

A
STATEMENT
OF THE
“ONE FAITH”
OF
THE BIRMINGHAM ECCLESIA¹

1871

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A Statement of the “One Faith” of the Birmingham Ecclesia

Part I. contains, in sixteen Articles, the “*Truth to be believed.*”

1. GOD.—That the God revealed to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob by angelic visitation and vision, and to Moses at the flaming bush (unconsumed), and at Sinai, and who spoke through the prophets who arose in Israel, is the supreme self-existent Deity, who is ONE, and hath out of His own underived energy created heaven and earth and all that in them is; that He sustains all things by His power, which is infinite; guides all things by His wisdom, which is perfect; and knows all things by His spirit, which is omnipresent; that He dwells somewhere in the vast expanse around us in Unapproachable Light, and is the only Being in the universe possessed of inherent deathlessness, whom no man hath seen nor can see.

2. NATURE OF MAN.—That God created Adam, the progenitor of the human race, out of the dust of the ground, as a living soul or natural body of life, and placed him under a law through which the continuance of life was contingent on obedience.

3. DISOBEDIENCE OF ADAM.—That Adam broke this law and was adjudged unworthy of immortality, and sentenced to return to the ground from whence he was taken, in which sentence all mankind are involved.

4. SCHEME OF SALVATION.—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.

5. THE PROMISES TO THE FATHERS.—That He inaugurated this plan by making certain promises to Adam, Abraham, and David, which were afterwards elaborated in greater detail through the prophets.

6. THE LAST ADAM.—That these promises had reference to a second (or last) Adam, to be raised up in the line of Abraham and David, who should purchase life by perfect obedience, and die for those who were under condemnation, and afterwards be raised to immortality; and be permitted to extend a participation in his life and inheritance to all who should believe and obey him; and that he should afterwards become the head and ruler of the whole world.

7. JESUS THE CHRIST, SON OF THE LIVING GOD.—That this second Adam was God with us, manifested in the flesh, and known as Jesus of Nazareth, who was of like nature with mortal man, being born by the virgin Mary (of the house and lineage of David), yet begotten of her by the Holy Spirit, without the intervention of man, and afterwards anointed with the same Spirit without measure at his baptism, to speak the words and do the works of his Father.

8. THE MESSAGE OF HEAVEN.—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.

9. THE LAMB OF GOD.—That for delivering this message he was put to death, and thus offered as a sacrifice to take away the sins of the world; and thereby confirm (or make possible of fulfilment) the promises made unto the fathers.

10. THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.—That on the third day God raised him from the dead, because he was an Holy One whom He could not suffer to see corruption.

11. HIS PRIESTHOOD.—That he was exalted to the heavens as the victorious second Adam, to stand 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.

12. HIS EMBASSAGE TO THE WORLD.—That he sent forth apostles to proclaim salvation through him, as the only name given under heaven whereby men may be saved.

13. THE TERMS OF SALVATION.—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.

14. THE GOSPEL DEFINED.—That the gospel they preached consisted of “the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ.”

15. THE GOSPEL ANALYSED.—That these things are —

1st. The Things of the Kingdom:

- A. The fact that God will through Jesus Christ set up a kingdom in the earth which will subdue all others and turn them into “the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ.”
- B. That for this purpose Jesus Christ will be revealed from heaven, and appear again on earth at the close of the time of the Gentiles.
- C. That the Kingdom of God then to be established will be the ancient kingdom of Israel restored in the territory formerly occupied by it, viz., the land bequeathed for an everlasting possession to Abraham and his seed (the Christ) by covenant; that this restoration of the kingdom again to Israel will involve—

(1) The ingathering of God’s chosen but scattered nation, the Jews.

(2) Their reinstatement in the land of their fathers, when it shall have been reclaimed from “the desolations of many generations.”

- (3) The building again of Jerusalem to become “the throne of the Lord,” and metropolis of the whole earth.
 - (4) The development, by resurrection and change, of “the nation bringing forth the fruits thereof,” constituting with Christ as their head the collective “seed of Abraham” in whom all nations will be blessed, and comprising “Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets.”
 - (5) The establishment of a law to go forth to the nations for their “instruction in righteousness,” resulting in the abolition of war to the ends of the earth; and the filling of the earth with the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea.
- D. That at the appearing of Christ, his servants, faithful and unfaithful, dead and living of both classes, 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”; that the unfaithful will be consigned to shame and “the second death,” and the faithful invested with immortality, and associated with Jesus as joint-heirs of the kingdom, co-possessors of the earth, and joint-administrators of God’s authority, in matters both political and religious.
 - E. 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.
 - F. That the mission of the kingdom will be to subdue all enemies, and finally death itself, by opening up the way of life to the nations, which they will enter by faith, during the thousand years, and (in reality) at their close.
 - G. 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 to eternal life during the thousand years,
 - H. 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.

2nd. The Things concerning the Name of Jesus Christ: These are defined in paragraphs 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13.

16. THE HOLY SPIRIT.—That the Holy Spirit is the out-flowing and everywhere-present power of the Father, by which He accomplishes all His will. By this He framed creation, revealed Himself to the prophets, and finally manifested Himself in a Son. By this He made known His truth through prophets and apostles, so that metonymically the truth is spirit to all in whom it dwells. By His Spirit He will raise and quicken the dead.

Part II. contains, in eighteen Articles, “*Fables to be refused*,” which are current in the religious world, and of which a rejection is required on the part of all applicants for fellowship. Each Article denies the “Fable” which forms its title.

17. The Trinity.—That God is not three, but One, out of whom are all things—even the Spirit and the Son.

18. THE ETERNAL SONSHIP OF CHRIST.—That the Son of God was not co-eternal with the Father, but is the result of the Father’s manifestation in the flesh, by operation of Holy Spirit upon Mary, in the manner defined in par. 7.

19. THE THIRD PERSON IN THE GODHEAD.—That the Holy Spirit is not a person, but the vehicular effluence of the Father, filling all space, and forming the medium and instrument of all the Father’s operations.

20. THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.—That the immortality of the soul is a pagan fiction, subversive of the first law of the Deity’s moral government, viz. that the wages of sin is death.

21. THE THEORY OF DISEMBODIED EXISTENCE.—That there is no existence in death, conscious or unconscious, and that the popular belief in heaven and hell is a delusion. Therefore

A. That the wicked will not suffer eternal torture, but will be engulfed in total destruction after resurrection.

B. That the righteous will not ascend to kingdoms beyond the skies at death or at any other time, but will inherit the earth for ever.

22. SUPERNATURAL PERSONAL DEVIL.—That there is no such thing as a supernatural personal devil, the devil of Scripture being a personification of sin in its several phases and manifestations among men.

23. That the kingdom of God is not “the Church,” or a region beyond the stars, but a system of things to be established under Christ on earth, in the Holy Land.

24. THREE-FACT GOSPEL.—That the gospel is not the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ merely, but “the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ.”

25. NO JUDGMENT AT THE COMING OF CHRIST.—That the judgment of the saints at the tribunal of Christ, when he comes, is not a simple allotment of rewards, but a dividing of the faithful from the unfaithful, with reference to the question of life or death.

26. THE FIRST RESURRECTION.—That the resurrection at the appearing of Christ is not confined to the faithful, but extends to all who have made a profession of his name, whether faithful or not.

27. IMMORTAL RESURRECTION.—That those thus rising are not in a glorified state, but appear before Christ in their natural body, to have it decided whether they are worthy of being clothed upon with immortality, or deserving of a return to corruption.

28. IMMORTAL NATIONS IN THE MILLENNIUM.—That the subject-nations of the thousand years are not immortal.

29. JUDAISM AND SABBATARIANISM.—That the law of Moses is not binding in any of its enactments, except those retained in the letter of the apostles; and the observance of Sunday as popularly enjoined is unscriptural.

30. BABY BAPTISM AND INFANT SALVATION.—That baby sprinkling is an invention of man, and infant salvation a doctrine opposed to Scripture.

31. RESURRECTION OF HEATHENS, IDIOTS, BABES, ETC.—That heathens, idiots, pagans, and very young children will never see the light of resurrection, but pass away as though they had not been, the resurrection being restricted to those who are responsible to the divine law.

32. SALVATION WITHOUT THE GOSPEL.—That salvation is impossible without a belief of the gospel, however moral a man's life may be.

33. SALVATION WITHOUT BAPTISM.—That under the apostolic dispensation salvation is impossible without baptism.

34. THE VALUE OF BAPTISM IN A STATE OF IGNORANCE.—That baptism is of no avail in the absence of an understanding and belief of “the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ.”

That the foregoing facts, doctrines, and principles constitute the whole counsel of God, declared by the apostles, for enlightenment unto salvation, and form the only basis of saving faith for Jews and Gentiles in the present dispensation.

A BRIEF STATEMENT OF FAITH AND PRACTICE OF THE ASSEMBLY OF
CHRISTADELPHIANS AT BALHAM, LONDON.²

This statement, furnished similarly in each proposition with proof references to Scripture, contains essentially the same type of doctrine, but omits “a list of negatives such as has been appended to some similar statements in the past, seeing that, as far as the record goes, such a list had no place in the ‘good Confession’ in apostolic days, and might tend, as it has done in the past, to unduly restrict scope for growth in the truth.” It concentrates upon “The Unity of God,” “The Second Coming of Christ,” “His Reign and Kingdom on Earth,” “The Promise of Immortality through Him by a Resurrection from the Dead,” and “The Baptism of Believers.” It includes in its text a denial only of the Trinity, of the existence of a personal devil, of universal immortality, of eternal punishment, of heaven as the scene of the future life, and of the passing away of the earth. Its twenty-five propositions are distributed in seven sections, concerning the Holy Scriptures, God, Jesus Christ, Death and Resurrection, the Coming Kingdom of God on Earth, Sin and Forgiveness, and Righteousness.

² In leaflet published by the Presiding Brethren.