

## Concerning Unions: Worldly or Religious.

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(THE TESTIMONY OF TWO WELL-KNOWN AND ABLE MINISTERS OF GOD'S WORD CONCERNING UNIONS: WORLDLY OR RELIGIOUS.)

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What leads to these few words is a letter from Chicago, which discloses the deeply painful and astounding fact, that there are professors of Christ, gathered to the Lord's name, who are banded *on oath* with the recent conspiracy in that city, or elsewhere also, of so-called labour against capital. That this issued in robbery and arson, in mutilation and murder, and other forms, not of wickedness only, but of lawless and criminal violence, is only the natural and necessary result.

It appears that these unworthy abusers of the Lord's name have defied the meetings (leavened by their presence) to put them out from their midst, and dare to plead the names of J.N.D. and of the Editor of the *Bible Treasury*, as abettors of their ungodliness. For such a plea they have nothing but their own wilful falsehood. Not only has there never been a word orally from either to furnish the smallest pretence for their talk, but the published writings of both are well enough known (wherever in the English, French, and other languages, they are read among Christians). Both refute the calumny and prove how hateful such combinations must be in their eyes, even if clear of any punishable enormities. None living ever more decidedly or constantly rejected their very principle as opposed to Christ.

We have always maintained that, as brought unto God, the Christian is bought with a price, the incalculable price of Christ's blood, and bound to glorify God in his body. As having the Holy Spirit of God, we are members of the one body of Christ even now and on earth; and no one estimating such a bond loyally and intelligently, as all profess by being gathered to His name, could consent to belong to another body, disparaging His, or yet more antagonistic to its nature, character, aims and hope. To any one rightly instructed it will soon appear that special societies for Bible or tract distribution, for missionary work at home or abroad, for training of the young or for help of the sick and suffering, are usurpations of the functions of God's assembly, or of its members as such; who are bound to do, in a better and holy way by His word and Spirit, what those societies attempt piecemeal and in a plan more or less human and worldly. Yet no fair mind doubts for a moment that in abounding grace God has deigned to bless these mixed and irregular agencies in the present anomalous and broken state of the church.

But nothing can justify a saint of God joining the irresponsible societies which resort to force and fraud in execution of their self-will, animated by motives alike short-sighted, selfish and sordid. Their springs are infidel, their objects are revolutionary, their means are fallen man's will, coercing all they can, without a thought or care for God, Who sanctions nothing but faith working by love. This of course cannot actuate the natural man. But here we are contemplating those who claim to be sanctified and redeemed. Do any Christians claim under lying pretexts to be allowed also to trample God's revealed word under the foot of men who bear on their forehead the stamp of destruction, veritable enemies of the cross of Christ? No meeting sheltering the known members of such guilty societies of the world has the least title to be considered an assembly of God — at any rate, after the question has been fairly raised before the Lord and His word. If the meetings persist in disobeying the holy word of God, they become defiled with great guilt, and cages of Satan.

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