It is in this aspect that Jesus presented Himself at  
first to the churches. i. 13. He was then in the sanctuary:  
they were lamps recognized there. But they  
kept not their standing: the extinguished lights are  
removed. The watchful saints have been caught up  
ere this: but disciples of Jesus, remnants of the churches,  
remain, and disciples have been raised from amidst  
Israel.  
 Jesus began to act as the sower as soon as Israel’s  
unbelief rose to blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.  
He *sowed* in His character of Son of Man.  
 He *reaps also* as the Son of Man. Matt. xiii. 39. Who  
so worthy to reap as He who sowed? ’Tis just that  
He should. He reaps, too, *what* He sowed; not tares,  
but the good seed, the children of the kingdom.  
 He is on the cloud, invisible as yet to the earth: for  
the rapture of His saints is a secret thing to the world.  
 He has in His hand a “sharp sickle.”  
 Swift is to be the reaping; and in order to its speed,  
the sickle is sharp. The cutting of the wheat is not in  
wrath, but in joy. It is observable in this connection,  
that the angel in speaking to the reaper says only,  
“Send thy sickle”; while to the grape-gatherer he says,  
“Send thy *sharp* sickle.”  
 The sickle is a mystery, or a symbol. It means  
angels; as the Saviour has said, and as we shall  
see.  
 The command to the Crowned Reaper to begin His  
work comes from the temple. An angel brings the  
message; evidently from the throne of the God of the  
temple. Jesus is the Father’s servant: God has constituted Himself judge of the seasons. Acts i. 7. The  
Son Himself is excluded from this knowledge: He  
waits the word, that tells of the complete ripeness of  
the saints. As Son of Man He calls not *Himself*, but  
His *Father*, “Lord of the harvest ” (Matt. ix. 38). He