

BEREAN BASIS OF FELLOWSHIP

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Statement of Faith	3
Truth to be Received	3
Doctrines to be Rejected	6
Commandments of Christ	7
Constitution	9
Restatement of the Always Held Berean Position	13
Restatement as Approved in 1960	13
Our Identity and Our Name	14
1 Nature and Sacrifice of Christ	15
Four errors to be Rejected	15
Six Truths to be Accepted	16
2 Resurrectional Responsibility	16
3 Evolution	17
4 Conferences	18
5 Suing at Law	19
6 Divorce	20
7 Worldliness	20
8 Military Service	21
9 The Formula For Fellowship	22
10 Marriage to the Alien	23

INTRODUCTION

THIS is our basis of fellowship, and our position on current problems. The first part (beginning on p. 2) is a reprint of the standard Christadelphian 'Constitution' booklet. This booklet, standard among us as our common basis of unity and identity for 100 years, and unchanged* from the days of bro. Roberts, consists of four parts: 1) Statement of Faith; 2) Doctrines to Be Rejected; 3) Commandments of Christ; and 4) Ecclesial Constitution. The latter part (from p. 12) is the 'Berean Restatement' concerning current problems, adopted in 1960.

It is perhaps a little unfortunate (in that it may have misguided some) that the 'Constitution' booklet contains both matters vital to fellowship and matters of mere local arrangement -- not clearly distinguished apart. Three of the four sections (Nos. 1, 2, 3 above) are in their entirety vital to fellowship. Rejection of any part of them, or holding of any view contrary to or subversive of any part of them, is an urgent matter of fellowship. These are all printed in **boldface type**.

But the 'Constitution' part itself (beginning on p. 7) contains both fellowship and non fellowship matters. We have therefore herein distinguished between them by printing the vital fellowship parts in **boldface**, with non fellowship parts light.

* Except for one minor clarification in 1917 (see footnote, p. 7)

It is true there are other matters that can affect fellowship. This body of material is not, and could not be, absolutely exhaustive, and include every point, negative and positive, that could affect fellowship. It would be unreal to say, 'As long as you accept and believe and defend in your fellowship stand everything contained herein, then you can believe and teach anything else with impunity, and it cannot be made a matter of fellowship.'

The Body cannot so tie its own hands beforehand with what amounts to a blank check for speculation. The brethren who formulated this material could not foresee all error for all time, or all truths that might be called in question.

But, on the other hand, any addition to what has been adequate for sound fellowship for over 100 years should be taken very, very slowly and cautiously; and only under the irresistible pressure of positive necessity. Every year that passes adds the value of increased stability to this overall statement of our Faith. And that stability is largely the fruit of its unchanged, untampered with, unadded to continuity. Any additional fellowship requirements or restrictions added unilaterally by individual ecclesias are to be discouraged and avoided. This way so easily lies the potentiality of anarchy and schism. What local decisions an ecclesia makes (in the interests of preserving its local harmony and soundness) are far better kept entirely separate from, and secondary to, this basic body of fellowship defining material we ALL have, and subscribe to, in common.

The ideal is that all ecclesias have exactly the same Constitution, as far as concerns matters of fellowship. There seems to be no reason for sacrificing this ideal for the sake of numbers. To do so would in time mean a multitude of varying bases, instead of our present common and uniform one.

There is such a thing as ecclesial autonomy, and such a thing as inter ecclesial unity of action. It is not always easy to say exactly where one should end and the other begin. As far as the matter of Fellowship is concerned, the more we are completely at one in our written Constitutions, the better. Any variation between constitutions as concerns anything to do with fellowship is a danger at least potentially of weakness & disunity.

* * *

Some, while showing lukewarmness regarding the application of the Statement of Faith positively in the interests of sound fellowship, have chosen to bind themselves negatively by professing inability to do anything to defend their group against any error not specifically spelled out in the Statement of Faith.

Fellowship is a very serious relationship. It is profitable only when it is wholesome and sound. There are many clear scriptural commands concerning it, and no amount of specious reasoning, or invention of such straw man, bogey terms as 'bloc disfellowship' can get rid of them. They deal with facts and conditions, not technicalities to hide behind. Properly applied, they produce a sound & harmonious fellowship. Evaded, they produce hand wringing, increasingly degenerative chaos. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

Each ecclesia is responsible for sound doctrine and conduct among its members. But when known error in its membership hides behind the shield of an ecclesia's professed allegiance to the S of F, and that ecclesia does not take the proper action, then it is unfaithfulness for other ecclesias to merely 'deplore' the situation and profess to have no ability, or responsibility, to do anything about it. Fellowship is not merely breaking bread together, though that is its most visible and solemn manifestation, and they are inseparable. But fellowship is far more. We are in fellowship with those 10,000 miles away to just as great a degree as those with whom we meet weekly. Here is its beauty and power: it has no limits of time and space.

Fellowship is the total oneness of the whole Body, based on THE TRUTH, believed and practiced, and preserved soundly among us according to the commands God has given us.

Fellowship is a beautiful, inspiring thing. It is a high responsibility, a glorious privilege, a joyful and unearthly relationship of minds and hearts united by and in THE TRUTH. Any group that cheapens its conceptions of fellowship, cheapens and commonizes itself. Any group that is careless about fellowship has lost the Beauty of Holiness. Any group that sets itself busily and

misguidedly to brush away as inconvenient the solemn obligations of fellowship, is doomed to disaster.

* * *

The material on the following pages is the bond of eternal Truth that binds us together & makes us a unity in Christ; the only reason & justification for our corporate existence. We urge everyone to read and study it very carefully; keep going over it; master it; test yourself on it; discuss it; have classes on it. Let us be sure the entire Berean Fellowship -- EVERYONE in it -- knows what they are, and who they are.

We are not just another surface religious group, associated for mere convenience to satisfy the natural 'religious' urge of the flesh. Everyone has to have a 'religion,' even if it's just themselves, even if it's just the superstition of Evolution. But there is only one narrow, total life demanding way to be part of the Body of Christ, and related to eternity.

We profess and aspire to be that One True Body of Christ on earth, that rarest of jewels in the huge flesh heap of mankind. And the TRUTH OF GOD--these truths embodied in this material that forms the statement of our Faith -- is our whole life and purpose and meaning and reason for being. If it does not fill our heart, and form the very core of all our interests, we may be part of the external organization of 'The Truth', but we are certainly not part of the Living Body. We should ALL be thoroughly familiar with this material: this is more important than any consideration of its presentation to others. If we are not, we are failing in our duty to the Truth and to the Body; we are not fulfilling our part in order for the Body to be the true and healthy Bride of Christ; we are not a fully living, active, useful, strengthening part; we're just a drone, part of the passing background.

A STATEMENT OF THE FAITH FORMING OUR BASIS OF FELLOWSHIP

THE FOUNDATION--That the book currently known as the Bible, consisting of the Scriptures of Moses, the Prophets, and the Apostles, is the only source of knowledge concerning God and His purposes at present extant or available in the earth, and that the same were wholly given by inspiration of God in the writers, and are consequently without error in all parts of them, except such as may be due to errors of transcription or translation. 2 Tm. 3:16; 1 Cor. 2:13; Heb. 1:1; 2 Pet. 1:21; 1 Cor. 14:37; Neh. 9:30; John 10:35.

TRUTH TO BE RECEIVED

- 1. That the only true God is He Who was revealed to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, by angelic visitation and vision, and to Moses at the flaming bush (unconsumed) and at Sinai, and Who manifested Himself in the Lord Jesus Christ, as the supreme self existent Deity, the ONE FATHER, dwelling in unapproachable light, yet everywhere present by His Spirit, which is a unity with His person in heaven. He hath, out of His underived energy, created heaven and earth, and all that in them is.** Is. 40:13 25; 43:10 12; 44:6 8; 45:5; 46:9 10; Job 38 40; Dt. 6:1 4; Mk. 12:29 32; 1 Cr. 8:46; Eph. 4:6; 1 Tm. 2:5; Neh. 9:6; Job 26:13; Ps. 124:8; 146:6; 148:5; Isa. 40:25 27; Jer. 10:12 13, 27:5; 32:17-23; 51:15; Ac. 14:15; 17:24; 1 Ch. 29:11-14; Psa. 62:11, 145:3; Is. 26:4; 40:26; Job 9:4; 36:5; Ps. 92:5; 104:24; Isa. 28:29, Rm. 16:27; 1 Tm. 1:17; 2 Ch. 16:9; Job 28:24; 34:21; Ps. 33:13-14; 44:21; 94:9; 139:7 12; Pr. 15:3; Jer. 23:24; 32:19; Amos 9:2 3; Acts 17:27 28; Psa. 123:1; 1 Kg. 8:30 39, 43, 49; Mt. 6:9; 1 Tm. 6:15 16; 1 Tm. 1:17.
- 2. That Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God, begotten of the Virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit, without the intervention of man, and afterwards anointed with the same Spirit, without measure, at his baptism.** Mt. 1:23; 1 Tm. 3:16; Ac. 2:22 24, 36; Mt. 1:18 25; Lk. 1:26 35; Gal. 4:4; Is. 7:14; Mt. 3:16 17; Is. 11:2; 42:1; 61:1; Jn. 3:34; 7:16; 8 26 28; 14:10 24.
- 3. That the appearance of Jesus of Nazareth on the earth was necessitated by the position and state into which the human race had been brought by the circumstances connected with the first man.** 1 Cr. 15:21-22; Rm. 5:12-19; Gen. 3:19; 2 Cor. 5:19-21.

4. **That the first man was Adam, whom God created out of the dust of the ground as a living soul, or natural body of life, 'very good' in kind and condition, and placed him under a law through which the continuance of life was contingent on obedience.** Gen. 2:7; 18:27; Job 4:19; 33:6; 1 Cor. 15:46 49; Gen. 2:17.
5. **That Adam broke this law, and was adjudged unworthy of immortality, and sentenced to return to the ground from whence he was taken--a sentence which defiled and became a physical law of his being, and was transmitted to all his posterity.** Gen. 3:15 19, 22 23; 2 Cor. 1:9; Rm. 7:24; 2 Cor. 5:2 4; Rm. 7:18 23; Gal. 5:16 17; Rm. 6:12; 7:21; John 3:6; Rm. 5:12; 1 Cor. 15:22; Psa. 51:5 Job 14:4.
6. **That God, in His kindness, conceived a plan of restoration which, without setting aside His just and necessary law of sin and death, should ultimately rescue the race from destruction, and people the earth with sinless immortals.** Rev. 21:4; Jn. 3:16; 2 Tm. 1:10; 1 Jn. 2:25; 2 Tm. 1:1; Tit. 1:2; Rm. 3:26; Jn. 1:29.
7. **That He inaugurated this plan by making promises to Adam, Abraham and David, and afterwards elaborated it in greater detail through the Prophets.** Gen. 3:15; 22:18; Ps. 89:34 37; 33:5; Hos. 13:14; 1sa. 25:7 9; 51:1 8; Jer. 23:5.
8. **That these promises had reference to Jesus Christ, who was to be raised up in the condemned line of Abraham and David, and who, though wearing their condemned nature, was to obtain a title to resurrection by perfect obedience, and, by dying, abrogate the law of condemnation for himself, and all who should believe and obey him.** 1 Cor. 15:45; Heb. 2:14 16; Rm. 1:3; Heb. 5:8 9; 1:9; Rm. 5:19 21; Gal. 4:4 5; Rm. 8:3 4; Heb. 2:15; 9:26; Gal. 1:4; Heb. 7:27; 5:3 7; 2:17; Rm. 6:10; 6:9; Ac. 13:34 37; Rev. 1:18; Jn. 5:21 22, 26 27; 14:3; Rev. 2:7; 3:21; Mt. 25:21; Heb. 5:9; Mk. 16:16; Ac. 13:38 39; Rm. 3:22; Ps. 2:6 9; Dan. 7:13 14; Rev. 11:15; Jer. 23:5; Zec. 14:9; Eph. 1:9- 10.
9. **That it was this mission that necessitated the miraculous begetting of Christ of a human mother, enabling him to bear our condemnation, and, at the same time, to be a sinless bearer thereof, and, therefore, one who could rise after suffering the death required by the righteousness of God.** Mt. 1:18 25; Lk. 1:26 35; Gal. 4:4; 1sa. 7:14; Rm. 1:3 4; 8:3; Gal. 4:4; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 2:14 17; 4:15.
10. **That being so begotten of God, and inhabited and used by God through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, Jesus was Emmanuel, God with us, God manifest in the flesh -- yet was, during his natural life, of like nature with mortal man, being made of a woman, of the house and lineage of David, and therefore a sufferer, in the days of his flesh, from all the effects that came by Adam's transgression, including the death that passed upon all men, which he shared by partaking of their physical nature.** Mt. 1:23; 1 Tm. 3:16; Heb. 2:14; Gal. 4:4; Heb. 2:17.
11. **That the message he delivered from God to his kinsmen the Jews, was a call to repentance from every evil work, the assertion of his divine sonship and Jewish kingship: and the proclamation of the glad tidings that God would restore their kingdom through him, and accomplish all things written in the prophets.** Mk. 1:15; Mt. 4:17; 5:20 48; Jn. 10:36; 9:35; 11:27; 19:21; 1:49; Mt. 27:11 42; Jn. 10:24 25; Mt. 19:28; 21:42 43; 23:38 39; 25:14 46; Lk. 4:43; 13:27 30; 19:11 27; 22:28 30; Mt. 5:17; Lk. 24:44.
12. **That for delivering this message, he was put to death by the Jews and Romans, who were, however, but instruments in the hands of God, for the doing of that which He had before determined before to be done -- namely, the condemnation of sin in the flesh, through the offering of the body of Jesus once for all, as a propitiation to declare the righteousness of God, as a basis for the remission of sins. All who approach God through this crucified, but risen, representative of Adam's disobedient race, are forgiven. Therefore, by a figure, his blood cleanseth from sin.** Lk. 19:47; 20:1 26; Jn. 11:45 53; Ac. 10:38 39; 13:26 29; 4:27 28; Rm. 8:3; Heb. 10:10; Rm. 3:25; Ac. 13:38; 1 Jn. 1:7; Jn. 14:6; Ac. 4:12; 1 Pt. 3:18; 2:24; Heb. 9:14; 7:27; 9:26 28; Gal. 1:4; Rm. 3:25; 15:8; Gal. 3:21 22; 2:21; 4:4 5; Heb. 9:15; Lk. 22:20; 24:26,46 47; Mt. 26:28.

13. **That on the third day, God raised him from the dead, and exalted him to the heavens as priestly mediator between God and man, in the process of gathering from among them a people who should be saved by the belief and obedience of the Truth.** 1 Cor. 15:4; Acts 10:40; 13:30-37; 2:24-27; 4:27; 13:35.
14. **That he is a priest over his own house only, and does not intercede for the world, or for professors who are abandoned to disobedience. That he makes intercession for his erring brethren, if they confess and forsake their sins.** Lk. 24:51; Eph. 1:20; Acts 5:31; 1 Tm. 2:5; Heb. 8:1; Acts 15:14; 13:39; Heb. 4:14-15; Jn. 17:9; Heb. 10:26; 1 Jn. 2:1; Prov. 28:13.
15. **That he sent forth apostles to proclaim salvation through him, as the only Name given under heaven whereby men may be saved.** Ac. 1:8; Mt. 28:19-20; Lk. 24:46-48; Ac. 26:16-18; 4:12.
16. **That the way to obtain this salvation is to believe the Gospel they preached, and to take on the Name and service of Christ, by being thereupon immersed in water, and continuing patiently in the observance of all things he has commanded, none being recognized as his friends except those who do what he has commanded.** Acts 13:48; 16:31; Mk. 16:16; Rm. 1:16; Acts 2:38, 41; 10:47; 8:12; Gal. 3:27-29; Rm. 6:3-5; 2:7; Mt. 28:20; Jn. 15:14.
17. **That the Gospel consists of "The things concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ."** Acts 8:12; 19:8, 10, 20; 28:30-31.
18. **That the 'Things of the Kingdom of God' are the facts testified concerning the Kingdom of God in the writings of the Prophets and Apostles, and definable as in the next 12 paragraphs.**
19. **That God will set up a Kingdom in the earth, which will overthrow all others, & change them into 'the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ.'** Dn. 2:44; 7:13-14; Rv. 11:15; Is. 32:1, 6; 2:34; 11:9, 10.
20. **That for this purpose God will send Jesus Christ personally to the earth at the close of the times of the Gentiles.** Ac. 3:20-21; Ps. 102:16, 21; 2 Tm. 4:1; Ac. 1:9, 11; Dn. 7:13.
21. **That the Kingdom which he will establish will be the Kingdom of Israel restored, in the territory it formerly occupied, namely, the land bequeathed for an everlasting possession to Abraham and his Seed (the Christ) by covenant.** Mic. 4:6-8; Amos 9:11, 15; Eze. 37:21-22; Jer. 23:3, 8; Gen. 13:14, 17; Heb. 11:8-9; Gal. 3:16; Lev. 26:42; Mic. 7:20.
22. **That this restoration of the Kingdom again to Israel will involve the ingathering of God's chosen but scattered nation, the Jews their reinstatement in the land of their fathers when it shall have been reclaimed from 'the desolation of many generations'; the building again of Jerusalem to become 'the throne of the Lord' and the metropolis of the whole earth.** Is. 11:12; Jer. 31:10; Zec. 8:8; Eze. 36:34, 36; Is. 51:3; 60:15; 62:4; Jer. 3:17; Mic. 4:7-8; Joel 3:17; Is. 24:23.
23. **That the governing body of the Kingdom so established will be the brethren of Christ, of all generations, developed by resurrection and change, and constituting, with Christ as their head, the collective 'Seed of Abraham: in whom all nations will be blessed, & comprising 'Abraham, Isaac & Jacob, and all the prophets and all in their age of like faithfulness.** Dn. 12:2; Lk. 13:28; Rv. 11:18; 1 Th. 4:15-17; Jn. 5:28-29; 6:39-40; Lk. 14:14; Mt. 25:34, 36.
24. **That at the appearing of Christ prior to the establishment of the Kingdom, the responsible (namely, those who know the revealed will of God, and have been called upon to submit to it*), dead and living -- obedient and disobedient -- will be summoned before his judgment seat 'to be judged according to their works: and 'receive in body according to what they have done, whether it be good or bad'.** 2 Cr. 5:10; 2 Tm. 4:1; Rm. 2:5-6, 16; 14:10-12; 1 Cr. 4:5; Rv. 11:18.

Clause 24 was clarified in Jan., 1898, with bro Roberts' full agreement and support, because of the teaching of error that one may avoid being raised for Judgment by refusing baptism.

25. **That the unfaithful will be consigned to shame and 'the second death: and the faithful, invested with immortality, and exalted to reign with Jesus as joint heirs of the Kingdom, co possessors of the earth, and joint administrators of God's authority among men in everything.** Mt. 7:26; 8:12; 25:20; Dn. 12:2; Gal. 6:8; 5:21; 2 Th. 1:8; Heb. 10:26 28; 2 Pt. 2:12; Rev. 21:8; Mal. 4:1; Ps. 37:30 38; Prov. 10: 25 29; 1 Cr. 15:51 55; 2 Cr. 5:1 4; Dim. 1:12; Rm. 2:7; Jn. 10:28; Mt. 5:5; Ps. 37:9, 22, 29; Rev 5:9; Dan. 7:27; I Th. 2:12; 2 Pt. 1:11; Rev. 3:21; 2 Tm. 2:12; Rev. 5:10.
26. **That the Kingdom of God, thus constituted, will continue a thousand years, during which sin and death will continue among the earth's subject inhabitants, though in a much milder degree than now.** Rev. 20:4 9,12 15; Isa. 65:20; Eze. 44:22,25; 1 Cor. 15:24,29.
27. **That a law will be established, which shall go forth to the nations for their 'instruction in righteousness', resulting in the abolition of war to the ends of the earth, & the 'filling of the earth with the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea.'** Mic. 4:2; Is. 42:4; 11:1 5; 12:4; Hab. 2-4.
28. **That the mission of the Kingdom will be to subdue all enemies, & finally death itself, by opening up the way of life to the nations, which they will enter by faith during the thousand years, & (in reality) at their close.** 1 Cr. 15:25 26; Rv. 21:4; 20:12 15; Isa. 25:6 8.
29. **That at the close of the thousand years, there will be a general resurrection and judgment, resulting in the final extinction of the wicked, and the immortalization of those who shall have established their title (under the grace of God) to eternal life during the thousand years.** Rev. 20:11 15; I Cor. 15:24.
30. **That the government will then be delivered up by Jesus to the Father, Who will manifest Himself as the 'All in All'; sin and death having been taken out of the way, and the race completely restored to the friendship of the Deity.** I Cor. 15:28

DOCTRINES TO BE REJECTED

1. **That the Bible is only partly the work of inspiration -- or if wholly so, contains errors which inspiration has allowed.**
2. **That God is three persons.**
3. **That the Son of God was co eternal with the Father.**
4. **That Christ was born with a 'free life.'**
5. **That Christ's nature was immaculate.**
6. **That the Holy Spirit is a person distinct from the Father.**
7. **That man has an immortal soul.**
8. **That man consciously exists in death.**
9. **That the wicked will suffer eternal torture in hell.**
10. **That the righteous will ascend to kingdoms beyond the skies when they die.**
11. **That the devil is a supernatural personal being.**
12. **That the Kingdom of God is 'the church.'**
13. **That the Gospel is the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ merely.**

14. **That Christ will not come till the close of the thousand years.**
15. **That the tribunal of Christ, when he comes, is not for the judgment of saints, but merely to divide among them different degrees of reward.**
16. **That the resurrection is confined to the faithful.**
17. **That the dead rise in an immortal state.**
18. **That the subject nations of the thousand years are immortal.**
19. **That the Law of Moses is binding on believers of the Gospel.**
20. **That the observance of Sunday is a matter of duty.**
21. **That baby sprinkling is a doctrine of Scripture.**
22. **That 'heathens', idiots, pagans, and very young children will be saved.**
23. **That man can be saved by morality or sincerity, without the Gospel.**
24. **That the Gospel alone will save, without the obedience of Christ's commandments.**
25. **That a man cannot believe without possessing the Spirit of God.**
26. **That men are predestined to salvation unconditionally.**
27. **That there is no sin in the flesh.**
28. **That Joseph was the actual father of Jesus.**
29. **That the earth will be destroyed.**
30. **That baptism is not necessary to salvation.**
31. **That a knowledge of the Truth is not necessary to make baptism valid.**
32. **That some meats are to be refused on the score of uncleanness.**
33. **That the English are the ten tribes of Israel, whose prosperity is a fulfilment of the promises made concerning Ephraim.**
34. **That marriage with an unbeliever is lawful.**
35. **That we are at liberty to serve in the army, or as police constables*, take part in politics, or recover debts by legal coercion.**

* * *

THE COMMANDMENTS OF CHRIST

The Commandments of Christ are the most practically important part of our Basis of Fellowship. Unless we are striving at all times to keep them before our minds, and to comply with them, we are no part of the Body of Christ. Here are the 'works' whereby our 'faith' is manifested as alive or dead. Let us meditate on them constantly, and make them the foundation of all our actions.

1. **Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you.** Matt. 5:44.
2. **Resist not evil: if a man smite thee on one cheek, turn to him the other also.** Matt. 5: 30 40.
3. **Avenge not yourselves: rather give place unto wrath: and suffer yourselves to be defrauded.** Rm. 12:18 19.
4. **If a man take away thy goods, ask them not again.** Lk. 6:29 30.

* "or as police constables" was added in 1917.

5. **Agree with your adversary quickly, submitting even to wrong for the sake of peace.** Mt. 5:25; I Cr. 6:7.
6. **Labor not to be rich: be ready to every good work, give to those who ask: relieve the afflicted.** I Tm. 6:8; Rm. 12:13; Heb. 13:16; James 1:27.
7. **Do not your alms before men; let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.** Mt. 6:1-4.
8. **Recompense to no man evil for evil: overcome evil with good.** Rom. 12:17.
9. **Bless them that curse you; let no cursing come out of your mouth.** Mt. 5:44; Rm. 12:14.
10. **Render not evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise, blessing.** I Peter 3:9.
11. **Pray for them that despitefully use you and afflict you.** Matt. 5:44.
12. **Grudge not; judge not; complain not; condemn not.** James 5:9; Matt. 7:1.
13. **Put away anger, wrath, bitterness, and all evil speaking.** Eph. 4:31; I Peter 2:1.
14. **Confess your faults one to another.** James 5:16.
15. **Be not conformed to this world: love not the world.** Rom. 12:2; 1 John 2:15.
16. **Deny all ungodliness & worldly lusts.** If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off. Tit. 2:12; Mt. 5:30.
17. **Servants, be faithful, even to bad masters.** Eph. 6:5-8.
18. **Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate.** Rom. 12:16.
19. **Owe no man anything.** Rom. 13:7-8.
20. **In case of sin (known or heard of), speak not of it to others, but tell the offending brother of the matter between thee and him alone, with a view to recovery.** Mt. 18:15, Gal. 6:1.
21. **Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.** Matt. 22:37.
22. **Pray always pray with brevity and simplicity; pray secretly.** Luke 18:1; Matt. 6:7.
23. **In everything give thanks to God and recognize Him in all your ways.** Eph. 5:20; Prov. 3:6.
24. **As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also so to them.** Matt. 7:12.
25. **Take Christ for an example and follow in his steps.** I Peter 2:21
26. **Let Christ dwell in your heart by faith.** Eph. 3:17.
27. **Esteem Christ more highly than all earthly things: yea, than your own life.** Luke 14:26.
28. **Confess Christ freely before men.** Luke 12:8.
29. **Beware lest the cares of life or the allurements of pleasure weaken his hold on your heart.** Lk. 21:34-36; Mt. 24:44.
30. **Love thy neighbor as thyself.** Matt. 22:39.
31. **Exercise lordship over no one.** Matt. 23:10-12.
32. **Seek not your own welfare only, nor bear your own burdens merely, but have regard to those of others.** Phil. 2:4; Gal. 6:2.
33. **Let your light shine before men: hold forth the Word of Life. Do good to all men as ye have opportunity.** Matt. 5:16; Phil. 2:16; Gal. 6:10.

34. **Be blameless and harmless, as the sons of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.** Phil. 2:15.
35. **Be gentle, meek; kind hearted, compassionate, merciful, forgiving.** 2 Tm. 2:24, Tit. 2:2; Eph. 4:32.
36. **Be sober, grave, sincere, temperate.** Phil. 4:5; 1 Pet. 1:13; 5:8.
37. **Speak the truth every man with his neighbor: put away all lying.** Eph. 4:25.
38. **Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as unto the Lord, and not unto men.** Col. 3:23.
39. **Be watchful, vigilant, brave, joyful, courteous and manly.** I Cr. 16:13; Phil. 4:4; I Th. 5:6 10.
40. **Be clothed with humility: be patient toward all.** Col. 3:12; Rom. 12:12.
41. **Follow peace with all men.** Heb. 12 :14.
42. **Sympathize in the joys and sorrows of others.** Rom. 12:15.
43. **Follow after whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous, and praiseful.** Phil . 4:8.
44. **Refrain utterly from adultery, fornication, uncleanness, drunkenness, covetousness, wrath strife, sedition, hatred, emulation, boasting, vainglory, envy, jesting & foolish talking.** Eph. 5:3,4.
45. **Whatever you do, consider the effect of your action on the honor of God's Name among men. Do all to the glory of God.** I Cor. 10:31; 3:17.
46. **Reckon yourselves dead to all manner of sin. Henceforth live not to yourselves, but to him who died for you, and rose again.** Rom. 6:11; 2 Cor. 5:15.
47. **Be zealous of good works, always abounding in the work of the Lord, wearying not in well doing.** Tit. 2:14; Gal. 6:9.
48. **Speak evil of no man.** Titus 3:2.
49. **Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.** Col. 3:16.
50. **Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt.** Col. 3:8 4:6.
51. **Obey rulers: submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake.** Titus 3:1.
52. **Be holy in all manner of conversation.** I Peter 1:15 16.
53. **Give no occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.** I Tm. 5:14.

* * *

THE COMMON CONSTITUTION OF BEREAN ECCLESIAS WITH MATTERS INVOLVING FELLOWSHIP PRINTED IN BOLDFACE

1. That we are a Christadelphian ecclesia.
2. That we accept and profess the doctrines and precepts of Christ, as taught in the apostolic writings, and defined (positively and negatively) in the annexed 'Statement of Faith' and epitome of 'The Commandments of Christ'
3. That we recognize as brethren, and welcome to our fellowship, all who have been immersed (by whomsoever) after their acceptance of the same doctrines and precepts.
4. That we meet on the morning of every first day of the week for the breaking of bread, worship, and exhortation; and in the evening for the exhibition of the. Truth in its invitation to the alien to become fellow-heirs of the Hope of the Gospel; also on the evening of one day in the week for the study of the Holy Oracles, when the meeting is not otherwise engaged; also that we meet once a quarter to receive and consider the reports of the serving brethren, and at

special meetings as may be required; the third quarterly meeting in the year to be also the annual meeting for any annual business that may require to be transacted.

- 5. That we mutually engage to submit to the order and arrangements preferred by the greater number.**
6. That brethren holding offices among us shall be described as "serving brethren", & that the denomination of each particular office shall have 'brother' or 'brethren' associated with it (for the sake of preserving the family character of our assembly in harmony with the mind of Christ).
- 7. That in the appointment of these, we shall have in view, and strive always to follow, the directions given by Paul as to the qualifications that ought to exist.**
8. That our serving brethren shall consist of arranging brethren and presiding brethren, a recording brother, an assistant recording brother, a finance brother, assistant finance brother, and such other brethren as the arranging brethren shall appoint to attend to various matters of detail, such as door-keeping, visiting, examining, etc. (See Rule 26).
9. That the arranging brethren, presiding brethren, recording brother, assistant recording brother, finance brother, and assistant finance brother, shall be elected every 3 years, in accordance with Rule 11.
10. That no brother shall be eligible for appointment as arranging brother, presiding brother, speaking brother, recording brother, assistant recording brother, finance brother, or assistant finance brother, for the first 2 years after his immersion (or resumption of fellowship, in case he has been separated), except by the unanimous consent of the arranging brethren; but any qualified brother may be elected for any number of times who has not lost the scriptural qualifications.
11. That the mode of election shall be by ballot, before which there must be a nomination in writing, signed by _ brethren, and handed to the recording brother, to be read by him at the week-night meeting 14 days before the annual meeting. There shall be no canvassing for votes. Votes obtained by canvassing shall be invalid. Nomination shall not be necessary in the case of retiring brethren, whose previous service shall stand in lieu of nomination. All names nominated (together with the names of retiring brethren) shall be submitted in a printed voting form to the brethren and sisters, who shall be required to put a cross before the name of each brother whom they desire to be appointed. Election to take place in the case of those having the highest number of votes. In all elections of serving brethren by vote, it shall require the voice of at least 1 /3 of those voting before a brother be considered appointed to any office. In case of failure of election in any case from the application of this rule, or from any other cause, the arranging brethren shall have power to fill the vacancy.
12. That the function of the arranging brethren shall be to arrange for the conduct of the meetings, fix speaking appointments, & decide all matters affecting the working of the ecclesia.
13. That the arranging brethren shall meet once a quarter, namely, on the Monday previous to the quarterly business meeting, but they may meet as much oftener as necessary. Any brother desiring a special meeting of the arranging brethren to be held during the quarter shall be at liberty to convene such a meeting by handing a written request to the recording brother, signed by brethren, specifying the nature of the business requiring attention. (This not to apply to cases of personal accusation, unless accusers have first taken the course prescribed by Christ).
14. All meetings shall be announced beforehand to the ecclesia, except where the nature of the business does not admit of delay; and the brethren and sisters shall be at liberty to attend and take part in the deliberations that may take place, but not to vote in the decisions that may be taken.
15. That their decisions shall have immediate effect, but may be reversed by the ecclesia at the quarterly meeting, only, however, in so far as they affect the future.
16. That the arranging brethren shall (by the recording brother) read the minutes of their proceedings every 3 months to the brethren and sisters in quarterly meetings assembled, for confirmation or otherwise.

17. That the recording brother, assistant recording brother, finance brother and assistant finance brother, shall attend all the meetings of the arranging brethren, and have power to vote in their decisions.
18. That the presiding brethren shall do duty week by week in alphabetical rotation, or provide substitutes from their own number; the brother presiding on Sunday to preside at all meetings during the subsequent week, except at tea-meetings and business meetings, for which the arranging brethren shall make special appointment; the duties of the presiding brethren to be limited to the conduct of the assemblies.
19. That the recording brethren shall (a) keep a record of all the proceedings of the ecclesia; (b) receive and communicate all applications intended for the ecclesia or the arranging brethren; (c) remind the ecclesia of meetings to be held, or other matters affecting them, & presiding brethren and speakers of their several appointments; (d) take note of all moneys received by the finance brother; and (e) generally keep the working machinery of the ecclesia in motion.
20. That the finance brother shall receive and disburse the funds accruing in any way to the ecclesia, with the co-operation and cognizance of the recording brother, and shall report quarterly to the ecclesia for confirmation.
21. That the following order be observed at our Sunday meetings—MORNING: 1, singing; 2, reading two of the Scripture selections for the day according to the Bible Companion; 3, brief fraternal announcements; 4 prayer; 5. singing; 6 exhortation (not to exceed half-an-hour); 7, breaking bread, and drinking wine, after thanks for each; 8, collection; 9, singing; 10, prayer. EVENING: 1, singing; 2, reading; 3, prayer; 4, singing; 5, lecture; 6, singing; 7, prayer.
22. That no business be introduced for consideration at any Sunday meeting, and that the doors be always closed during singing, Scripture reading, or prayer.
23. That special meetings of the ecclesia may be convened by the recording brother at the request of the arranging brethren; or by the written requisition of _ brethren, whose requisition however, before it shall have full force, shall be submitted, without discussion, to the vote of the ordinary week-night meeting of the ecclesia the next ensuing Thursday. If the vote is against it, the meeting shall not be held. At all special meetings it shall require an _th part of the ecclesia to form a quorum.
24. That all applications for immersion or admission to fellowship must be reported to the recording brother, whose duty it shall be to announce the same to the ecclesia at the first Sunday morning meeting thereafter, & to make arrangements for the necessary examination; the result of such examination to be announced on the following Sunday; after which, in the absence of objection, immersion or admission to fellowship to take place. This rule not to apply to persons from a distance, passing on.
25. That in each district a suitable number of visiting brethren & sisters, nominated preferably by the brethren and sisters residing in the district, shall be appointed by the arranging brethren to communicate at least once a month with brethren and sisters absent from the table; with a view to ascertaining the cause of absence, and administering comfort in cases of sickness, and in cases of need. Such visiting brethren and sisters to report to the recording brother anything coming under their notice which the ecclesia ought to know.
26. That a convenient number of brethren & sisters be appointed by the arranging brethren to confer, in conjunction with the recording brother, with persons applying to be immersed or admitted into the ecclesia, with a view to ascertaining if the requisite qualifications exist.
27. That all funds and property belonging to the ecclesia shall legally vest in the arranging brethren for the time being, as trustees for the general body, to whose direction they shall at all times be subject as to the disposal thereof.
28. That any brother holding any office in the ecclesia may be removed at any time by the vote of the majority of the whole ecclesia.
29. Behavior unworthy of the Name of Christ (see 1 Tm.3;'1'it. 1) shall, when proved against any brother, have the effect of cancelling any appointment such brother may hold, without a vote of the ecclesia; and the appointment shall in that case be treated as vacant, and steps taken to fill it accordingly.

30. That any brother departing from any element of the One Faith, as defined by us in our Statement of Faith appended, shall, on proof of the fact being given to the satisfaction of the arranging brethren, cease to be in fellowship, without a formal vote of withdrawal, on the fact being announced to the ecclesia.
31. That no accusation or matter of evil report against any brother shall be listened to in public or private, until the brother bringing or reporting the accusation shall have taken the course prescribed in Mt.18:15-18; and any brother refusing to take this course while persisting in his accusation, or in alienation on account of it, shall himself be considered and dealt with as an offender against the law of Christ.
32. That absence from the established assembly of the brethren for the breaking of bread, except from illness or other lawful reason, is an offence against the law of Christ; unless the said assembly shall tolerate the rejection of any element of the Truth of the Gospel, or shall sanction doctrines or practices inconsistent with the commandments of Christ.
33. That none shall, even for a legitimate cause, separate themselves from the assembly, without first stating, in writing, to be addressed to the recording brother, the cause or causes of impending separation; and asking the same to be considered, with a view to their removal, at a special meeting at which they consent to be present and take part.
34. That no brother or sister withdrawn from by, or out of fellowship with, another ecclesia, shall be received in fellowship until the cause shall have been investigated and found such as to warrant the reception of said brother or sister; but that this investigation shall not take place without first asking the said other ecclesia to take part in the proposed investigation; that if the said other ecclesia shall refuse their co-operation in the said investigation, the matters in question shall be investigated without them; that if, on the other hand, they consent to take part in it, they shall, after the re-investigation conducted in their presence, have equal voting power with the first ecclesia, and that no decision shall be valid without the concurrence of a majority of the assembly so constituted of the 2 ecclesias fused together in equality of numbers; if one ecclesia exceeds the other in number, the equality to be obtained by arrangement.
35. That in case of another ecclesia, after either of these processes, receiving into their fellowship any brother or sister from whom we have withdrawn, or who may have separated from us, we shall not consider it a cause of separation from them, regarding the case as one of difference of judgment as to facts merely. We shall be content in that case to maintain our own withdrawal from the brother or sister in question. Should they, on the other hand, receive such without re-investigation or without asking our concurrence in any re-investigation that may take place, we ourselves shall apply to the said ecclesia for re-investigation in the form defined by the last rule, and only in the case of their refusal shall we consider that their action in the case has furnished a cause of separation.
- [NOTE: Bro. Roberts wrote, 'Rule 35 of the Birmingham Constitution has no reference to cases where first principles are in question. The rule relates solely to disputed questions of personal action and character, as to which it is possible for even 2 men to be righteously disagreed in their opinion concerning a third person'- Chdn., Apr., 1887. See '79 Berean, p. 377.]*
36. That marriage with the alien is an offence against the law of Christ. That those who maintain the contrary are unfit for fellowship with those who 'consent to the wholesome words of the Lord Jesus: That when offence takes place in the matter, the ecclesia shall signify their disapproval by resolution, sent to the offending brother or sister; after which the brother or sister shall only retain their places among the brethren by admitting their offence.
37. That any Sunday School established in connection with the ecclesia shall be under the control of the arranging brethren. The ecclesia to elect every _ years, in the mode observable in the case of other serving brethren, a superintendent, secretary, assistant secretary, and treasurer, who shall appoint the teachers and, in conjunction with them, manage the school in matters of detail.

38. That none of the foregoing rules be altered except by a ballot of the whole ecclesia; and a month's previous notice of intention to propose such alteration (which shall be signed by at least brethren) must be given to the recording brother, who shall read the same at each intervening week-night meeting.

* * *

A RESTATEMENT OF THE ALWAYS HELD BEREAN POSITION ON CURRENT PROBLEMS AMONG THOSE USING THE NAME 'CHRISTADELPHIAN'

Agreed upon by the Berean Fellowship in 1960, and printed in the July, 1960 issue.

In the late 1950s, because of compromise and degenerating conditions in other groups, it became desirable that the Berean Fellowship re state its original and always held position on several matters of truth being called in question elsewhere. This was taken very slowly, over a period of years, so all would have ample time to study and comment on the material. With 2 very minor and secondary exceptions (see notes on Nos. 4 & 6), the Berean Restatement was unanimously adopted as expressing the mind of the whole Body. We invite the fellowship of any who are wholly of one mind with us. The 1960 Restatement follows: --

THIS is not a new basis of fellowship; nor is it an addition to, or an alteration of, our Basis of Fellowship. It is simply a reiteration of the position the Berean Fellowship has held on these matters from the beginning. It is a call back to the old, established position of sound Christadelphianism. Our desire and endeavor is to give as strong and clear a presentation as possible on the basis of the established Berean position of nearly 40 years [written in 1960: it's now 66 years], without making any change or innovation. We are most comfortable in our minds when we are firmly within the sound framework laid down by sincere and able brethren of one, two, and three generations ago. The long delay [it was between 2 and 3 years] in issuing this Restatement, since it was first proposed, has been used to imply that we are not united. We believe it is desirable to clarify this point. From the very beginning, the overwhelming majority fully accepted the original draft of this Restatement. The normal course would have been to publish on this established basis of a preponderant majority. From the beginning, the total of those who have desired any change has been numerically very small.

But we have aimed for the ideal of unanimous and enthusiastic approval in every detail. Therefore we have believed it best to move very, very slowly whenever there was the slightest objection or reluctance of any kind.

We believe the greatest value of the Restatement is in the promotion, through mutual patience and understanding, of a deeper spirit of unity and fellowship and -- above all -- love among ourselves. Its value in relation to those outside our fellowship, though great, is secondary to this.

We have been extremely reluctant to make decisions on the final wording if even one brother objects. We have hoped and worked and prayed for complete unanimity, not wishing to offend any, or to override the wishes of a single one.

We believe it is possible, however, that in trying to fully satisfy every wish of every individual we have perhaps not given full weight to the desires of the many who were satisfied from the beginning, and who have repeatedly expressed the strong desire that it be carried forward.

Circumstances now appear to make further delay undesirable. We are just 2 minor points short of perfect unanimity: 1) A small group have expressed dissatisfaction with the wording on Conferences, not disagreeing, but fearing misinterpretation: see note there; and 2) A small group, not disagreeing with the item, desired further wording on Divorce: see note there.

THE RESTATEMENT AS APPROVED IN 1960:--

AS the trends in the Reunion movement become clearer, and many who have joined in that movement are now seriously reconsidering their position, a restatement of the Berean position on various problems that have confronted the Brotherhood, has become desirable.

This article has been many months in preparation. It has been submitted to all Berean ecclesias and brethren and sisters, and has received their approval. Two drafts were submitted, the 3rd (this present form) incorporating as far as possible all suggestions received as a result of the circulation of the first two. While it is not to be taken as a formal, official, all inclusive document, nor in any way as an addition to the Statement of Faith, it does represent the considered, united viewpoint of the Berean Fellowship in regard to the principal issues that have arisen. It is not necessarily meant to be final and exhaustive: other problems can be considered later as circumstances require.

At the outset, let it be clearly understood there is no desire to criticize others. Our purpose is simply to present our own position, with particular relation to the present circumstances. Reference to others will be kept to the minimum required to make our position & its reasons clear.

*** * ***

OUR IDENTITY AND OUR NAME

First and foremost, we have been increasingly impressed with the great value and importance of a clear distinction and identity in fellowship. The Berean Fellowship has maintained a clear, separated position since 1923, since it was first necessary to stand aside from loose fellowship and toleration of error.

We desire to continue the benefit and advantage of this identity and stability (since 1923). We firmly believe that the stand taken in 1923 was right and necessary for the preservation of the Truth. We freely recognize and confess mistakes in methods and attitudes due to the inherent weakness of the flesh and the natural limited perception of the human mind. But the general foundation and course of our fellowship from the first, we believe, in God's mercy and guidance, to have been sound.

In our approach to the problems and opportunities arising from the present developments, this determination to maintain the value of our clear, separate position will be, God willing, our guiding principle.

We earnestly desire, yea, need, the strength and support of all earnest brethren and sisters. We know that all who are at one with us in heart will agree with the reasonableness of our request that they seek our fellowship on the basis of a recognition of the soundness and correctness of the long established stand of the Berean Fellowship. In this way they will contribute to the strength of the continuity of our position, & share its advantages with us. All who are truly of one mind with us will readily agree to restrict their fellowship to those who are identified with the Berean position. To consent to a union of fellowship on any other basis would be to sacrifice the strength and stability that our consistent stand (since 1923) has built up.

Some have objected to the name 'Berean' on the ground that it implies a claim to certain characteristics, and denies them to others. We would like to point out that it does not imply presumption any more than the name 'Christadelphian' -- Christ's Brother -- can be said to. It is not meant to imply any claim or presumption, but rather a dedication and allegiance and aim toward certain scriptural characteristics.

But (it is asked), Is not the name Christadelphian sufficient? Sadly, we believe all must agree upon consideration that it is not. A name is simply to identify and distinguish. Therefore when any name is used by more than one separate group, some further identification is necessary.

Our determination to decline to consider merging with other groups and adopting any other name is not that we consider there is any special virtue or importance in the name itself, but because it represents a continuous position and outlook established over many years. We derive comfort and strength and stability from this consistent, continuous identity, especially in view of the many changes in principles, fellowship, and outlook throughout the Christadelphian world in recent years.

* * *

The second major point we desire to make clear is that we have no intention of imposing any new, official, basic requirement of fellowship. If some, in reading this article, find that certain matters they would like defined are not treated of, or to their mind are insufficiently treated of, we would ask that they receive the following as the explanation...

Our purpose is consolidation, not innovation. We desire to remove any occasion for the charge that we are setting up new requirements.

Furthermore, we have been more and more impressed with the conviction that the real solution to many problems lies not so much in restrictive legislation, but in laboring to build and develop a higher and more spiritual plane of thought and action throughout the Brotherhood by the transforming power of the love of Christ.

This is our great aim and fervent desire, and we frankly say that it is to such as are whole heartedly in harmony with this aim that we appeal. Those who are satisfied with anything less than striving toward the beauty of the perfection of the holiness, and goodness and godliness manifested in Christ will not find the Berean Fellowship to be what they desire.

Where this desire exists and flourishes in united zeal, worldly and fleshly things will be cast away freely without the need of legislation, and many problems of conduct that have saddened and divided the brotherhood will be undreamed of. We believe, too, that God will protect & deliver such a body from many of the problems that have been allowed to trouble the disobedient and worldly.

On the other hand (though not desiring to impose any new requirements), we are equally anxious and determined upon a firm defense and preservation of the original truths and principles upon which the Berean Fellowship has always stood. The following are the principal issues upon which we believe it wise at this time to reiterate our position.

* * *

1. THE NATURE AND SACRIFICE OF CHRIST

It was the determined agreement of the former Bereans who took part in the Jersey City Conference to insist upon an acceptance of the Ten Point Statement on the Nature and Sacrifice of Christ as a minimum safeguard against the erroneous theories long current in the Central group. Under pressure, this determination was not maintained.

We firmly believe that any who do not WILLINGLY AND READILY express their approval of the Ten Point Statement designed to defend Truth and guard against error, are not of one mind with us, & consequently a union in fellowship with such would not be mutually beneficial.

The Ten Point Statement [formulated by the Los Angeles ecclesia, and accepted by Central in 1940 as a sound basis for reunion on the question] is as follows:

FOUR ERRORS TO BE REJECTED

- 1. That the nature of Christ was not exactly like ours.**
- 2. That the offering of Christ was not for himself, and that Christ never made any offering for himself.**

3. That Christ's offering was for personal sins or moral impurity only. That our sins laid on Christ made him unclean and accursed of God, and that it was from this curse and this uncleanness that Christ needed cleansing.
4. That Christ died as a substitute; that is, that he was punished for the transgressions of others, and that he became a bearer of sin by suffering the punishment due for sins.

SIX TRUTHS TO BE ACCEPTED

1. That death came into the world extraneous to the nature bestowed upon Adam in Eden, and was not inherent in him before sentence.
2. That the sentence defiled him (Adam) and became a physical law of his being, and was transmitted to all his posterity.
3. That the word 'sin' is used in 2 principal acceptations in the Scriptures. It signifies in the first place 'the transgression of law', and in the next it represents that physical principle of the animal nature which is the cause of all its diseases, death, and resolution to dust.
4. That Jesus possessed our nature, which was a defiled, condemned nature.
5. That it was therefore necessary that Jesus should offer for himself for the purging of his own nature, first, from the uncleanness of death, that, having by his own blood obtained eternal redemption for himself, he might be able after ward to save to the uttermost those that come to God by him.
6. That the doctrine of substitution (that is, that a righteous man can, by suffering the penalty due to the sinner, free the sinner from the penalty of his sins) is foreign to Scripture and is a dogma of heathen mythology.

We earnestly desire fellowship on the basis of a wholehearted oneness of mind, but we believe recent events have shown the fallacy of attempting to build fellowship on any basis involving compromise or insufficient investigation. We believe the principle of uniting first and 'straightening things out' later is neither scripturally sound nor practically workable.

There must be a willingness to face the facts of the past that have brought about the problems of the present. Essential truths have been assailed. Friends of the Truth will GLADLY make clear their position: yea, will be ANXIOUS to make it clear.

* * *

2. RESURRECTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

On this question, we stand firmly and wholeheartedly upon Article 24 of the Statement of Faith that has been accepted among us since the days of bro. Roberts --

"That at the appearing of Christ prior to the establishment of the Kingdom, the responsible (namely, THOSE WHO KNOW THE REVEALED WILL OF GOD, and have been called upon to submit to it), dead and living -- obedient and disobedient -- will be summoned before his judgment seat 'to be judged according to their works'; and 'receive in body according to what they have done, whether it be good or bad.'" (2 Cor. 5:10; 2 Tm. 4:1; Rm. 2:5-6, 16; 14:10-12; 1 Cor. 4:5; Rev. 11:18).

This truth is expressed equally clearly in the 'Instructor' by which we have taught our children for the same length of time [the sound, original Instructor] --

132: Q.--What will Christ do when he first returns?A.--He will assemble all those who are responsible to judgment, living or dead.

133: Q.--Who are responsible to judgment? A.--All who know the Truth, whether they submit to it or refuse.

Bro. Thomas [in 1855] defined the same basic principle in his 'system of divine truth' entitled 'The Revealed Mystery', Article 46 --

"Those who have come to an understanding of the Gospel, but have rejected it . . . come forth from the grave again to encounter the burning indignation of Christ, the Judge of the living and the dead, at his appearing and Kingdom."

We believe that LIGHT is the ground of resurrectional responsibility (Jn. 3:19; Jm. 4:17), and the clear scriptural picture is that the responsible -- just and unjust --will be called forth together for judgment at the last day, 'at his appearing and his Kingdom' (Jn. 12:48; 2 Tm. 4:1).

This issue was fought through in the past by the pioneers of the Truth. Faithful brethren found that compromise on this basic principle is unsound and impractical. We believe our only faithful course is to maintain a clear and uncompromising position on this as to fellowship, so that we may be of one mind, & may be free to teach our children in a clear trumpet sound without having other brethren whom we support in fellowship undermining our efforts and teaching them otherwise. The Truth cannot prosper under such confused conditions.

This is a serious issue, and goes far deeper than many realize. The prevalent incorrect and hazy conceptions about resurrectional responsibility undermine the one great solemn fact of all existence: the eternal MAJESTY AND AUTHORITY of God over all His Creation. We see it very clearly illustrated in the very beginning: authority, command, responsibility, and a calling to account. Adam was not asked if he desired to make a covenant.

This error engenders an entirely false and unwholesome conception of man's position before his Creator. The issues of life and death depend upon the reality and vividness with which we keep these basic principles before our minds. We believe, therefore, that it would be a disastrous casting away of all the value of the past struggle if we were to unite with any who do not robustly discern, believe, and actively support this basic truth.

There are various shades of error on this question, mutually tolerated within other groups. To open our arms to such on a compromise basis would be to insert the thin end of the wedge.

* * *

3. EVOLUTION

We have been increasingly impressed with the necessity of a strong stand upon the original Christadelphian beliefs regarding Creation.

The attempts to reinterpret the early chapters of Genesis to bring them into harmony with current speculations regarding 'geological ages' and 'evolutionary development', is a clear repetition in these last days of the fatal trend in the early centuries. when the 'learned' and the philosophers took over the church and remolded its doctrines to the then current worldly conceptions of 'science' and 'knowledge.'

We reject as unscriptural all theories of this evolutionary nature, such as that Adam was not necessarily the first man, but just the first 'real' man--meaning the first 'man' whom God chose to endue with 'capacity for worship', which is interpreted as 'creating' man.

The Berean Fellowship stands strongly on the original Christadelphian belief that the first chapter of Genesis is a TRUE LITERAL RECORD of Creation, & not just a 'vision' Moses saw, representing long ages of Evolution. We believe the simple truth as testified in Exo. 20:9 11--

“Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God . . . for IN 6 DAYS THE LORD MADE HEAVEN AND EARTH, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.”

Referring to this passage, bro. Thomas said (Elpis Israel, pgs. 11 12)--

“The six days of Genesis were unquestionably 6 diurnal revolutions of the earth upon its axis. This is clear from the tenor of the Sabbath law . . . Would any Israelite or Gentile, UNSPOILED BY VAIN PHILOSOPHY, come to the conclusion of the geologists by reading the Sabbath law? Six days of ordinary length were ample time for Omnipotence.”

We are well aware that the ‘wisdom of the world’ considers this ‘foolishness’, but we are convinced that if we are to be among the accepted, we must decide on which side we stand.

This divine truth is a PROVIDENTIALLY provided anchor of our faith. As long as we hold it fast in godly simplicity, we are protected against the drift toward evolutionary speculation.

As to modern speculations and theories about the antiquity and development of the present condition of things on the earth, we feel no need to apologize for, or reinterpret, the simple scriptural record. In the divine purpose, ‘science’ doubtless has been guided in these last days to discover many wonderful facts and truths in order to bring about the desired conditions on the earth. But when they presume to speculate about the past, and attempt to fix ages and periods and relationships and supposed evolutionary developments by methods based on their limited current observations of natural phenomena, they are leaving out of account the one great central fact of the universe that makes all their speculations meaningless: the continuous, ever present, direct power and control of God in the working of His will. Of such, Jesus said, ‘Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the POWER OF GOD (Mt. 22:29).

Apart from divine revelation, man is utterly incompetent to speculate about the remote past. We have no difficulty in dismissing all these idle theories with the words of Paul in the first chapter of First Corinthians, particularly verses 20 and 27 --

“Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? . . . God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise . . . that no flesh should glory in His presence.”

This is why He confounds their wisdom, and why we KNOW that their supposed ‘wisdom’ in anything to do with His Creation and Purpose is foolishness.

* * *

4. CONFERENCES

Our conviction over many years, greatly strengthened by recent events, are that there is great wisdom in the words of bro. Roberts to be found in the Ecclesial Guide, Article 44

FRATERNAL GATHERINGS FROM VARIOUS PLACES

“These are beneficial when restricted to purely SPIRITUAL objects (that is, let the brethren assemble anywhere from anywhere, and exhort, or worship, or have social intercourse together). But they become SOURCES OF EVIL if allowed to acquire a legislative character in the LEAST DEGREE.

“Ecclesial independence should be guarded with great jealousy (with the qualification indicated in the foregoing sections). To form ‘unions’ or ‘societies’ of ecclesias, in which delegates should frame laws for the individual ecclesias, would lay the foundation of a collective despotism which would interfere with the free growth and the true objects of ecclesial life.

“Such collective machineries create FICTITIOUS IMPORTANCES, which tend to suffocate the Truth. All ecclesiastical history illustrates this.”

It is clear from ecclesiastical history that the practice of sending ‘representatives’ to ‘conferences’ was one of the major stepping stones to the Great Apostasy. We have a great fear of the consequences of any delegation of authority or power of ‘representation especially when such ‘representation’ is exercised at a distant place. This inevitably leads to centralization and a shriveling of the individual determination in regard to ecclesial affairs.

We believe that, in the providence of God, the Truth was well established by our pioneer brethren. We believe that that system of Truth has had continuous existence among us, & is held by the Berean Fellowship today. We therefore see no need for potentially dangerous ‘conferences’ with other groups. It is the essential nature of conferences to lead to compromise, and these compromises are often worked out by a few who are not truly representative of the Body, under the pressure of eloquence, emotion, and limited time.*

In addition to the general dangers of conferences, there are various specific unsound aspects [all manifested at the J. C. Conference] which we believe it is necessary in the circumstances to make our position clear. The following we believe to be misguided and unsound--

1. Any agreement to limit the investigation and consideration of any aspect of an issue which has affected fellowship in the past.

It is very difficult to maintain soundness of fellowship even when every possible care and precaution is employed. It is impossible when there is an agreement to ignore the facts of the past which have created the conditions of the present.

2. Any agreement to rule out discussion of any other issues than the ‘original cause’ of the separation.

When one group has had to separate from another because of toleration of error, all reason, Scripture and experience teach that -- especially after a prolonged separation -- great care and thorough, detailed investigation of ALL doubtful points would be required to discover if there is any true basis for considering re association.

3. Putting any such proceedings under the control of any who are not of our fellowship.

[It is surely absurd to put the erring side in charge of the proceedings].

NOTE: A few (who agreed with the principle) feared 1) this item might be taken to rule out discussion with any who wish to join us, and 2) it might discourage others from seeking our fellowship. Nothing could be further from its intention. The principle at issue is GIVING AUTHORITY TO REPRESENTATIVES to assemble at a distance and make decisions, with the subsequent inevitable losing touch and control by the membership. It is a real and serious danger, as history has repeatedly taught. Bre. T & R vehemently warned against this danger.

* * *

5. SUING AT LAW

We believe, and have always believed, that the Scriptures forbid going to law AGAINST another for any cause whatsoever. The command is plain.

The addition of the phrase, ‘for any cause whatsoever,’ does not add anything to the command. It means the same without it. But It is added to indicate that we accept the command in its fulness; and to guard against a merely nominal acceptance which nullifies it by ‘exceptions.’

This command against going to law against another is part of the basic framework of the principles of the Law of Christ, which forbids violence, coercion, resistance to and retaliation for evil. We are not to use the law, or the powers of the law, AGAINST anyone in any way. To do so in ANY way is to violate the WHOLE spirit.

This command is not simply a technicality which can be scripturally circumvented by subterfuge, threats, and the creating of false impressions of intentions to use the law. A threat to use the law -- whether stated or merely implied with a view to intimidating or coercing -- not only violates the command, but adds to it the evil of deception.

This command is an INTEGRAL AND ESSENTIAL part of the beautiful way of life in Christ; and a clear perception of this way, and a clear distinguishing of it from the evil, deceptive, self assertive way of the flesh. will enlarge our hearts and free us from the misconception that compliance with the LETTER of the law is sufficient, and a TECHNICAL obedience is all that God requires. The basic issue is our own character under trial and development, in the inner battle with the evil of the flesh.

The undermining of this principle of non retaliation and non resistance was one of the principal causes of the Berean stand of separation in 1923. This principle was blurred and assailed during the first World War and in the ‘Constabulary’ issue that followed.

We wish to keep this principle clearly distinct from what is termed the ‘Divorce’ question. The issue of suing at law is far deeper and broader than just that. A clear stand on this issue is one of the necessary bulwarks of the true spirit of the Truth in these days.

* * *

6. DIVORCE -- in relation to the brethren and sisters of Christ

We believe divorce is contrary to the commands of Christ. We believe that remarriage after divorce is contrary to the commands of Christ.

“And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord: Let not the wife depart from (korizo-put asunder--Mt. 19:6) her husband. But and if she depart let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband. And let not the husband put away his wife” (I Cor. 7:10 11).

We believe further that these 2 evils are not only contrary to divine command, but are in direct violation of the deep principles of the mind of Christ. They will be eschewed as unthinkable by all true brethren and sisters of Christ.

[This is a statement of basic principles only. It goes without saying it was not intended to contravene the teachings of brethren Thomas and Roberts.]

NOTE: One small group, while not disagreeing with anything contained here, strongly desired further wording on this subject. But it must be kept in mind that this is a RE statement of the Berean position on current problems not an attempt to formulate any new position or to go beyond what former brethren have in wisdom and experience established. Bro. Roberts -- while at least as earnest and well grounded as any now living, and at least as anxious to maintain purity and to combat corruption--was very reluctant to attempt sweeping and hypothetical legislation on this.

* * *

7. WORLDLINESS

There are many who have thought the Berean Fellowship too ‘narrow’ and ‘extreme’ on the issue of holiness and separation from the world.

We are thankful we have such a reputation, and we shall increasingly do our best to justify it. The sad events in the Brotherhood during the past few years have greatly strengthened our conviction that looseness and worldliness have been the major source of all ecclesial problems, and of the purging trials that have been brought upon us, and that the only solution is an ever greater striving toward godliness.

We intend, God willing, to press increasingly for a closer walk, greater holiness, less worldliness. We are very strongly set against worldly habits, customs, fashions, amusements, entertainments, associations & affiliations. We cannot too often or too strongly remind ourselves and one another of the solemn words of John, James, and Paul-

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For ALL that is in the world -- the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life -- is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 John 2:15 16).

“Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the ENEMY of God” (James 4:4).

“What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath Light with Darkness? . . . For ye are the Temple of the Living God . . . Wherefore come out from among them, and BE YE SEPARATE, saith the Lord, and I will receive you” (2 Cor. 6:14 17).

Let us make these Spirit words our banner and our ensign. Let us, in these closing, evil, Gentile days, show forth the Divine glory of the Beauty of Holiness.

We recognize the existence among us of things and ways that belong to the world. We are greatly troubled by them. WE BELIEVE THAT IT WAS A PREPONDERANCE OF WORLDLINESS THAT LED TO THE COLLAPSE OF A LARGE PART OF THE BEREAN FELLOWSHIP IN 1953. We desire to build more soundly upon the lessons of the past.

Recent events have taught us many things. Those of us that remain have been drawn much closer together in the bonds of love, and of the unity of the Spirit.

Reflection and experience have, we believe, taught us the cause of many of the weaknesses and failures of the past. To be in harmony with God, the underlying spirit of any fellowship must be joyfulness, patience, gentleness and love. These Divine attributes are essential parts of the doctrine of Christ. They must permeate and dominate the whole Body. Otherwise the whole fabric will gradually wither, and die spiritually, however it may prosper and grow externally. NONE are Christ's brethren who do not wholeheartedly subscribe to these principles, and actually apply them as the basis of their life.

We have been impressed more and more with the conviction that there can be no communion between looseness and holiness, no fellowship between worldliness and godliness, no oneness of mind and walking together between the mind of the flesh and the mind of the Spirit. True Divine fellowship can only exist between those who are mutually and heartily and joyously dedicated to the principle of pressing on toward PERFECTION.

We are not in sympathy with the overhastiness that has at times been manifested to apply the processes of withdrawal of fellowship. We believe the gentle and loving Law of Christ provides and requires a course of humble, patient endeavor toward reconciliation and unity of mind.

Still, the true Body of Christ is a closely knit unit -- by command and by choice -- and the spiritual health and welfare of one affects all. Infractions of the Divine law that are defended or persisted in cannot be overlooked or ignored or brushed aside as just some one's 'private life' that is none of our responsibility or concern. Such an attitude completely fails to comprehend the glorious, joyful oneness, interdependence & communion of the true Body of Christ.

The great tragedy of compromise and looseness is that it is progressive, and its trend is ever downward. There is no standing still. We are either, by constant effort, drawing toward greater godliness, or we are drifting downward into the ways of the flesh. Paul 'ceased not to warn night and day with tears', knowing the flesh and its inevitable tendencies.

We believe all that has happened [the collapse of a large part of the Body into another group] has had the Divine purpose of forcing this realization & conviction upon us. We must repeatedly be put through the purging and purifying process of Divine love. THE

WAY OF LIFE AND GODLINESS IS A FAR GREATER AND MORE REVOLUTIONARY THING THAN MOST REALIZE--

"If any man be in Christ he is a NEW CREATURE: Old things are passed away! Behold, all things are become new!" -- 2 Cor. 5.

* * *

8. MILITARY SERVICE

As we consider current problems arising in Christadelphia, we notice there is a definite trend away from the original position upheld by the brethren of some years ago in respect to military service. There is a present tendency to accept non-combatant service, and service in the Merchant Marines. Work under the supervision of the Military and in munition factories is also making it difficult for the brethren to secure exemption as religious conscientious objectors.

Our position in this respect should be clearly understood, and consistently maintained: not only as a doctrinal principle of our Faith, but also as a way of life to be upheld and exemplified by the purity and holiness of our walk before God, and by our strict adherence to the precept that calls for separateness from all institutions of the world.

In our endeavor to render acceptable obedience to God, we find it necessary to ask for exemption from both combatant and non-combatant service in any branch of the armed forces. And in order that our lives may be found consistent with our convictions in this respect, we should refrain from taking employment in any capacity under the supervision of the Military, or where the principal line of work is the manufacture or supply of arms, munitions, or military equipment to the armed forces.

This is so because it is our sincere conviction that the laws of God, which transcend all human laws, definitely and unmistakably forbid His children having any connection with the martial organizations of the country in which they live.

* * *

9. THE FORMULA FOR FELLOWSHIP

There is at present [1960] a movement for a realignment and a new form of reunion on the basis of an acceptance of the 'BASF without reservation, enforced in fellowship'. This is all very well as far as it goes, but we believe that recent events in Christadelphia have clearly shown that just a bare affirmation to this effect is not a sufficient basis for a lasting unity.

Reason, Scripture and experience teach that in each case there must be sufficient investigation to give assurance of oneness of mind. More care will be required in some cases than others, and no simple password can be set down as the only requirement. Certainly MASS AMALGAMATION ON A MAJORITY VOTE is utterly inadequate to preserve the Truth for the dissenting minority that comes along with the majority may bring every form of error. A majority vote is, as Clause 5 of the Constitution specifies, the brotherly way to determine 'order and arrangement', but FELLOWSHIP is an INDIVIDUAL matter.

The only generalization that can be made is that in any consideration of a unity in fellowship, sufficient mutual investigation must be made in each individual case to maintain the Truth among us to the best of our ability.

To avoid any appearance of harshness, or the erection of any unnecessary barriers, we would like to make it clear that we desire it to be as easy and pleasant as possible -- in faithfulness to the Truth -- for any to join or to return to us, who have come to a full unity of mind with us on the problems confronting the Brotherhood.

We recognize that it would be the prerogative of each ecclesia to determine the amount of personal interviewing necessary in each particular case. We believe it is a basic principle that the Truth is an INDIVIDUAL matter. Each individual much be considered as an

individual but we are anxious that it be done as gently and unofficially and briefly as is consistent with the Truth. We have no thought of interrogation just for interrogation's sake, but rather speedy and joyful reception as soon as UNITY OF MIND is established.

However, it is the mind of the Berean Fellowship -- particularly in light of the insufficiently considered mass movements in 'fellowship' of the past few years that this scriptural aspect of INDIVIDUAL consideration should be mutually accepted in any discussion of resumption of fellowship, & should be honored in principle, though applied in humbleness, kindness & wisdom.

The events of the past few years have deeply impressed us with the wisdom and truth of the words of bro. Roberts in 1896, speaking concerning fellowship problems near the end of a life of conflict and struggle for the Truth (Christadelphian, Nov., 1896, p. 428):

"Our circulation would have been a large one, after 32 years' publication, if we had chosen to broaden out to the diluted forms of truth that are current in sundry quarters* . . . We would rather walk with an afflicted few in the scriptural purity of the Hope of Israel (with all that involves), than run with a prosperous multitude in the loose and polluted ways of the natural man. The looseness may be convenient for the time being, but there hastens a time when it will be highly inconvenient.

"When God speaks again by Christ returned, the inconvenience of this adhesion to His holy, narrow ways will turn to felicitation, joy and gladness . . .

"Experience over a wide and constantly fermenting field shows that unless there is a resolute adhesion to the position of Divine wisdom, recovered with much difficulty during the last 2 generations, there is danger of easily losing it all: NOT ALL AT ONCE, BUT POINT BY POINT -- ONE POINT AT A TIME TILL ALL IS GONE."

In conclusion, we cannot too often or too strongly emphasize our deep conviction that there can be no true, sound, strong, spiritual fellowship on any basis other than eager, mutual yearning toward the Divine Beauty of Holiness. There is no other power that can truly unite us spiritually, and mark us out from the rest of the perishing world.

There can be but one True Bride of Christ, and she will be marked by an all consuming love for her Lord, manifested in a constant striving toward the beautiful ideal of spiritual perfection described in the words of the Spirit through Paul (Eph. 5:27)--

"A glorious Ecclesia, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy & without blemish."

Without the eager, mutual acceptance of dedication to this divine deal, all else is meaningless and dead. This must be the heart and power of any true fellowship. The Berean Fellowship is deeply conscious of its many human weaknesses and imperfections, but it is lovingly united in a realization of, and strong desire toward, the great beauty of this pattern of the chosen Bride of Christ.

We earnestly appeal for the support and fellowship of all who will enthusiastically stand with us upon the foregoing truths and principles. Let us strengthen and encourage one another -- in the few days that remain as the warclouds gather ominously around Armageddon -- to manifest the beauty of that Divine community, the holy and separated Bride of Christ, awaiting her Lord in purity and patience in a world given over to pleasure and sin.

* * *

10. MARRIAGE TO THE ALIEN

This was not part of the original Restatement, but it was subjoined in the first printing. The reason it was not covered originally was because it is covered in the Constitution and in the Doctrines to be Rejected, and it did not appear to be a current problem from the point of view of proposed fellowship affiliations.

Since the Restatement was originally drafted, however, the 'Reunion' movement has been broadened and accelerated to absorb groups which have always been weak and worldly in this matter. We therefore, for completeness, append the following from the Ecclesial Guide--

Marriage with the alien is forbidden both by the general tenor of any precepts, and by express intimation of liberty to marry 'only in the Lord' (1 Cor. 7 :39). The law of Christ thus follows the Law of Moses (that other 'law of the Lord, in most points superseded, but not in this).

It was a strict injunction to Israel not to marry the heathen on either side of the house. It is fitting that such restriction should extend to saints, because the reason dictating it in the case of Israel after the flesh is more powerfully operative among Israel after the spirit: 'They will turn thee away from following Me" (Dt. 7:4).

A brother ought not to marry a woman who is not a sister. A sister ought not to marry a man who is not a brother. The marriage of a believer ought to be 'only in the Lord.'" --Ecclesial Guide, Article 45.

As to the definition of 'believer' in the command, 'Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers': bro. Roberts says (Christadelphian, June, 894, Inside Front Cover) --

"The only scriptural application of the term 'believer' is to those who hold the Truth in the fulness with which it was apostolically reached. 'Unbelievers' are ALL who fall short of this."