

# John James Andrew: Offender or Defender?

*A documented review of the motivation and role of John James Andrew in the controversies surrounding the Amendment and his relationship with Thomas Williams and the Unamended fellowship.*

## PREFACE

The name of John James Andrew is more often associated with controversy than it is with the contributions he made to the Christadelphian community. His is a name both championed and villainized. Although there is sufficient documentation preserved with which to evaluate his role and contribution to the controversy leading to the Amendment to the Christadelphian Statement of Faith, Bro. Andrew's reputations precede and often preclude interest in such a review.

Bro. Andrew's role and works have been, and continue to be, the focus of controversy, allegations and misconceptions. It is recognized that there is nothing that can be said or written which would have a significant impact upon strong opinions held concerning this brother. However, this overview proposes to provide relevant documentation with which those interested might evaluate the person of John James Andrew for themselves.

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## INTRODUCTION

John James Andrew (1840-1907), the very name elicits emotion and controversy. Bro. Andrew was a pioneer defender of Christadelphian faith and was well known and respected within the household. In the early 1870's, he played a prominent role in opposing the Renunciationist controversy and worked along side Bro. Roberts in the publication of *The Christadelphian*. Henry Sulley, in his preface to the 2nd edition of *The Temple of Ezekiel's Prophecy* (1892) notes the assistance of both Bro. Andrew and Roberts in proofreading and revising. In 1894, Bro. Andrew took issue with Bro. Roberts' writings in *The Christadelphian* and began to publish his own magazine, *The Sanctuary- Keeper* (1894-1902). From that point until his death in 1907, Bro. Andrew, along with Bro. Williams in the United States assumed the role of defender of Unamended Christadelphian faith.

Bro. Andrew's efforts and works are at the same time a source of pride and embarrassment for different members within the Unamended community. Branded as the father of the Unamended community by the Amended and, a brother of extremes by individuals within both fellowships, association with his name and writings has been discouraged in some circles while at the same time championed in others.

The purpose of this review is to examine this contradiction and this controversy. What factors account for such divergent opinions? Which, if any, claims regarding Bro. Andrew are legitimate and, most important, what impact has this divided opinion had upon the Unamended fellowship?

### **REPUTATION: OFFENDER or DEFENDER?**

It would be difficult to assess the role and contribution of Bro. Andrew without first understanding the strong reputations attached to his name. His are opposing reputations, historically prolonged and often resulting in preconceptions.

Considering the Amended community's focus on Bro. Andrew as the instigator of the Amendment and the father of Unamended error, it is no surprise that his reputation among that community is negative. In a letter from Alfred Nichols and Harry Tenant to the secretary of the Amended Continental Reunion Committee, 10-09-81, they comment:

*We indicated our agreement to the proposals made at the March conference because we understood, at that time, that all the problems arising out of the J.J. Andrew errors had been examined and as a consequence agreement had been expressed on the Nature of Man, the Nature of Christ and the Atonement.*

*The principle cause of difficulty lies in the strong inferences which our Unamended brethren seem to expect us to draw, whereby resurrectional responsibility is directly related to covenant making. We do not and cannot accept this concept because it appears to us to be the doctrine of J.J. Andrew in another guise.*

### **10-9-81 Letter to the Secretary of the Amended Continental Reunion Committee on behalf of CMPA brethren**

We note here the reference to "J.J. Andrew errors" which specify under this category Unamended beliefs regarding the nature of man, the nature of Christ and the atonement. Accusation is also made that the Unamended brethren are following "J.J. Andrew doctrine" by their belief that resurrectional responsibility is directly related to covenant making.

Another example of the Amended viewpoint is found in the *Logos*, March, 1995:

*Bro. Farrar criticizes the phrase used by the authors that "Bro. Andrew is the father of the Unamended Community." Whilst it is true historically that Bro. Williams as editor of the Advocate magazine predates the division caused by the teachings of Bro. Andrew, the statement was considered representatively as indicating that the Advocate brethren follow the teachings*

*represented by Bro. Andrew in the areas of resurrectional responsibility and hereditary alienation.*

*...the Advocate community adheres to the teachings, which are clearly aligned to those of J.J. Andrew. For example...a person must “Be baptized for the remission of sins- Adamic and individual,” ... the Advocate community continues to teach that we are alienated from God by birth, in addition to personal transgression.*

**Logos March, 1995**  
**Pp. 186-187**

In this article the Amended community defends the identification of Bro. Andrew as the “father of the Unamended Community.” Their allegation that the “Advocate community” follows the teachings of Bro. Andrew clearly insinuates that those teachings were introduced by, or identified with, Bro. Andrew.

Within the Unamended community there has been considerable negative association with Bro. Andrew, most of which has focused on the controversial nature of some of his views and his role in the controversy leading to the Amendment. Bro. Thomas Williams in 1905 labeled Bro. Andrew’s belief and action as “extreme” and that label has continued as a significant element of Bro. Andrew’s legacy. These associations are cited in *Doctrinal Consequences of Clause 24 BASF*:

*We have cited only a few samples of Amended literature and tapes that omit any reference to the fact that the baptized believer becomes a party to the Abrahamic covenant and consequently an heir to the things covenanted therein. Many more samples could be submitted and are on file in the writer’s’ library. . . .How did this erosion of doctrine take place? ... The answer lies in the title of a booklet that was published in 1894 in Britain, entitled *The Blood of the covenant by Bro. J.J. Andrew The Amendment to the Statement of Faith was introduced in 1898 to counteract the Andrew view Amended writers and teachers, since that time, in their zeal to denigrate the Andrew view, have thrown the baby out with the bath water. The bath water is the extreme position taken by Bro. Andrew**

**Edward W. Farrar**

***Doctrinal Consequences of Clause 24 B.A.S.F***

**Pp. 21-22**

Bro. Farrar here notes the Amended community's overreaction and resulting erosion of doctrine. He identifies *The Blood of the Covenant* as the provocation leading to the process that resulted in the Amendment some four years later and, references as "extreme" the 1894 position of Bro. Andrew.

On the opposite end of the reputation spectrum is found recognition and support on behalf of Bro. Andrew. Bro. Ken McPhee in *Christadelphian History - A Story of Division*, comments:

*In the 1890's a very vigorous controversy arose. This controversy was principally between Robert Roberts and J.J. Andrew who discerned a drift in Robert Roberts' writings in "The Christadelphian" magazine in 1893. The drift was away from the firmly declared teaching in the writings of R.R. from 1870 to 1883 and J.J.A. published excerpts to demonstrate the drift. He began to publish his own magazine, "The Sanctuary Keeper" and in the first issue, July 1894 he published an indictment against the teaching of "The Christadelphian." This was pretty strong stuff and caused a great resentment against J.J. Andrew among the friends and supporters of Robert Roberts.... We have believed for many years that the continuing effort by the Amended brotherhood to blame the division of 1898 on Bro. Andrew is a gross miscarriage of justice.*

**K.G. McPhee**

***Christadelphian History - A Story of Division***

**Pp. 2,4**

In this reference Bro. McPhee addresses the motivation of Bro. Andrew and presents the circumstances leading up to the resentment which resulted.

In response to the *Logos* article reviewed earlier, Bro. James Stanton responded with a letter to the editor published 3 months later:

*I have never heard the expression that JJ Andrew is the father of the Unamended community. But I do know that his views have been for years and currently are shared by many in the Unamended. ... The Amended have a right to call JJA extreme because his views do not agree with theirs, but the Unamended hold his views by and large on the purpose of baptism, inherited alienation including that of Jesus, and the grave-releasing efficacy of the blood of the covenant.*

**James S. Stanton**  
***Logos* June 1995**  
**Pp. 28 1-282**

In this letter Bro. Stanton affirms that the Unamended community does by and large hold to Bro. Andrew's views and teachings. Lastly, in the March 1997 *Advocate*, a review entitled "Reflections on a Pioneer:"

*Among the prominent names of the pioneers of our faith is one that stands out as a principal defender and activist. This man is more often associated with the controversy surrounding aftw of his teachings, than he is with the many other contributions that he made... We are speaking of Brother J. J. Andrew ... The position of this magazine has always been that the general understanding of Bro. Andrew in these areas is consistent with the teachings of Bro. John Thomas and the teaching contained in Bro. Roberts' final work, *The Law of Moses*.*

**The Advocate Committee**  
***Advocate* March 1997**  
**Pp. 63-64**

Here the Advocate Committee recognizes the controversial nature of Bro. Andrew's teachings on resurrectional responsibility while expressing support for his teachings on those related subjects labeled as error by the Amended community.

The challenge of a review of Bro. Andrew's impact and contribution to the truth is sorting out fact from fiction, or, reputation from reality. Without doubt, he was a focus of attention in events leading up to the Amendment and he maintained a prominent role in following years. As we examine his part in this history, perhaps each of us should evaluate and assess whether Bro. Andrew should be considered as offender or defender. It seems everyone has an opinion regarding Bro. Andrew, but are those opinions based upon tradition or individual assessment? To assist in the assessment of this controversial and complicated man, the following topics are proposed for review:

1. The Blood of the Covenant
2. Bro. Andrew's change in belief
3. Bro. Andrew's relationship with Bro. Williams
4. The last years

## **THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT**

Most Christadelphians know very little about Bro. Andrew, and few have read his controversial booklet, *The Blood of the Covenant*. Yet this is the work for which he is best known. Bro. Andrew explains in the preface to the first edition that he wrote this booklet in 1894 to address the subject of the atonement:

*Twenty years ago the One Body passed a controversial conflict concerning the nature of Jesus Christ at his first appearing. It was then clearly demonstrated that Christ was, by birth, related to condemnation in Adam to the same extent as the rest of the race, and that He was made of the same fallen, or sinful nature.*

*It fell to my lot to take a prominent part in the aforesaid conflict, and as the result of it I wrote the pamphlet entitled "The Doctrine of the Atonement." The scriptural principles embodied therein constitute the basis of what I have here written; and they are consistently applied to the several steps by which men may pass from condemnation in Adam to immortalization in Christ.*

**J.J. Andrew**  
***The Blood of the Covenant***

*The Blood of the Covenant* received a hostile reception by some in England and immediately became a source of contention. This contention pitted Bro. Andrew and Bro. Roberts against each other, lines were drawn, sides were taken, and the topic of resurrectional responsibility became the focus of attention and controversy. At the same time some English brethren began allegations of “extreme teachings” against Bro. Andrew.

When one reads *The Blood of the Covenant*, one may identify specific teachings that would qualify as controversial, however, none were new to the Christadelphian community. Identified controversial subjects include:

- 1) violent death as the decreed punishment for sin;
- 2) 8th day sin;
- 3) Enoch’s translation and,
- 4) Resurrectional responsibility - only those in covenant relationship.

These interpretations were within the Christadelphian community in Bro. Andrew’s day as they are in our community today. Such interpretations are generally accepted and tolerated as of minor consequence. Most do not consider refusing fellowship with their brethren if they believe that Enoch is not literally dead but rather preserved in an unconscious state, or, if they believe that God originally intended the death sentence foretold to Adam to be an immediate cutting off rather than a dying state. Resurrectional responsibility interpretations have always been a source of contention. With some exception, the Unamended community does not subscribe to the interpretation that God will raise those outside covenant relationship strictly for punishment. Our community has traditionally determined not to make this subject a matter of fellowship! Various interpretations are tolerated, generally with a “believe as you will but don’t teach it as doctrine” attitude.

There is little doubt that *The Blood of the Covenant* contains controversy. However, controversy in pioneer writings does not begin nor end with Bro. Andrew. The household has been equally consumed



by controversy from “respected” pioneer writers on such topics as: identification of the sheep and goats; postmillennial rebellion, and, the 2nd resurrection. How has the Unamended household reacted to Dr. Thomas’s interpretation of the “angels that sinned” in Elpis Israel or his 3rd class resurrection in Anastasis? Is our community upset with Bro. Robert’s stand in Christendom Astray that light determines resurrectional responsibility? Despite these controversies, the Unamended community has not discouraged the reading of these works nor have we distanced ourselves from their authors!

Our literature does not reflect any significant use of the word error in regard to any of the topics above, including those topics covered in *The Blood of the Covenant*. Some do use the word “extreme” in regard to Bro. Andrew’s late life stand on resurrectional responsibility, i.e., that God cannot raise... However, the Amended community consciously and consistently has used the word error not only in regard to resurrectional responsibility, but also to Unamended beliefs regarding hereditary alienation, baptism for the remission of sins Adamic and individual, the nature of man, the nature of Christ and the atonement. The Amended community has purposely associated the name of Bro. Andrew with what they term “Unamended Error” and have referred to Bro. Andrew as the father of the Unamended community. Thus the implication is made that Bro. Andrew’s writings on these topics in *The Blood of the Covenant* constituted new teachings introduced at that time.

One of the problems contributing to this confusion for Unamended brethren is a lack of familiarity with the writings of Bro. Andrew. With such a reputation for controversy and extremes, one is bound to proceed cautiously. Is it possible this reputation exceeds the tone of the author, who on the subject of resurrectional responsibility states?

***The dead in Adam have not been brought under the law of the spirit of life” and therefore they are not amenable to its retribution. They have never been freed from the law of sin and death, and therefore the death on which they have entered is endless. To bring them out of the grave or further punishment would be to terminate one endless death for the purpose of inflicting upon them another.***

*Cannot God raise anyone, and for any purpose? No; because to do so would stultify His own word. God has chosen to regulate His action in regard to death and resurrection by law. He has decreed that death must follow sin, and that such death can only be terminated or averted by justification from the sin which caused it. The endless subjection to death of unjustified sinners is essential to the fulfillment of “the law of sin and death”; and, on the other hand, the deliverance from the grave of those who have died after being justified whether faithful or unfaithful is equally necessary to the fulfillment of “the law of the spirit of life.” To stop the operation of “the law of sin and death” without justification from sin for the purpose of applying a feature confined to “the law of the spirit of life,” would introduce confusion, and be a violation of justice; it would also destroy the distinction between two laws of an antagonistic character.*

*God has shown, both by word and deed, that strict adherence to His own laws is a supreme feature of His character*

**J.J. Andrew**

*The Blood of the Covenant*

**# 32. Objections p. 42**

The question that we must individually ask ourselves is, ... are we personally offended by Bro. Andrew's interpretation? Is he limiting the power of God or merely recognizing God's laws? Do these beliefs in any way affect those who seek to serve God, those in covenant relationship, those who must appear before the judgment seat of Christ to be judged according to what they have done? In other words, does this brother's interpretation of what God, through His independent power, may or may not do to those outside the covenants of promise, stir us to action? The Amended fellowship felt this interpretation warranted amending the statement of faith and excluding from fellowship all who would not confess that resurrectional responsibility was related to light and not covenant making. But traditionally, the Unamended fellowship has been content to consider resurrectional responsibility of enlightened aliens an open question that should not affect fellowship.

Returning to *The Blood of the Covenant*, was it indeed, as is the prevailing belief among many brethren, the cause of the Amendment? None can deny that it was at the least a catalyst as it set in motion, or

brought to the forefront, this controversy between brethren already holding divergent views. Bro. Andrew indicated he was aware of a wide divergence of belief, and his forceful contention that God would not raise any outside of covenant relationship was a challenge to those who believed otherwise. But, was this brother's written interpretation of such profound significance to bring about a step as drastic as separate fellowships?

*The Blood of the Covenant* was published in February 1894. Bro. Roberts immediately responded with a pamphlet entitled *Resurrection to Condemnation* in which he states:

*It is with no pleasure that I write an answer to the pamphlet that has just been published by brother J.J. Andrew, of London, entitled, "Blood of the Covenant." The personal respect in which I hold him; the number of good things that the pamphlet contains; the advantage given to the enemies of the truth by conflict among its friends; and the discouragement and distress that must necessarily be caused to many who are waiting for Christ by the flood of mystifying technicalities let loose upon them from quarters where edification ought to be looked for...*

**Robert Roberts**

*The Resurrection to Condemnation*

**p.5**

Although it is clear that Bro. Roberts is writing to counter Bro. Andrew's views on resurrectional responsibility, he gives us indication that the dispute was not of fellowship proportions, i.e., he speaks of his personal respect for Bro. Andrew, he notes that *The Blood of the Covenant* contains a "number of good things", and, he characterizes the disputed interpretations as "mystifying technicalities."

Bro. Williams also takes note of the issue and enters the debate in a article published in the June, 1894 *Advocate*:

*What is the matter with you over there? Who is this man that you are venting your cruelty on?... Is all this fuss because he does not believe in the resurrection of some out of Christ? No, that cannot be, for some in nearly*

*every ecclesia have not believed that ever since the revival of truth in this nineteenth century and no such fuss as this has been raised. No; it is not because he did not believe in the resurrection of some out of Christ; but it is because he had made that belief offensive by continually forcing it upon the attention of the ecclesia and has sent out a pamphlet giving vent to his beliefs. Well, since the difference between him and yourselves was not considered an essential one it would have been wiser on his part not to make it offensive;...*

**Thomas Williams**  
***Advocate June 1894***  
**p.277**

Bro. Williams takes exception to the treatment of Bro. Andrew by brethren in England. Noting that divergent viewpoints on resurrectional responsibility had always been present and tolerated, he characterizes the issue as “not essential”. He further comments that as the subject was not essential it would have been more prudent on Bro. Andrew’s part to not force it.

If these statements of Bro. Roberts and Bro. Williams are to be taken as representative of the fellowships they wrote and spoke for, we could assume that the controversy might well have run its course and faded. After all, if the issue was truly a “technicality” and an “unessential” belief, should not cool heads have prevailed? It is clear from his writings in the *Christadelphian* that Bro. Roberts never swayed from his belief in the resurrection of enlightened rejecters, but neither did he suggest making it a fellowship issue. There has been speculation that Bro. Roberts acted as an impediment to extreme factions within the household who were insisting upon elevating this issue to a test of fellowship. Although the Amendment to the Statement of Faith in 1898 addressed only the proposition on resurrectional responsibility, by that time there were other related areas of disagreement which divided the two fellowships and which were later to be labeled “J.J. Andrew errors” by the Amended.

Note: *The Blood of the Covenant* was first published in 1894 and a second edition was issued in 1913. Since that time 3 editions have been issued, John W. Teas - Conway, Arkansas 1927, The Dorchester Massachusetts Christadelphian Ecclesia 1967, and Christadelphian Publications - Richmond, Virginia 1985

## **BRO. ANDREW'S CHANGE IN BELIEF**

The fact that Bro. Andrew had himself undergone a change in belief on the subject of resurrectional responsibility is a critical factor in this assessment. Not only does this change contribute to our understanding of the development and maturing of Bro. Andrew's teachings on this subject, it also aids in our understanding of the fierceness of the reaction against him. Bro. Andrew was considered one of their own. He was a respected writer and contributor to *The Christadelphian* with strong ties to Bro. Roberts. For Bro. Andrew to forcefully put forth a viewpoint on a controversial topic in opposition to Bro. Roberts was a serious challenge. However, though he was taking Bro. Roberts to task for having drifted from earlier positions to erroneous positions, many were aware that Bro. Andrew had earlier been on record as believing in resurrectional responsibility of enlightened rejecters. In 1870, 24 years prior to his writing *The Blood of the Covenant*, Bro. Andrew published Jesus Christ and Him Crucified (later reprinted as The Real Christ). In this work Bro. Andrew states:

*All men, however will not then be raised from the dead; for "Where no law is there is no transgression" (Rom. 4:15); and "As many as have sinned without law' shall also PERISH without law" (Rom 2:12). Daniel is, therefore, quite in harmony with the other prophets when he predicts that only some, or "many of them that sleep, "...shall awake.*

*The "many" will comprise all those who, by a knowledge of God's revealed truth, have been brought into a state of responsibility, from the time of Abel to the second appearing of Jesus Christ.*

**J.J. Andrew**  
**The Real Christ**

## **Pp. 174-175**

Bro. Roberts takes note of Bro. Andrew's change in belief and challenges him in the debate held between these brothers in April 1894:

*We have, in past times, dwelt together in unity as regards the particular issue raised tonight, if there is any change, it rests you know where with brother Andrew, who thinks he has discovered that some things he used to think were true are not true...*

*He was not always of this mind. His change of mind might not have necessitated the present meeting, but he has taken steps which involve an attempt to coerce us into the reception of his views,*

### **“Resurrectional Responsibility Debate”**

#### **Robert Roberts - First Night**

Bro. Andrew responds:

*Reference has been made to my change of attitude. Yes, a change from a position which I never deemed strong to one which I do deem strong.*

**Ibid.**

#### **Brother Andrew - First Night**

Even though Bro. Andrew describes his original belief as “never deemed strong”, it was nevertheless known and again thrown back at him as late as 1905 by Bro. Williams. By 1904, Bro. Andrew had, as a result of 10 years of conflict and debate, hardened his position to declare that God could not raise anyone to life not in covenant relationship. He then followed the example of the Amended community by making this issue a test of fellowship. At that point he had refused to fellowship Bro. Williams and submitted his reasons for doing so for publication in the *Advocate*:

*...evidence that has been advanced in pro of that there is no resurrection outside the Abrahamic covenant.*

*When in London you partially recognized this truth, but you also taught that God may, or will, raise some Gentiles for punishment, or for testimony ... (Bro. Andrew)*

Answer

*If you mean by “this truth” that resurrection which is a subject matter of the gospel is “through Jesus” only, and that only those in covenant relation are the subjects thereof I not only “recognized this when in London,” but long before you did, and when you were opposed to it. Indeed, I recognized it at my immersion, and as I told Bro. Roberts, learned it through reading “Twelve Lectures.” When I first heard that you were discussing the question in London, I concluded, from my knowledge of your position previously that you were contending for your old position still, and it was under this impression I commence reading “The Blood of the Covenant” by which, to my surprise, I learned of your change (Bro. Williams)*

**“An Exchange of Views”**

**Reprinted in Life and Works of Thomas Williams**

**Pp. 155 & 157**

We note that Bro. Williams quite forcefully responds that he was a proponent of resurrectional responsibility through covenant relationship “long before” Bro. Andrew was, explaining that he was aware of Bro. Andrew’s previous position. Bro. Williams then says something very significant and revealing about the status of resurrectional responsibility belief prior to 1894. He says he “learned it through reading Twelve Lectures” written by Bro. Roberts! This testimony of Bro. Williams points out not only the “open” nature and toleration of beliefs on this subject, but also the contradictory understanding held by pioneer brethren as they struggled with this doctrine. In such an era it is easy to understand Bro. Andrew’s explanation that he had accepted what he believed to be a common understanding on a non essential subject in 1870, while maturing to a more studied position in 1894. Bro. Andrew offers further explanation on his change in belief in the March, 1895 *The Sanctuary- Keeper*:

*It was this and similar unsound arguments which satisfied me that the belief in resurrection out of Christ was untenable. First, it was said that any in Adam could be raised through the blood of Christ, and then it was contended that even Christ was not raised through his own blood. When such contradictory and unscriptural reasoning is required to bolster up any tenet it is obviously based on an unsound foundation. It was to me quite a revelation to find that a fundamental truth concerning Christ's death and resurrection could be so perverted by those professing his name; and, perceiving the danger involved, duty compelled me to oppose it and to use every opportunity for setting forth the teaching of the Scriptures.*

**J.J. Andrew *The Sanctuary - Keeper*  
Volume 1 (March, 1895) p. 125**

In summary, Bro. Andrew's forceful contention in *The Blood of the Covenant* for his changed beliefs regarding resurrectional responsibility became the focus of attention and criticism. However, *The Blood of the Covenant* was written to defend scriptural principles of the atonement and addressed a host of subjects critical to that doctrine. Bro. Andrew explained that he had observed a change in beliefs appearing in *The Christadelphian*, which he believed resulted from an effort to maintain belief in resurrection out of Christ. Thus, his advocacy for atonement principles came at a time when the popular trend was going in an opposite direction and this put him in conflict with Bro. Roberts. Christadelphians in America managed for several years to avoid the severity of the conflict and open discord evident in England. As events unfolded, Bro. Andrew and Bro. Williams shared for the most part a common understanding of doctrine. In the following section we will examine the relationship between these two pioneer brethren.

## **BRO. ANDREW'S RELATIONSHIP WITH BRO. WILLIAMS**

Understanding the relationship between these two defenders of Unamended doctrine is a critical element in an assessment of Bro.



Andrew. The Amended community has painted both of these brothers with the same brush in that they identify the “Advocate” community with “J.J. Andrew errors”. The Unamended community respects the work and efforts of Bro. Williams but is historically uncertain as to Bro. Andrew and his relationship with Bro. Williams. It is generally believed by many that Bro. Williams did not approve of Bro. Andrew due to Bro. Williams having labeled him as extreme, and perhaps an assumption is made that Bro. Williams disapproved of *The Blood of the Covenant* as well.

What we actually see is initial approval and support for Bro. Andrew by Bro. Williams. This approval and support is evident over the period 1894 to 1904. In 1904, there was a change in their relationship brought about by Bro. Andrew. It was at that point that he refused to fellowship Bro. Williams resulting in Bro. Williams’ characterization of Bro. Andrew’s changed position as an “extreme claim and fellowship attitude.”

In 1894 when *The Blood of the Covenant* was published, we find that Bro. Williams rushed to the support of Bro. Andrew and sharply criticized his English brethren for their “cruel” treatment. In the June, 1894 *Advocate*, under the title of “What Is The Matter With You Over There?”, he defends both Bro. Andrew and *The Blood of the Covenant*:

*Wait a little bit, brethren; ... Give that man you have at your feet, whom you are kicking, bruising and stabbing, a chance to breathe. ...What is the matter with you over there? Who is this man that you are venting your cruelty on? ... The J.J. Andrew who has been a faithful and able and loving brother lo, these many years?*

*...Now let me beg of you to consider if all these false and ridiculous charges have not increased one wrong into a legion? ...for here you come running and rushing and stumbling over each other to charge this brother with “limiting the power of the Holy one of Israel;” with denying “the supremacy of God;” with “sitting in judgment” and “assuming God’s prerogative;” with “insulting God, “ etc. Is it that one “limits the power of the God of Israel” because he thinks God’s own arrangement according to His revealed plan is so and so?...*

*Are we at baptism delivered from anything we received from Adam? Your answers show that the complaint of the circular was not without foundation; for you ridicule the very thought of Adam's sin being imputed to us,...*

*...In this excited assault upon Bro. Andrew you have been cutting and slashing till your own positions you occupied when in a normal state have been abandoned and the most reckless statements made.*

*...I received his book, read it carefully; agreed with many things it contained, differed from many other things. One thing, however impressed me, and that was that a becoming spirit, which all his writings show to be characteristic of the man, pervades the book throughout.*

*As it is, your duty is to recall the false things you have imputed to him and escape the dangerous results of bearing false witness against your neighbor.*

...

**Thomas Williams**

**“What Is The Matter...?”**

***Advocate* June 1894**

**Pp. 277, 278, 280, 281, 282**

It is clear that Bro. Williams does not consider Bro. Andrew or his writings to be dangerous, although he did feel that Bro. Andrew had made his position on a non-essential belief offensive by forcing it.

What followed over the next few years would change the relationship between these two brothers. Bro. Williams' advice to the English brethren was not heeded and the Amendment was introduced four years later in 1898. The Christadelphian body in England was divided into defensive camps. It was a period of bitterness and open strife. In October 1900, Bro. Williams comments upon the state of the household in England in an *Advocate* article entitled, “A Rallying Point”:

*In view of the divided state of the brethren of the British Isles it has become difficult for one to go from place to place without offence on one side or another. This deplorable state of things has arisen largely of late from disputes and differences on Adamic condemnation and justification in Christ,*

*and the “third class resurrection” theory. The result is the existence here of not less than seven different bodies “Partial inspirationists,” “Renunciationists,” extremists on third class resurrection, those who agree with the latter partly but who allow “doubters,” those who do not make the third class matter a test of fellowship, and those called “The Andrew Party.” What a wilderness to travel in!*

*The brethren in America have succeeded in keeping these troubles from their shores...*

*At present most of them stand firmly on the old foundation occupied for forty years, ... “The Old Birmingham Statement of Faith and Basis of Fellowship.”...*

**Thomas Williams**  
*Advocate Oct. 1900*

**Reprinted in Selected Works of Thomas Williams**  
**Pp. 487-488**

The charged atmosphere in England changed the brotherhood and it changed Bro. Andrew. In 1905 Bro. Williams published “An Exchange of Views” in which he revealed that Bro. Andrew had refused to fellowship him the previous year. He further labeled Bro. Andrew as “extreme” in his new contention that God could not raise the uncovenanted and his decision to elevate that belief to a test of fellowship. This exchange is reprinted in the Life and Works of Thomas Williams published by the Advocate Publishing Committee in 1974. As a preface to this article, the editors wrote:

*The following article, “An Exchange of Views Between Brother J. J. Andrew and Brother Thomas Williams” is reproduced here in part in order to correct the impression or belief long held by many, that these two brethren held and taught the same ideas relating to resurrectional responsibility. As this article demonstrates, this was not so; they did not agree, and they were not in fellowship one with another.*

Life and Works of Thomas Williams  
Editors’ note p. 152

This preface makes claims which require scrutiny. It indicates that the “Exchange” will “correct the impression or belief long held by many” and states, “they (Bro. Andrew and Bro. Williams) did not agree” and “they were not in fellowship one with another.” As no time periods are specified relative to this characterization of their relationship, one might be left with the impression that these two brethren had never agreed, or, that Bro. Williams was distant from Bro. Andrew. Such conclusions would be in error. Fortunately, the article contains the necessary clarity to define their relationship as well as their standings on doctrinal issues and fellowship. Bro. Williams begins the article with an overview of events and then prints Bro. Andrew’s letter with his own responses after each paragraph. Bro. Andrew begins:

*My reasons for declining to fellowship you, when in London the early part of last year were given you in writing;*

**J.J. Andrew *Advocate* July 1905**

**“An Exchange of Views”**

**Reprinted in Life and Works of Thomas Williams**

**p.153**

As this article originally appeared in the July 1905 *Advocate*, it appears Bro. Andrew declined to fellowship Bro. Williams the previous year, 1904. This action, occurring in 1904 is what Bro. Williams refers to as Bro. Andrew’s extreme:

*We are sorry, however, that he still strives to justify his extreme claim and fellowship attitude on the question of resurrection, namely, that God has so circumscribed His power by the law of the resurrection that it is impossible for Him, in the future, to raise any one to life again, for any purpose, who is not in the “everlasting covenant,” and, moreover that an acceptance of this claim must be made a basis of fellowship.*

Thomas Williams

Ibid. p. 152

Thus it appears that it is Bro. Andrew's hardening of position in 1904 that Bro. Williams objects to, and, it is at this point that "they did not agree" and "they were not in fellowship one with another." Later, in the "Exchange", Bro. Williams says:

*...From the beginning of the controversy you had appeared publicly in agreement with me, you heard my address and answers to questions in Barnsbury, and you afterwards voted to invite a return visit ...Then suddenly you became a busy opponent.*

*...In this you have gone to the extreme, impaired your usefulness and humiliated those who defended you before you changed from the "happy medium" to the presumptuous extreme.*

Thomas Williams

Ibid. Pp. 155,160-161

Bro. Williams reminds Bro. Andrew that "from the beginning of the controversy" there was apparent agreement between them. That beginning was ten years earlier, 1894! Another clarification that is made by Bro. Williams in the "Exchange" is that the "extreme" position of Bro. Andrew in 1904 was a change from what he had taught and been associated with for the previous ten years:

*You admit, then, that the change in your fellowship attitude was the result of a change in your belief and thus you admit that it was through no fault of mine. You need not date your former attitude as far back as the writing of "The Blood of the Covenant;" for it was in the year 1900 that you wrote me that if one believed that God, "by His independent power" outside the law of resurrection, might "raise some others" you would not consider it a barrier to fellowship. It was not long before our last visit to London that you helped to quiet a disturbance in Camberwell by showing the brethren there that they were going too far in making a test of fellowship upon the basis of limiting the "independent power" of God to the resurrection of those only who are in covenant relationship. Your change was a very sudden one;...*

**Thomas Williams**

**Ibid. p. 153**

Bro. Williams says, “You admit then that the change in your fellowship attitude was the result of a change in your belief, and thus you admit that it was through not fault of mine.” Bro. Andrew’s change is characterized as coming late and sudden. Bro. Williams did not withdraw fellowship with Bro. Andrew, the withdrawal was Bro. Andrew’s! Bro. Williams ends his “Exchange” with the following:

*Affectionately your brother, in the Lord, awaiting the day when all our misunderstanding shall end.*

**Thomas Williams**

**Ibid. p. 161**

Though the preface to the “Exchange” states “they did not agree” and “they were not in fellowship one with another”, it is apparent that from 1894 to 1904 they were in agreement and in fellowship. Bro. Andrew died in 1907 and for the last 4 years of his life refused to fellowship Bro. Williams or anyone who would not support his position. There is no indication that Bro. Williams would have failed to fellowship Bro. Andrew had he been given the opportunity. Perhaps the extent of Bro. Williams’s affection and support of Bro. Andrew is best documented in the notice of Bro. Andrew’s death, written by Bro. Williams and published in the August 1907 *Advocate*:

***BRO. J.J. ANDREW DEAD.** Death has at last claimed a devoted, faithful and able brother. Our beloved and highly esteemed brother, J. J. Andrew died early in the month of June. Perhaps of him it can be said as Paul did of himself “For him to die was gain, “ since for five or six years he had been sadly afflicted with paralysis, affecting him physically, mentally and vocally. This affliction, almost at its first attack, brought to a close a long life of usefulness in the Truth, and as we believe, almost terminated that probation which will receive approval of the Lord when the time of dispensation of*

*rewards comes. It was up to that time it could be said of our dear brother that he had fought a good fight, he had kept the faith, he had finished his course. The lingering days that followed till death came may not be counted.*

*For nearly forty years Bro. J. J. Andrew has been a power of good in the work of the Truth, both by pen and by tongue, amid especially by example as seen in a life that adorned the doctrines he was so well able to forcefully yet calmly, and logically set forth. In the battles which the Christadelphian fought for years for the purity of the Truth, who did more able and valiant work than Bro. J. J. Andrew? While others rushed in amid, perhaps, vehemently met the first onslaughts, it was Bro. Andrew's calm, logical work of clearing up all difficulties amid removing all obstacles that helped more than anything else to fortify and establish the strongholds of the Truth. He was so constituted that whatever he took in hand to do, it must be done thoroughly. He was a veritable embodiment of precision, and so long as he was spared affliction he was able to largely counteract the tendency of 'this characteristic to run to extremes. Toward the latter part of his life the Christadelphian world had the sad opportunity of witnessing how suddenly friends could become bitter foes. But aggravating as were some of the tongues that "set on fire of Gehenna," our dear brother, who is now at rest from it all, never retaliated, but made manifest that he had well learned the lesson of the Master who, "when he was reviled, reviled not again." Take your rest, dear Bro. Andrew, in death's silent and undisturbed repose. Our turn may come ere long; but our prayer is that when the trumpet shall sound to wake the Lord's sleeping ones we shall be worthy as we believe you are to receive the longed-for words from the lips of our absent Lord, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."*

**Thomas Williams**  
**Advocate August 1907**  
**Pp. 248-249**

As a point of clarification it might be helpful to review Bro. Andrew's position regarding the resurrection of enlightened rejecters during the period of 1894 to 1904 as referenced by Bro. Williams in the "Exchange". Although Bro. Andrew stated in *The Blood of the Covenant* that God would not raise enlightened rejecters for judgment, he

nevertheless allowed for belief in others being raised by God's independent power:

*The question of making resurrection of Gentiles out of Christ a test of fellowship depends upon the way it is held.*

*If it be recognized that Adam brought death upon the entire race by his sin, that baptism into Christ frees men from the permanent power of death, and that such of the baptized as die will rise through their relationship to Christ, but that it is possible God may by His independent power, raise some others, I should not consider it a barrier to fellowship.*

*But if it be contended that some Gentiles out of Christ will be raised on the same basis as those in Christ, this contention would be a barrier to fellowship.*

**J.J. Andrew**

**Advocate October 1900**

**Reprinted in Selected Works of Thomas Williams  
p.489**

The distinction drawn here by Bro. Andrew between the possible resurrection of those out of Christ and the certain resurrection on a sure basis of those in Christ was in fact a considered and accepted position within the household. Bro. Roberts had earlier been on record in support of this position, noting the "inappropriateness" of bringing forth enlightened rejecters upon the same basis and at the same time with the household of faith:

*Rejecters of the Word, who do not come under the law of Christ by belief and obedience may be reserved till the close of the thousand years. It does not seem reasonable that those who put away the counsel of God from themselves should be passed over without judgment, and yet, since they do not become constituents of the household of faith, their resurrection at the time when account is taken of that household would seem inappropriate. May they not be dealt with at the end?*

Robert Roberts



## THE LAST YEARS

Bro. Andrew's last years (1904-1907) are the most difficult to understand or explain. He separated himself from those with whom he agreed on essential doctrine, the "old foundation" as Bro. Williams termed it. Why did such a staunch brother, having recognized and defended against the error and excesses evident around him separate himself from brethren who supported him? In hardening his position and elevating that belief to a test of fellowship he in effect followed the extreme example of the Amended community. We may never fully understand the forces that brought him to this point, but considering the hostility of the Christadelphian community in England at that time, perhaps his action was predictable! Where such animosity and conflict exist there is typically a hardening of positions and a withdrawal into camps with resulting loss of perspective. This is referenced in Principles and Proverbs and seems most applicable to the experience and decisions of the brotherhood during this period:

### *The Weightier Matters*

*When there is failure to maintain the principle of balance, the greatest danger is that the very first principles of right conduct may be neglected, while all attention is bestowed upon matters of little importance which for the moment chance to loom large. This indifference to essentials and scrupulous whitening of exteriors is such a common failing of humanity that we can gather lessons from almost all part of history*

*The mind grows along the line of its activities. That is why men always tend to exaggerate the importance of matters to which they have given much attention or which have been the subject of their discussion. ... In the most natural manner they would exaggerate the importance of these subjects while the essential principles on which they agreed received no attention.*

**Islip Collyer**  
**Principles and Proverbs**

### Chapter 3, p.16

Bro. Williams, however, publicly offered his insight into Bro. Andrew's change. He attributed the change to the influence of others, and in the "Exchange" states:

*...It was just before my arrival, when a few excitable sisters were using their influence in favor of the extreme attitude, that you suddenly changed.*

*...I was not blind to the fanaticism of excited sisters. I saw your weak condition, and I told the truth and gave the facts when, to shield you, I offered the real explanation "Feminine fanaticism" was my explanation, though you, the unconscious victim, could not be expected to see it.*

**Thomas Williams**

*Advocate July 1905"*

*An Exchange of Views"*

**Reprinted in Life and Works of Thomas Williams**

**p.161**

Bro. Williams had kept his readership informed of Bro. Andrew's poor health and here he attributes the hardened position to the manipulations of others. In the notice of Bro. Andrew's death printed two years later, Bro. Williams again references Bro. Andrew's afflictions "toward the latter part of his life."

Bro. Ken McPhee's Christadelphian History also comments upon Bro. Andrew's poor health as a possible factor contributing to his situation during his last years:

*Brother Andrew had been an excellent student of Scripture and had been a tower of strength to Robert Roberts as his assistant in the work of publishing The Christadelphian." As we read his writings produced in his early years, the 1870's and 1880's, we find his reasoning crisp and clear. In his last years (he died at age 67 in 1907) it is evident that his thinking was not as consistent as it had been formerly. He had had a stroke which seriously undermined his*

*strength. It was in these last years that he assumed and defended the position that Thomas Williams referred to as “Bro. J.J. Andrew’s Extremes.”*

*We have believed for many years that the continuing effort by the Amended brotherhood to blame the division of 1898 on Bro. J.J. Andrew is a gross miscarriage of justice. The charitable thing would be to appreciate the constructive work done by Bro. Andrew in his good years and, with forbearance, extend compassion to him for the difficulties he suffered in his last years.*

**KG. McPhee**  
**Christadelphian History -**  
**A Story of Division**  
**Pp. 3-4**

## **REFLECTION**

As we consider this history many will inevitably ask if it would not have been best if Bro. Andrew had left the issue of resurrectional responsibility alone. After all, it was generally considered a non-essential belief and even Bro. Andrew’s most vocal supporter suggested that he had made it offensive by forcing it. Or, recognizing Bro. Andrew’s perspective, couldn’t he have presented his viewpoint less forceful and tried persuasion rather than assertion? Such questions are legitimate particularly when we view the chain of events that flowed after publication of *The Blood of the Covenant*. However, if we consider as a starting point events that led up to Bro. Andrew’s determination to restate the principles of atonement to counteract a growing number of divergent views, we get a different perspective. In the opening article of *The Sanctuary-Keeper*, Volume 1, Bro. Andrew explains:

*The effort represented by No. 1 of The Sanctuary-Keeper is not a matter of choice, but of necessity using the word in the sense of duty. I should much have preferred to remain, as hitherto, an occasional contributor to the literature of the Truth. But existing circumstances indicate the need for something more. The controversy on resurrection to judgment has made*

*manifest a wide divergence of belief in the meaning of Christ's sacrifice and the benefits now derivable from it. These are not subordinate, but vital, parts of the Truth.*

*The Sanctuary-Keeper*  
**Vol. 1 July 1894**  
**p.1**

Earlier that year Bro. Williams had likewise taken Bro. Andrew's critics to - task on doctrinal grounds:

*The question really is, does baptism have anything to do with Adamic sin? In other words, are we at baptism delivered from anything that we received from Adam? Your answers show that the complaint of the circular was not without foundation; ..., since you deny that Adamic sin is imputed to his children? Read "Revealed Mystery, "pages 24 and 27, and you will see how your phraseology has of late been changed ... you have been cutting and slashing till your own positions you occupied when in a normal state have been abandoned and the most reckless statements made.*

**Thomas Williams**  
**"What Is The Matter...?"**  
*Advocate June 1894*  
**Pp. 280, 281**

It appears that a showdown was inevitable! If Bro. Andrew hadn't assumed the task; it would have fallen to someone else, possibly Bro. Williams.

Still, should we not assess the style chosen by Bro. Andrew to defend the atonement? Does this not impact our consideration of his offender/defender status? Could he not have presented his beliefs in a less forceful manner and perhaps been more persuasive, particularly in addressing resurrectional responsibility? Hindsight may be an important factor in our determination. And yet, friendly persuasion wasn't the style of that day nor has it ever been a preferred feature of the truth. We find that the truth has always been presented and defended with uncompromising passion! We know this to be true of the prophets and

the apostles. When considering pioneer brethren in the 19th century, we note that Robert Roberts described Dr. Thomas as “a person of self reliance with an independence almost to the point of eccentricity”. Dr. Thomas was known to be “intolerant of ignorance” and “uncommonly frank.” Robert Roberts and Thomas Williams were not known to mince words! Political correctness was not a consideration for these brethren who were passionate and jealous for the truth. Would we have expected Bro. Andrew’s approach to be any less?

## **SUMMARY AND IMPACT**

After reviewing Bro. Andrew’s reputations, writings, relationships and last years, most will probably still rely heavily upon their personal reaction to his belief regarding resurrectional responsibility in their final assessment. Are we offended when he says, “Cannot God raise again anyone, and for any purpose? No; because to do so would stultify His own word. God has chosen to regulate His action in regard to death and resurrection by law.” If one believes that God will surely raise some for reasons other than judgment, one will probably be offended even if they themselves believe that indeed there are some dead who “shall not rise” according to God’s law. But, is this interpretation of scripture something that strikes at the foundation of our faith, or limits the power of God? Most will agree that God cannot lie, cannot break His promise to Abraham and cannot dispense with His plan for a millennial reign on this earth. In these beliefs we do not see ourselves as limiting the power of God nor are we saying that God is powerless to perform these breaches. What we are attesting to is the attributes and arrangements by which God has declared Himself to us. We believe these to be true, and not only true, but sure!

Even if our personal reaction is to declare Bro. Andrew an offender in this subject matter, is this belief a barrier to fellowship? We recall further that Bro. Andrew, up until the last 4 years of his life, did not consider this issue a barrier to fellowship if some should believe “...that it is possible God may, by His independent power, raise same others . . .”

Thus for all but the last four years of Bro. Andrew's life, (10 years after writing *The Blood of the Covenant* and 6 years after the Amendment), he supported the "open question" stand which has been the position of the Unamended community since the days of Dr. Thomas.

Bro. Andrew unfortunately left that position in 1904 when he hardened his stand and made that belief a test of fellowship. In so doing, he followed the extreme example of the Amended community. In 1898 the Birmingham ecclesia issued a dictum that disfellowshipped thousands who could not agree that light brought responsibility. They declared that to be and remain in fellowship with them one must reject former brothers and sisters. Surprisingly, though they declared resurrectional responsibility an essential belief determining fellowship, no re-baptism was necessary!

Still today many Unamended appear less concerned with the extreme positions of the Amended community than they are with Bro. Andrew, and, with what result? Have labored attempts to disassociate the Unamended community from Bro. Andrew had an unanticipated negative consequence? How have our youth, and our community at large interpreted such distancing? Could repeated concern or disapproval of Bro. Andrew give unintentional support and/or credibility to the Amended community's campaign of associating him with erroneous beliefs? Are our expressions of concern or disapproval balanced by recognition of his role as defender of pre-amendment faith? We must keep in mind that the Amended community labels as "J.J Andrew error" those Unamended beliefs regarding hereditary alienation, baptism for remission of sins- Adamic and individual, the nature of man and the nature of Christ. Disassociation and condemnation of Bro. Andrew by the Amended community seems a logical if not tactical response. However, do we not risk creating confusion and harm to our household if we are perceived as distancing ourselves from the elements of faith which Bro. Andrew persistently defended? They were his beliefs as well as the beliefs of Bro. Williams and they are our beliefs. The error regarding these issues is on the part of the Amended, having begun as a "drift" recognized by Bro. Andrew in the early 1890's and characterized by Bro. Williams as slashed and abandoned positions.

Has 100 years of controversy or disassociation with Bro. Andrew contributed to a de-emphasis on the differences that separate the Unamended community from the Amended community? We certainly recognize that some within the Unamended fellowship openly question the significance of these beliefs. Are our lectures and class lessons restricted by attempts toward “political correctness” in order to avoid divisiveness or offense?

The purpose of this review was to provide relevant documentation whereby we might evaluate the person of John James Andrew. In response to his standing reputations, the challenge was issued to determine if Bro. Andrew should be considered an offender or defender. Many will probably conclude that both characterizations apply. Is he not due credit or praise for his defense of the Truth as well as compassion for his late life extreme? A second obvious conclusion is that the Unamended community owes its existence to the tireless efforts of Bro. Andrew and Bro. Williams in defending Unamended tenants of faith. Bro. Andrew was an effective writer who presented his ideas clearly and succinctly. *The Sanctuary-Keepers* are considered by many Unamended as valuable additions to their libraries while they are unknown in other circles. Should brethren be discouraged from reading Bro. Andrew’s work? We readily read Amended authors, confident that we can recognize and separate truth from error. Do we not as readily owe to Bro. Andrew understanding and fairness, if not recognition?

James Washeck  
St. Louis, Missouri  
February, 2002