

son of the consummation of mercy. So accurate is the allusion in all its parts.

Ver. 5. *"He shall cut off the sprigs, and take away the branches."* "These words express not simply sprigs and branches, but useless shoots" 'luxuriant branches,' which bear no fruit, and weaken the plant; and properly such shoots and branches of a vine. A vine, in the prophetic language is an image of the Church of God: the branches of the vine are the members of the Church: and the useless shoots and the fruitless luxuriant branches are the insincere nominal members of the church and the pruning of such shoots and branches of the vine is the excision of such false hypocritical professors, at least the separation of them from the Church by God's judgments. This verse therefore, and the following clearly predict a judgment to fall upon the Church, for its purification and the utter destruction of hypocritical professors of the truth.

The time is fixed in the beginning of this verse, '*For afore the harvest,*' &c. This pruning shall immediately precede the harvest and ingathering. The season of the harvest and the gathering of the fruit is the prophetic image of that period, when our Lord shall send forth his angels to gather his elect from the four winds of heaven; of that period when a renewed preaching of the gospel shall take place in all parts of the world; of which the conversion of the Jews will perhaps be the first effect.

Ver. 6. *They shall be left together,* &c. That is the shoots and branches shall be left. "*Summer upon them. Winter upon them.*" The pronoun of the third person in the original is singular "it." The true antecedent of this singular pronoun in the original is the word, 'my dwelling place,' in ver. 4, which dwelling place may be understood literally of Mount Zion. It was a prevailing opinion in the primitive ages that Antichrist's last exploit would be to fix the seat of empire on that holy spot, where he would ultimately perish.

Ver. 7. *"In that time will the present be brought of a people,"* &c. '*In that time.*' Immediately after this purgation of the Church, at the very time when the bird of prey with all the beasts of the earth, Antichrist with his rebel rout, shall have fixed his seat between the seas, in the holy mountain, a present shall be brought, i. e. the nation described in ver. 2, as those to whom the swift messengers are sent, after their long infidelity, shall be brought as a present to Jehovah. (Compare ch. 66: 20.) They shall be converted to the acknowledgment of the truth, and they shall be brought to the place of the name of Jehovah, to Mount Zion; they shall be settled in peace and prosperity in the land of their original inheritance.

This then is the sum of this prophecy, and the substance of the message sent to the people dragged about and plucked. That in the latter ages, after a long suspension of the visible interpositions of Providence, God who all the while regards that dwelling place which he never will abandon, and is at all times directing the events of the world to the accomplishment of His own purposes of wisdom and mercy, immediately before