

“ let us return unto the Lord ; for he hath torn,  
 “ and he will heal us ; he hath smitten, and he  
 “ will bind us up.”

HOSEA was a Prophet of Israel, after the revolt of the Ten Tribes from the King of Judah. The sins of the Israelites had risen to an enormous height. Idolatry, lewdness, murder, pride, and wickedness of every kind prevailed ; and swept almost every trace of piety from among the revolted Israelites ; as we learn from this Prophet, who was an eye-witness.

THE people had rejected the knowledge of God ; and therefore he threatens to reject them. “ They were joined to Idols. Whoredom and wine had taken away their heart ;” that is, had deprived them of a right judgment, and perverted their understanding ; inasmuch that they quarrelled with the few faithful Priests and Prophets that were left, who admonished them of their duty ; yet listened gladly to the false Prophets who led them astray. They even “ asked counsel of their stocks,” or idols, in preference to the living God. “ The Lord had a controversy with the land ; because there was no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they broke out ;—and therefore the land should mourn, and the Inhabitants languish.†”

THUS

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† See Chapters IV. and V. where these and other heavy charges are brought against Israel and Ephraim.