

"SAY YE NOT, A CONFEDERACY."

ISA. 8:9-20.

A confederacy is a league or covenant, a compact or alliance for mutual support or common action. "In union there is strength," is everywhere the expressed sentiment of to-day. Confederacy – Union – is the watchword in civil, social, and religious circles. This sentiment now so common, has grown out of the felt necessities of the times, and the fear of coming trouble and danger.

The prince of this world (John 12:31) sees the approaching storm. He believes and trembles at the sure word of prophecy which indicates the overthrow of his power; but with characteristic genius, energy and presumption, he arrays himself to oppose, and if possible to thwart the plans of the Almighty. At present and for some time past he has been actively engaged in planning, organizing and arranging his unconscious forces. We are glad in one sense to say unconscious, for to be the conscious and willing servants of Satan would imply a fearful state of depravity. And yet we would that men were not so blinded as to be unconsciously led by their wily and deceptive foe.

Leagues or confederacies are forming all over the world. The kingdoms are forming alliances for mutual protection against the increasing independence and power of their subjects, while communism or socialism is secretly plotting and forming its world-wide confederacy to resist enthroned power. Capitalists are forming alliances with each other to protect their interests, while the laboring classes are also combining their forces for self-protection.

In religious circles we see the same policy pursued. The two great classes most bitterly opposed to one another are so-called

Orthodoxy and Infidelity. Each is struggling for supremacy and power. On the orthodox side are Papacy and Protestantism, while the non-religious world stands in opposition. All the various sects of Protestantism have formed a confederacy – "The Evangelical Alliance" – for mutual support and common action, agreeing to **[R601 : page 5]** almost entirely ignore doctrine, and to preach simply morality, and the necessity of union with them, in order to be saved. And now friendly relations and proposals of union are beginning to be thought of even between Papacy and Protestantism. The latter is losing all sight of doctrine and sees no special hindrance to union in a lower standard of morality, while the former is not slow to speak of itself as one of the Christian denominations, and of others as their "Methodist and Presbyterian friends, etc.," while both agree and unite in branding as Infidel all who oppose their system, no matter how firmly their faith may be rooted and grounded in the word of God. Infidels are also uniting forming liberal leagues, and banding themselves together to resist superstition and to advocate morality and benevolence on a basis of common sense and expediency.

While all this seems expedient and necessary to these various classes in the world, while human reason says, Surely in Union there is strength, shall we as Christians who are by no means less interested in the final issues than others, act contrary to such reason, and battle singly and alone with the mighty powers of darkness? In this as in all matters, we look to the Word of God for instruction. And that instruction is given plainly and clearly – "For," says the Prophet, taking his standpoint down here in our time, "the Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying, Say ye not, A confederacy to all them to whom this people shall say, a confederacy; neither fear ye their fear nor be afraid. Sanctify the

Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary." Isa. 8:14.

Thus instructed we should have nothing to do with these confederacies either civil, social or religious. We are to walk separate from all these, joined only to the Lord and loyal to the kingdom of God as yet unrecognized by the world. We are to have no confederacy, no union with any other. The Lord's Prophet speaks most emphatically concerning the outcome of all these confederacies.

Thus we read (Isa. 8:9,10) "Associate yourselves, O, ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries; gird yourselves and ye shall be broken in pieces. Take counsel together and it shall come to naught; speak the word and it shall not stand." How plain and forcible these expressions! They need no comment; and only the unbelief in the word of God – the spirit of infidelity – in the church nominal, prevents them from understanding their import.

In the Lord of hosts alone is our sanctuary, our defence, and all who would walk with him must walk separate from the world. Those who thus walk with the Lord are so led into the knowledge of his plans, that those things which cause fear and trembling to others, are to them but the indications of the development of God's glorious plan.

"Behind his frowning providence
They see his smiling face."

While the Lord is thus our defence and rejoicing, he is a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel – Israel after the flesh and the nominal gospel church. "And many among them shall stumble and fall, and be broken, and be snared and be taken." They stumble and fall over the truth and are taken in the snare of the adversary, their faith shattered and

broken; and the great flood of infidelity will engulf the church nominal.

But the Prophet continues, "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples." This is equivalent to Daniel's prophecy "The wise shall understand" (Dan. 12:10); and David's – "They shall walk O Lord in the light of thy countenance" (Psa. 89:15); and Paul's-"Ye brethren are not in darkness." (1 Thes. 5:4.) Yes, to those consecrated ones who walk with God separate from the world and worldly alliances, the law and the testimony is precious – a constantly unfolding treasure-house of blessed promises, inspiring such with glorious and blessed hopes which dispel all fearful apprehensions. But it is bound up and sealed among these, and none of the unfaithful shall understand their glorious import.

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

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