

walls, or windows, should see nothing but deformity. So little discernment is there even of the letter of Holy Scripture, when it is as plain as the sun at noon day. The text then speaks of Christ in the character of a Shepherd, employed in his holy occupation of attending to those who are less cared for, the poor of the flock, "the flock of slaughter;" those whom the enemy of souls thirsts to devour, those whom ungodly men would persuade to lead the same hard and ungodly lives with themselves: those who are in any oppression, or trouble: those in short who are poor, needy, and sin-wounded, and who have hearts capable of salvation: "these are thy trophies, all-redeeming Lord!" That the words apply to Christ is evident from the verse which follows. "They weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver"—which we know relates to the price our Saviour's betrayal. But if the words were once spoken of Christ, they go on to the end of time, ever fulfilling, ever still fulfilled. The Lord Jesus is here represented speaking in his own person, as feeding the flock, and supplying their wants with spiritual sustenance by means of the Staff of Beauty and the Staff of Bands; and the only question is, what may we understand by these expressions. Here then we are not left to our own private interpretation: but the prophet has interpreted them for us. He says, that the Staff of Beauty was broken, "that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the people:" and that the Staff of Bands was broken, "that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel." The first Staff, while it was whole, signified the means by which the Jewish religion was made conducive to the promotion of inward holiness: and the second Staff, called Bands, signified the various means by which God intended to continue in one united body the twelve tribes who inherited the land of promise. The breaking of the Staff of Beauty was the dissolution of that covenant, the ceasing of the temple worship, the abolition of bloody sacrifices, the change of the whole Jewish system. It had served its purpose, and therefore came to an end. The breaking of the Staff of Bands was the dissolution of the union between the twelve tribes, and

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