is usually a word indicative of some-  
thing evil; for it is ordinarily applied to succulent  
and perennial plants and trees. “Let no fruit,” says  
Jesus to the barren fig-tree, “grow on thee hence-  
forward for ever. And presently the fig tree dried  
up” [é&npav@y, as here}. Matt. xxi. 19.. The fig-tree  
represents Israel, long to abide on the earth, and to  
draw its nutriment from it. But wheat is only an annual  
herb, and answers to Christians who are strangers and  
sojourners on carth. The dryness of the wheat is its  
perfection, and marks its time of removal near. Thus  
the Christian’s deadness to the carth is indicative of his  
removal to the prepared mansions. How different the  
hold of earth which is taken by the roots of the wheat,  
and by the fig-tree respectively. But this deadness to  
earth is as yet far from being characteristic of Jesus’  
disciples : it will require severe persecution to effect  
it. It was thus with Israel. Lest they should become  
Lgyptianized, persecution was sent: and that was  
hottest, just as their removal drew on.  
At this point a difficulty will arise in the minds of  
some. “The Harvest occurs here as part of a chrono-  
logical series. In the order of nature the harvest precedes  
the vintage. And the Harvest itself only comes after  
the persecutions of the Wild Beast, and just ere his  
reign comes to an end. How, then (it may be said), can  
you speak of the rapture of the saints as a something  
which may take place at any moment, and which  
requires not the previous completion of any series of  
events ?”’ The force of this is so strongly felt, that  
Darby and others refuse to own the Harvest to be an act  
of blessing to the holy. But the proofs before given  
show that this does refer to disciples of Jesus, though