

**CAUSES AND EVILS OF  
CONTENTIONS: UNVEILED  
IN LETTERS TO CHRISTIANS**

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Causes and Evils of Contentions: Unveiled in Letters to Christians by Noah Worcester

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**NOAH WORCESTER**

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LETTERS TO CHRISTIANS.

BY NOAH WORCESTER.

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## LETTERS TO CHRISTIANS.

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### LETTER I.

#### INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS.

*My Christian Brethren,*

KNOWING that the time of his crucifixion was at hand, our Saviour took an opportunity to prepare the minds of his disciples for the event, by communicating such instructions as they were then able to bear, and such as he wished them to observe. It was in this discourse that he gave them his "New Commandment" which he repeated again and again "that ye love one another as I have loved you." He also said to them, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another." He forewarned them of the trials which they would have to endure as his disciples, and promised to send to them the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit. He not only assured them that they were beloved by himself, but also beloved by the Father. At the close of the interview he poured forth the desires of his soul in fervent prayer to the Father,



not only for his apostles but for all that should become believers on him through the instrumentality of their preaching in his name. The following are important portions of his prayer. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one as thou Father art in me and I in thee, that they may be one in us, that the world may know that thou hast sent me." John 17. 20, 21.

It is remarkable of what importance it seems to have been in his view that his apostles and all his disciples should love one another, and be one as he and the Father are one. But why this fervency for love and union among his disciples? The reason is assigned in the following words—"THAT THE WORLD MAY BELIEVE THAT THOU HAST SENT ME."

To believe that the Father sent him was to believe that he was not an impostor, but the promised Messiah, whom God had sent to be the Light and the Saviour of the world.

The words of Christ very clearly import that in his view the progress of the gospel and the conversion of the world to the Christian faith, greatly depended on the mutual love and union of those who believe in him; that such love and union are adapted to bring others to believe in him, as the way, the truth, and the life. When Christians thus walk in love they exhibit the true spirit of Christ and his gospel, excite attention and inquiry, command esteem, and produce conviction of the reality and usefulness of the Christian religion. The spirit

of Christ then appears to great advantage in contrast with the spirit of party and of the world.

Another truth of awful import is implied in this prayer of Christ, which is, that alienation and discord among professed believers in Christ, tend to prevent the conversion of others, and to promote infidelity. If the oneness of Christians, or their mutual love tends to multiply conversions, to the Christian faith, discord and alienation must have the contrary tendency.

May it not then be a solemn truth that the party strifes and contentions among professed believers in Christ, have been the principal reasons why the world ere this day has not been filled with the benign influence of the Gospel—why so great a part of the world is yet enveloped in pagan darkness, and why Deism, and even Atheism still show their heads in Christian lands? How awful and affecting is the thought that the dying prayer of our Lord has had so little influence on the minds of his avowed friends, and that their anti-christian conduct has been the means of preventing the progress of the Gospel and the salvation of their fellow men! What real friend of Christ with his prayer in view, can reflect on the ecclesiastical history of Christendom, or observe the contentions among Christians at the present day, without feeling shocked, grieved and ashamed? Surely if mutual love, or union among Christians be an appointed means for the spread of the Gospel, and the conversion of the world, it behooves Christians

seriously to inquire what each has to do that the stumbling block may be removed. It is not to be supposed that the evil is limited to any one or two denominations—nor that the evil can be removed by mutual sectarian reproaches as a substitute for mutual love. If the people of each sect will impartially examine at home, and correct what may be found amiss, they will perhaps find enough to do in the work of self-reformation, and in cultivating that humility of heart without which mutual love can never exist among Christians.

All well informed Christians must acknowledge that the conversion of the world to the Christian faith, is a desirable event, and one which has long been predicted. If the fulfilment of the prophecy has been prevented or retarded by the want of mutual love among Christians, or by the existence of a contrary spirit, this state of things must have resulted from causes which should be sought out and set aside. It is possible that much of the evil has resulted from the adoption of some erroneous principle or principles, which for want of due examination may have seemed to justify schism and alienation.

No intelligent Christian will dare to say that the prayer of the Messiah, that his disciples might be one was foolish or unreasonable. If then it shall be found that a principle has been extensively adopted which tends to defeat the object of this prayer, or which is incompatible with the oneness for which Christ prayed, we may pretty safely infer