**“Result of Being ‘Like the Nations’” The Present Truth 15, 40, pp. 629, 630.**

ISRAEL would form a State, and have a king, that they might be “like all the nations.” {PTUK October 5, 1899, p. 629.1}

All the nations were heathen. To be “like all the nations,” then, was only to be like the heathen. {PTUK October 5, 1899, p. 629.2}

All the nations became heathen by rejecting God. Then when Israel would be like all the heathen, they could do so only by rejecting God. {PTUK October 5, 1899, p. 629.3}

It was therefore but the simple statement of a fact when the Lord said: “They have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them.” {PTUK October 5, 1899, p. 629.4}

When Israel formed a State, they thereby created a union of religion and the State. But they had to reject God in order to form a State. Therefore they had to reject God in order to form a union of religion and the State. {PTUK October 5, 1899, p. 629.5}

It follows, therefore, plainly, that no people can ever form a union of religion and the State without rejecting God. {PTUK October 5, 1899, p. 629.6}

But though Israel had rejected God, yet He did not reject them. He still cared for them; and, through His prophets, still sought to teach and guide them, ever doing His best to save them from the evil consequences which were inevitable in the course which they had taken. {PTUK October 5, 1899, p. 629.7}

Long before the days of Samuel and Saul, Israel had been taught what would be the outcome of forming themselves into a State and choosing a king; for the formation of a kingdom in the days of Saul was but the culmination of a long-cherished desire in that direction. {PTUK October 5, 1899, p. 629.8}

After the great victories of Gideon, a hundred years before the day of Saul, “the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son’s son also; for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian.” Judges 8:22. {PTUK October 5, 1899, p. 629.9}

This was nothing else than a proposition to establish at that time a kingdom, with Gideon as the first king, and the kingship to be hereditary in his family. But Gideon refused the offer, and “said unto them, I will not rule over you; neither shall my son rule over you; *the Lord shall rule over you*.” {PTUK October 5, 1899, p. 629.10}

Gideon knew that such a proposition meant the rejection of God; and he would have no part in any such thing. But the desire still lurked among the people; and forty years afterward, upon the death of Gideon, it was manifested openly in the men of Shechem making Abimelech, a son of Gideon, king in Shechem. {PTUK October 5, 1899, p. 629.11}

But in a parable, Jotham, the only son of Gideon who had survived the slaughter wrought by Abimelech, mapped out plainly to the people what would be the sure result of their venture. {PTUK October 5, 1899, p. 630.1}

Jotham stood on the top of Gerizim and called to the people of Shechem, and said:— {PTUK October 5, 1899, p. 630.2}

“The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us. But the olive tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honor God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? And the trees said to the fig tree, Come thou, and reign over us. But the fig tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou, and reign over us. And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou, and reign over us. And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth you anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow; and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon. Now therefore, if ye have done truly and sincerely, in that ye have make Abimelech king, ... then rejoice ye in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you; but if not, let fire come out from Abimelech, and devour the men of Shechem, and the house of Millo; and let fire come out from the men of Shechem, and from the house of Millo, and devour Abimelech.” Judges 9:8-20. {PTUK October 5, 1899, p. 630.3}

And so it came to pass; for in three years the distrust and dissension had so grown between the parties to the transaction respecting the kingship, that open war broke out, which ended only with the death of Abimelech; and, with that, the end of their experiment at setting up a kingdom. {PTUK October 5, 1899, p. 630.4}

Now all this was held up before all Israel who should come after, as a solemn warning and a forcible admonition of what would inevitably be the result of any attempt at setting up a kingdom. And when, in disregard of all this, and against the Lord’s open protest, they did at last again set up a kingdom, this very result, though longer delayed, did inevitably come. {PTUK October 5, 1899, p. 630.5}

Almost all the reign of Saul, their first king, was spent by him in envy and jealousy of David and a steady seeking to kill him. The reign of David was marred by his own great sin, which he never could have carried out if he had not been king; and was also disturbed by the treason of his chief counsellor, and the insurrection of his son Absalom. The latter half of the reign of Solomon was marked by his great apostasy, and was cursed by the abominable idolatries that came in with his heathen wives—all “princesses,” the daughters of kings—and which in turn brought heavy burdens and oppression upon the people. {PTUK October 5, 1899, p. 630.6}

At the end of the reign of these three kings, the nation had been brought to a condition in which it was not well that they should continue as one; and they were therefore divided into two—the Ten Tribes forming the kingdom of Israel, and the two other tribes forming the kingdom of Judah. {PTUK October 5, 1899, p. 630.7}

And from that day, with the Ten Tribes there was continuous course of apostasy, of contention, and of regicide, till at last, from the terrors of anarchy, they were compelled to cry out, “We have no king.” Hosea 10:3. Then the Lord offered Himself to them again, saying: “Thou hast fled from Me.” “O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself.” “Return unto Me.” “I will be thy King.” Hosea 7:13; 13:9, 10. But they would not return, and consequently were carried captive to Assyria, and were scattered and lost forever. {PTUK October 5, 1899, p. 630.8}

When this happened to the kingdom of Israel, it could yet be said of Judah, “Judah yet ruleth with God, and is faithful with the saints.” Hosea 11:12. But this was only for a little while. Judah, too, went steadily step by step downward in the course of apostasy, until of her too the word had to be given: “*Remove the diadem, take off the crown;* ... exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it; and it shall be no more, until He come whose right it is, and I will give it Him.” Ezekiel 21:25-27. {PTUK October 5, 1899, p. 630.9}

Thus Judah too was obliged to say, We have no king. And Judah had to go captive to Babylon, with her city and temple destroyed, and the land left desolate. Thereafter the Lord was obliged to govern His people by the heathen powers, until He Himself should come. And even when He came, because He would not at once set Himself up as a worldly king and sanction their political aspirations, they refused to recognise Him at all. And when at last even Pilate appealed to them, “Shall I crucify your King?” they still, as in the days of Samuel, insisted on rejecting God, and cried out, “We have no king but Cesar.” John 19:15. {PTUK October 5, 1899, p. 630.10}

And this was but the direct outcome, and the inevitable logic, of the step that they took in the days of Samuel. When they rejected God and chose Saul, in that was wrapped up the rejection of the Lord and their choosing of Caesar. In rejecting God that they might be like all the nations, they became like all the nations that rejected God. {PTUK October 5, 1899, p. 630.11}

And such was the clear result of the union of Church and State among the people of Israel. And it is all written precisely as it was worked out in detail, for the instruction and warning of all people who should come after, and for the admonition of those upon whom the ends of the world are come. {PTUK October 5, 1899, p. 630.12}

Will the professed people of God to-day in the churches, societies, leagues, unions, and associations of all sorts, everywhere, learn the lesson taught thus in the Word of God of the experience of the people of God of old who would have a State, and so rejected God? {PTUK October 5, 1899, p. 630.13}

A. T. JONES.