on. xiv. 17-20] EXPOUNDED 289  
  
they do not now occupy a complete church-standing, as  
in the opening of the book. The true answer to the  
difficulty is, that there is more than one rapture. One  
has already preceded in this series: the Man-child was  
caught up ere the Great Tribulation for the earth had  
begun. But, at the first rapture, some disciples were  
unready. They were left behind to pass through the  
Great Tribulation. They were not accounted worthy  
to escape that scene of sin and trouble. But they  
have now withstood the seductions and compulsion of  
wickedness, and their trial is over. The heat of perse-  
cution has been blessed to wean them from the love of  
this present evil world.  
“ And the sitter on the cloud cast his sickle on the  
earth, and the carth was reaped.”  
“The earth was reaped.”  
The suddenness and ease of the work are denoted by  
the brevity of the description. This reaper sits, and  
the work is done by a cast of the sickle. The saints  
are passive in this divine harvesting.  
Many are the reapers; and their powers are far  
beyond those of men.  
  
Tur VINTAGE.  
  
17. “And another angel came out of the temple that is in  
heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. 18. And another angel  
came out from the altar, who hath authority over its fire, and he  
called with great voice to him that had the sharp sickle, saying—  
‘Send thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the  
earth, for her grapes are fully ripe.’ 19. And the angel cast his  
sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast  
(the grapes) into the great winepress of the wrath of God. 20.  
And the winepress was trodden outside the city, and blood came  
out of the winepress up to the horse’s bridles, for one thousand six  
hundred furlongs.”  
  
Earth at length presents the spectacle of the ripeness  
of both friends and foes; the one for glory, the other