

# Christadelphian History

John Thomas begins publication of The Apostolic Advocate. Published for 6 years.

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1843

John Thomas publishes The Investigator and Independent Advocate of Truth

John Thomas begins publication of The Herald of the Future Age. Published for 5

1844

years.

1845

1846

1847

John Thomas baptised

1848

1849

First edition of Elpis Israel published by John Thomas

1850

1851

John Thomas begins publication of The Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come. Published for 11 years.

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1859

Robert Roberts publishes The Investigator

Tudor heresy: William Tudor denied the Abrahamic Hope, the Israelitish nature of the Hope, was part of the gospel.

1860

The manuscript form of The Messenger of the Churches (Dowie) was replaced with a new printed magazine of the same name and editor. This Messenger of the Churches, (being the second one), was to run from 1860 - 1870, first from Edinburgh, and later from Dundee. There would be three more after this one folded. Dowie holds the ideas of the inherent immortality of the soul, "an immortal fireproof devil", and a futuristic interpretation of the book of Revelation.

1861

Eureka volume 1 published

American Civil War begins; The Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come is suspended with plans to resume publication in 1863 but was never resumed.

1862

Twelve Lectures written by Robert Roberts. Later expanded into Christendom Astray

1863

1864

Robert Roberts begins publication of Ambassador of the Coming Age

1865

George Dowie of Edinburgh arranges for William Lange to speak in Mumbles, South Wales. Lange speaks for 8 nights -- on the 8th-13th and 15th -- and following this had 11 people immersed, one being Thomas Williams.

1866

Eureka volume 2 published

J.J. Andrew baptised (date approx). See October 1900.

Anastasis published to counter immortal emergence doctrine of Benjamin Wilson group.

1867

1868

"But where no law is there is no transgression. Sin is not imputed when there is no law – for man that understandeth not is like the beasts that perish; hence those only who have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law – that the law of righteousness required by God during the dispensation in which each individual has lived." (J.J. Andrew, The Ambassador, May, 1868)

Eureka volume 3 published

"The tares,' we are told, 'are the children of the wicked one,' – a phrase which comprises, not only unbelieving adversaries, but also all believers who are not faithful to their master; for Jesus says, 'He that is not with me is against me'... we may conclude the burning of the tares immediately precedes the glories of the millennial age." (The Ambassador, J.J. Andrew, December, 1867)

1869

Ambassador of the Coming Age magazine renamed to The Christadelphian by Robert Roberts

1870

"Daniel (12:2), in harmony with other prophets 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. To the faithful portion, styled by Daniel, 'the wise,' resurrection is all-important: it is the gate from the prison-house of the grave to eternal life: without it, they would like the heathen, become 'as though they had not been" (The Real Christ aka Jesus Christ and Him Crucified, J.J. Andrew, pp. 174-175).

1871

Death of John Thomas

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1873

Edward Turney publishes his book Diabolism in which he writes, "If it be asked what Paul means by 'made him sin,' he replies 'flesh and blood,' or 'sin's flesh.' It is undeniable, then, that sin was an element of the flesh of the Son of God, unless we, had rather take the apostacy than Paul for our guide in the matter. The doctrine that Jesus was immaculate renders him of no service at all... It was 'filled with a loathsome disease,' which is sin, and the inevitable end, death." The rejection of this passage would lead to the name "Renunciationist" in 1873.

1874

Edward Turney begins publication of The Christian Lamp, a rival to The Christadelphian magazine and outlet for Edward Turney's clean flesh teachings.

Edward Turney gives a lecture before brethren advocating clean flesh. This would become known as The Renunciationist Controversy. Turney temporarily turns to the Dowieites for fellowship and support. Robert Roberts responds on July 29th with his own lecture which was titled The Slain Lamb. J.J. Andrew and Robert Roberts work closely together to combat "Clean-Flesh".

1875

Robert Ashcroft (34) formerly Congregationalist minister baptised.

1876

"The rejecters of Christ were not 'brethren.' Yet they are to rise from the dead.—(John 12:48.) Consequently it cannot be an 'open question,' 'whether any but the brethren of Christ will be raised from the dead.' None but they will be raised to immortality; but numbers besides them will rise to the shame and the contempt of the terrible epoch of the Lord's coming. This teaching is too explicit and too accordant with justice to be mistaken. The only point in

1877

Birmingham Statement of Faith says, "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

1878

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.'

connection with the subject that may be said to be 'open' is as to the degree of knowledge necessary in our day to constitute a rejecter responsible to resurrection. Where a man knows and believes the gospel, there can be no doubt about his resurrection-responsibility, whether he obey it in baptism or no; for the basis of responsibility is knowledge.(John 3:19.)" (The Christadelphian, 1875, Robert Roberts, p. 473)

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The Ecclesial Guide of 1883 changes wording of clause 5 to "the responsible, (faithful and unfaithful)".

Withdrawal "from ten who are not able to see that unbaptised and knowing rejecters of the truth are responsible" (1884, p. 190). This action upheld by Robert Roberts (1884, p. 382).

The Fraternal Visitor magazine started by those who were called by early Christadelphians, "professed Christadelphians". Brother Roberts wrote concerning one of the first issues, "The Fraternal Visitor... bringing not times of refreshing. It intends to, perhaps, so we must take the will for the deed, in prospect of the true times of refreshing which will stop much that is now going on". Those associated with the Fraternal Visitor became known as the "Suffolk Street Fellowship" and over the years gathered into their bosom all those whom the Christadelphians would have no fellowship with: Dowieites, clean flesh, partial inspirationists, later the British Andrewites. &c. Suffolk

The North London ecclesia issues a new Statement of Faith. J. J. Andrew, is one of the principle authors. Clause 5 reads, "That Resurrection affects those only who are responsible to God by a knowledge of His revealed will; that all these,

G.M. Lees immersed at the Edinburgh Church (Dowieite). He would soon become a writer in The Fraternal Visitor magazine (see 1886). By the mid 1880's Dowieism is part of the Conditional Immortality Mission - a loose group of Dowieites and clergyman whose definition of the gospel is essentially limited to the doctrine of conditional immortality.

(1) In a cunning article in his magazine, The Exegetist, Robert Ashcroft sets forth the claim that parts of the Bible are not inspired. Ashcroft decides for himself which parts are and which parts are not inspired. Arthur Andrew, R.C. Bingley and others will later join him in this movement known as partial-inspirationism Suffolk Street Fellowship develops headed by J. J. Hadley, J. J. Bishop,

Street leaders begin advocating a new platform which was eventually adopted by Central: "Preach the truth and say as little as possible about the errors". That is to say, "what error?". Hate is called love, love is called hate. Evil is good, and good is evil; darkness for light, and light for darkness (Isa 5:20)

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whether just or unjust, faithful or unfaithful, will be raised from the dead at the Second Appearing of Jesus Christ, and will, with the living, appear in a corruptible nature, before the judgment-seat of Christ, to give an account of themselves, and to receive in body according that that which they have done, whether it be good or bad."

"It is further alleged that 'first principles which have been established and settled for forty years are 'recast' and this is adduced as 'proof that there is something unnatural in the argument'. The allegation being untrue, the conclusion based upon it has no weight. A portion of the 'first principles' may be presented in a somewhat different light, but the only really new items are a violent death in relation to Edenic disobedience, and the doctrinal aspect of 'the second death.'" (JJ. Andrew, The Sanctuary Keeper, July 1894, p. 13).

"Islington Temperance Hall, Church Passage, Upper Street, N., April, 1894.—At a business meeting on April 15th, the Islington Ecclesia refused to re-affirm its basis of fellowship against the false theories introduced by brother J. J. Andrew, which are embodied in his pamphlet entitled 'The Blood of the Covenant.' We, therefore, who maintain the truth as it has hitherto been held and taught in the London meeting, have withdrawn from the meeting at Barnsbury Hall [at Islington]. We invite you to meet with us upon the old basis of fellowship, which is explained in the following proposition:—'That we re-affirm our belief that knowledge is the basis of responsibility to God, and that enlightened rejecters are amenable to Resurrection and Judgment, and that we, in accordance with Rule 3, withdraw from those who deny this.'"

On April 3rd and 5th, the Resurrectional Responsibility debate between Robert Roberts and J. J. Andrew was held.

Robert Roberts dies in San Francisco

C. C. Walker takes over editorship of The Christadelphian. He was baptised Sept. 10, 1881, at Melbourne

1901

J. J. Andrew has himself reimmersed, some 35 or so years after he was baptised.

1902

1903

1904

John Bell's Shield Fellowship established, holding amongst other things, the heresy of clean-flesh.

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1911

Thomas Williams unilaterally makes 7 changes to the Birmingham Statement of Faith and in announcing these changes to the basis of fellowship claims that they "raise no question of fellowship"!

1912

1913

Allen Darius Strickler publishes "Out of Darkness" -- a confused advocacy of clean-flesh.

1914

A.H. Zilmer, a converted Lutheran pastor and clean-flesh teacher, takes over as editor of The Christadelphian Advocate (Unamended)

1915

1916

1917

1918

1919

1920

British Andrewites unite with Suffolk Street Fellowship

1921

1922

A.D. Strickler's Ecclesia gives notice that they have taken action against ADS and his teachings

Berean Fellowship created

Harry Fry defends A.D. Stricker's and John Bell's clean-flesh teachings

1923

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1932

1933

A.H. Zilmer taken to task for teaching clean-flesh. Zilmer replies with his own pamphlet entitled "The Charge not Sustained". It is a doctrinally confused self-defense of his position. The Fraternal Visitor, ever a defender of doctrinal error reports: "Bro [Albert] Hall has, we think, taken an extreme view which cannot be supported by scriptural evidence, and has used hard language, which had better be forgotten. Bro Zilmer writes in a thoughtful brotherly way, and is particularly good in his exposition of 1st Peter 2:24". In future issues The Fraternal Visitor would welcome all reports of Zilmer's labors.

The Berean magazine reports "The same leavening is going on in the United States of America. Some few years ago the followers of the late bro. T. Williams (who hold that the question of responsibility to Christ's judgment seat, of enlightened rejectors, should be left an open question) joined hands with the ecclesias who have always tolerated the view that the Scriptures may only be partially inspired. Ostensibly this union was based upon the Statement of Faith in vogue among us prior to 1885.

"Recently bro. A. H. Zilmer of Arkansas, editor of Truth, obtained bro. A. D. Strickler's books and has embraced the views expressed therein. He has published literature advocating the same heresies. This has caused consternation, particularly among those who formerly were associated with bro. T.

Temperance Hall ecclesia meets for the last time in Temperance Hall.

Dawn Fellowship created

1934

Williams, and the editor of the Advocate, bro. A. Hall, has very soundly advocated the truth on the matter and challenged bro. Zilmer's position."

1935

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1937

1938

Bro. Walker turns over publishing enterprise to an association of nine brethren, formed under the title of "The Christadelphian Magazine and Publishing Association, Ltd". John Carter takes over as editor of The Christadelphian.

John Carter rebukes "The Young Christadelphians' Amity Movement" in The Christadelphian. The movement is lead by what he says are young Christadelphians and "professed Christadelphians" of the Central and Suffolk Street fellowships.

1939

C. C. Walker writes against Amity Movement saying they held "heresies" and that they were "tolerationists".

1940

About this year "the Guild of Youth" (like C.Y.C) is established in the Suffolk Street Fellowship by Eric Thatcher who was "a very enthusiastic worker with the Amity movement in the 1930's"

C. C. Walker dies.

1941

The Fraternal Visitor reports that "'The Binding of Satan,' a pamphlet published by Bro. A. H. Zilmer some few years ago, has been reprinted." This was the booklet produced by Zilmer after he adopted A.D. Strickler's views.

1942

John Carter writes "We regret the necessity for publishing further reports on the meetings held in connection with the Young Christadelphians' Amity Movement. We do so because we believe the interests of the Truth are best served by so doing. If the right conditions existed, we should welcome the effort to remedy the disunion that exists, and should be willing to do all in our power to further the effort being made. But satisfactory conditions do not exist. If, instead of treating the differences between the two fellowships as of no importance, an effort was made to bring the ecclesias in the Suffolk Street fellowship into line with our position, we should rejoice in the prospect of a possible re-union. The present methods and aims will not achieve it."

1943

Alfred Norris and Frank Lindars report to The Christadelphian magazine, "We attended a meeting at Dewsbury organised by the 'Young Christadelphians' Amity Movement,' and we give you our impressions for you to use as you think fit. We felt disappointed with the meeting because of the attitude taken by this movement. There were four addresses, principally noticeable for sentimentality, and the avoidance of the real issues."

1944

1945

Serious new efforts are underway to bring union between the Christadelphians of the Central fellowship and the community once called "professed Christadelphians" of the Suffolk Street fellowship. The formula for union is described by its supporters thus: "deciding carefully to avoid all questions which had made for disunity in the past, we resolved that statements of faith issued by T.H. and Suffolk Street, did not constitute differences justifying divided fellowship".

1946

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1952

Jersey City Conference and subsequent merging of most Berean ecclesias with Central

1953

Christmas Evans purchases William Norrie's (Edinburgh) book entitled The Early History of the Gospel of the Kingdom in Britain from G.M. Lees (Edinburgh). The book is a pro George Dowie, anti-Christadelphian history.

1954

1955

Central and Suffolk Street delegates meet to draw up terms of union.

1956

Old Paths Fellowship created

1957

Union between Central and Suffolk Street Fellowships

1958

George McHaffie of the Edinburgh Church writes Christadelphia Redivivus -- a defense of the basic doctrines of the apostasy

1959

The rehabilitation of Edinburgh's George Dowie begins in the pages of The Christadelphian by Christmas Evans. George Dowie is now called "Brother Dowie" though Christmas Evans notes that Mr. Dowie "expressed his belief in a personal devil"

1960

1961

Publication of The Endeavour magazine begins -- the endeavour of the magazine is to bring Christadelphians to the Mother of Harlots.

1962

1963

Louis G. Sargent takes over as editor of The Christadelphian

"Reform there must be if we are to be faithful witnesses, but it must be back to what some now regard as the materialistic spirit of early Christadelphians who were ever speaking of a real land, a real kingdom, a real city and a real political King who would conquer the world for God in a real military war. The alternative, and I must say it, however kindly I feel toward the Endeavour brethren and sisters, as individuals, the alternative is forward with the Endeavour, and the Christadelphian movement, in the widest and non-institutional sense of the word, will be dead in twenty years if the Lord delays his coming that long." (Edgar Wille to Endeavour Magazine, spring 1963, pg.17)

1964

1965

L. G. Sargent denies the second acceptance of sin claiming that human nature (moral) is only prone to sin and not 'sin'.

1966

1967

1968

Michael Ashton transfers from Rugby ecclesia to Edinburgh church.

1969

1970

Alfred Nicholls takes over as editor of The Christadelphian

1971

1972

H. A. Twine advocates the clean flesh heresy in Australia. He is accepted into the fellowship of Petrie Terrace (Brisbane) and Caloundra meetings.

1973

1974

A movement advocating present possession of the Holy Spirit arises in the Central fellowship. Attempts to challenge the heresy are dismissed by The Christadelphian. The distinct idea of mental possession of the Word is confused with indwelling Holy Spirit to hide the heresy.

1975

Graham Pearce publishes a book titled The Holy Spirit and Holy Spirit Gifts to answer the growing heresy.

Edgar Wille publishes a book advocating present possession of the Holy Spirit. The CMPA publishes a statement denying responsibility for its contents. Mr. Wille left the Christadelphians and became a church warden and lay reader at St Clement's Anglican Church in Prague.

1976

Williamsburg Christadelphian Foundation established with a stated pupose of "charitable works, service to the brotherhood". The real goal was to bring union to a divided Christadelphian community by getting the youth, that is, the future

Ted Sponberg advocates the "perfect obedience" heresy.

1977

Revelation: A Biblical Approach published by Harry A Whittaker. The book advocates a preteristic interpretation

1978

Melva Purkis expresses his sympathy for the doctrine of present possession of the Holy Spirit and the advancement of this doctrine as "a genuine spiritual renewal". He went on to write "if we are going to maintain our identity at all I am certain that we shall have to subject ourselves to a heart-searching examination, especially on

Letter from Melva Purkis and James Norris appears in the Christadelphian: "We have been perturbed by the departure to the Anglican, Methodist, Baptist and Pentecostal churches of a small number of our young members in various parts of the country and by the dissatisfaction felt by others who as yet are still among us. Some at least of these young people have been brought up in good Christadelphian homes and would have been expected in due

that is, the future leaders of the various fellowships to develop friendships.

of the apocalypse. It was republished by CGAF. (date approximate)

1979

the doctrines of grace, of the living Christ and of the Holy Spirit". He further wrote, "I had hoped to help towards a bloodless revolution which would bring about a change in our official position." (Note: On the one hand he claimed to want to preserve former identity, and on the other to help lead a bloodless revolution with a goal of having 'a change in our official position")

course to become pillars of the brotherhood. We would like to know from young and not-so-young brethren and sisters as to what they feel is needed to remedy this state of affairs. If this letter is read by any who have actually left us, we would be pleased to hear as to what they have found in their new allegiance which is lacking among us."

1980

Harry Fry's book teaching clean-flesh recirculated in Australia, England and America by John Martin with his marginal notes expressing agreement with Fry's ideas.

1981

Apocalypse for Everyman by Alfred D. Norris is published. The book is a futuristic interpretation of Revelation and subscribes to the Catholic doctrine of a coming Antichrist (part 12, p. 116)

1982

Reunion effort (Central/Unamended) rejected by Central Amended brethren on the basis that fundamental doctrinal differences exist between the Amended and Unamended communities. Unamended Reunion Committee members supported dual statements of faith for reunion. Central Amended reunion committee members stated that this would only lead to further division.

The Revelation - Which Interpretation published by Graham Pearce to counter the futuristic and preteristic (Jesuit) theories being promoted.

1983

Julio B. Scaramastro and James Phillips, both Bereans, issue "The Doctrine of Fellowship" portraying various excerpts from brethren J. Thomas and R. Roberts as "the traditional understanding of Fellowship. But nowhere in the book do the pioneer brethren suggest a "world-wide pure fellowship" doctrine.

1984

The Revelation: An Appeal for Right Understanding published by Paul Billington to counter the futuristic and preteristic (Jesuit) theories being promoted.

1985

The Christadelphian magazine publishes an editorial which states "NO ONE who moves around the ecclesial world, either in Britain or anywhere else, can have failed to observe or hear about a practice among a not insignificant number of brethren and sisters which creates a division of loyalty between our own community and other places of worship. The division makes itself known amongst those who regularly attend both a Christadelphian meeting, usually the Breaking of Bread, and some other place of worship—Baptist or evangelical, for example—or some convention or campaign arranged by or supported by groups of churches." ("A Time to Be Honest")

1986

Christadelphians For Unity (a WCF led organization): An appeal to unite the Central and Unamended communities based on facts such as, "we sing from the same hymnbook".

1987

Michael Ashton takes over as editor of The Christadelphian.

1988

H.P. Mansfield is laid to rest. A "graveside" meeting is held by various brethren who are now ready to effect union between Central Australian and the vestiges of Shield (clean flesh) Fellowships.

1989

1990

Julio Scaramastro leaves the Bereans after deciding that the Bereans do not properly practice "The Doctrine of Fellowship". He joins the Maranatha Fellowship.

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Julio Scaramastro, as a member of the Maranatha fellowship, republishes "The Doctrine of Fellowship". The Bereans still distribute the same book as well. Both claim to uphold "traditional fellowship practices", though if one looks at the actions of Brother Thomas and Brother Roberts it will be noted that they practiced Biblical fellowship but did not create a new Fellowship institution every time the Truth was challenged by renegade individuals or ecclesias who were astray. They never claimed Christ could have fellowship with Belial and saw that fellowship responsibility starts with the individual/locally whereas sectarian fellowship starts with the world-wide Institution and works down to the individual.

1996

Alan Eyre makes the wide-sweeping claim in Don Style's Tidings magazine that the terms "defiled nature, clean and unclean flesh, and a host of other Calvinist concepts [are] unknown to the Scriptures of truth".

1997

1998

1999

Christadelphia Redivivus by George McHaffie published by Ruth McHaffie. The introductory note says "This essay offers insight to the thinking which prevailed among a number of our members (Edinburgh) in the closing years of the 1950s." What was the thinking at Edinburgh? Amongst other things that we might have an immortal soul, that souls going to hell for punishment is a possibility, that the early Christadelphian understanding of the atonement "did not arise out of calm reflection but had a flavour of partisanship", that early Christadelphian views on the Holy Spirit were the result of non-Biblical influences on Dr. Thomas &c &c. The Christadelphian for 1985, Edinburgh church reports "With great sadness we report the falling asleep in Jesus of Bro. George McHaffie" (p. 193).

2000

"Interestingly, it is our re-thinking of the atonement, by discussion in Bible schools large and

The "we have knowledge" generation comes of age (history

small throughout the brotherhood, that has transformed the Christadelphians into (at last) an unstoppable international evangelical force... It is our profound conviction that, overall, the Brotherhood is moving in a positive direction. It has never been healthier since the apostolic age. At last we are discerning the theological consequences of our doctrinal faith, and at last we are learning to love the brother and sisters in our ecclesia – the estranged, the wayward, the lost sheep, smokers, refugees, addicts, the heartbroken... those deemed to be guilty of some sexual sin, such as fornication or divorce... May the revolution continue until our Lord shall come." (The 'Christadelphian' Tidings, February 2000)

age (history repeats itself). History holds no lessons for this generation -- just as many of their forefathers were either ignorant of or chose to ignore it. Therefore,

NASU organizers move ahead with plans for union in North America where they can achieve it only creating new division.

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NASU committee takes the formula used in the Central (TH) reunion with the Suffolk Street (Fraternal Visitor) Fellowship: "deciding carefully to avoid all questions which had made for disunity in the past, we resolved that statements of faith issued by T.H. and Suffolk Street, did not constitute differences justifying divided fellowship" (The Christadelphian, 1945, p. 43) Having amalgamated just about everything that original Christadelphians disfellowshipped, Central stands on the verge of being a Universal Christadelphian Church.

Clean-flesh leaders in Australia now feel confident enough in their power to try and start disfellowshipping those who challenge their errors.

NASU unity movement rejected by Unamended.

Tudor Heresy Anew: "Our community is supposedly based on a return to Bible teaching -- 'Back to the Bible', as the campaign slogan used to proclaim. Isn't there a need, therefore, for a careful reassessment of our attitude towards Israel? We need a thoughtful, biblical discussion, in a spirit of humility, as to whether we are trying to fit political developments into a theory based on British politics from the early 19th century rather than on a valid assessment of the message of the prophets and the teaching of Jesus and the New Testament. (Time Watching and Israel, vol.2, p.183, Ruth McHaffie, Edinburgh church)

**As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths. Isaiah 3:12**