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CHAPTER FOUR

THE EMBRYONIC SPIRIT OF PENTECOST

John Alexander Dowie and the Ministry of Divine Healing (1875-1907)

Although he was never a Pentecostal, a significant number of pioneer Pentecostal leaders trace their spiritual heritage to John Alexander Dowie (1847-1907). Dowie spent only eight and half years of his astonishing career in Australia. Yet during this time, he developed a philosophy of ministry and leadership that would catapult him into international fame as a religious leader. John Dowie was an enigma, a figure of contrasts. He was a major contributor to the early development of Pentecostalism, yet he was also in some ways a major hindrance to its acceptance. Dowie was so admired by many Australians that hundreds of them left their homes to live in Zion City in Illinois, the theocratic city he planned, conceived and brought to birth. Yet when he returned here in 1904, he was vilified, scorned and abused by angry mobs in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide and had to flee for safety. Dowie's preaching and teaching indicate a fervent love for Jesus and a longing for holiness and godliness, yet at the end of his life, he was demanding allegiance as Elijah the Restorer and the First Apostle of the Lord Jesus the Christ in the Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion. For all that, the movement he established was a womb in which the embryonic spirit of Pentecost was nurtured.

Ministry in Sydney

Early in 1873, Dowie moved to Sydney from his home State of South Australia, to take up the Congregational pastorate at Manly.¹ According to Dowie, although there had been just 25 or so worshipers when he first arrived, the church was soon ‘filled to overflowing with a most earnestly attentive audience every Sabbath, especially in the evening.’ This evidently represented about a hundred people. The new Sabbath School which he commenced had 70 scholars within three weeks of its opening. Indeed, everything seemed ‘bright and prosperous’ for the new minister.²

Dowie was a passionate pastor. His love for his Saviour and his earnest desire to see his people unreservedly committed to him is indicated in the following letter he wrote to a young convert —

It rejoices me to know that you are growing in grace. Oh, keep very near to Jesus always. Get down very often in prayer, and you will rise in power to do and bear His will in all things. O that we loved Him more, and looked to Him more steadfastly!³

At the same time, from the earliest days of his ministry, Dowie displayed a continuing longing for bigger and better things. He was never satisfied with his achievements. The church may have been full, but it was not enough. He wanted ‘more room, more population, to work on.’⁴

Dowie was also becoming increasingly concerned over social problems, especially alcoholism. He perceived what he called a ‘terrible flood of moral evil.’⁵ Unhappily, the churches were not addressing the real need. They were not preaching the gospel of mercy and pardoning love that would rescue men and women from evil. This could only be done through a baptism of the Holy Spirit. Yet at the same time, he himself felt terribly inadequate for the task.

¹ Dowie was born in Scotland and at the age of 13 migrated with his family to South Australia, where he was ordained as a Congregational minister. For further on Dowie’s background see H.J.Gibbney, ‘Dowie, John Alexander (1847-1907),’ in ADB Vol 4 1851-1890; see also Appendix Ten.

² Edna Sheldrake (ed), *The Personal Letters of John Alexander Dowie* Zion, Ill: Wilbur Glenn Voliva, publisher, 1912, pp.30,42,50.

³ Sheldrake, 1912, p.35.

⁴ Sheldrake, 1912, p.36.

⁵ Sheldrake, 1912, p.37.

‘Oh, how miserably weak and empty of goodness and power do I feel!’ he lamented. ‘God give me more strength and fill me with grace!’⁶

The Manly church continued to grow and by the end of 1874, the building was enlarged and improved. But Dowie became increasingly critical of the established churches and began to denounce them more openly. There was some talk of Dowie’s returning to his native Scotland, but this did not eventuate. So he began to look elsewhere in Sydney and was soon considering the Newtown congregation. This was seen as being ‘next to Pitt Street in importance’ and stood in the midst of a rapidly rising population. Dowie saw it as a challenge, especially as it would require a ‘high order of preaching’.⁷ In February 1875, he began at Newtown. It was a large building, with seating for nearly 1000 people, but only about 120 members.⁸ There were some 350 to 450 on the Sabbath school rolls.

It was during this year, when Dowie was 28 years of age, that he fell in love with his uncle Alexander’s daughter Jeanie. This was clearly a relationship which pleased the daughter more than the father. Alexander was concerned that the marriage of cousins might be detrimental. He was also worried about his nephew’s ability to provide for his daughter. The wedding went ahead on 26 May, the following year, at the prestigious Brougham Place Congregational Church in Adelaide, with its esteemed pastor, the Rev Dr James Jefferis officiating. But for the next few years, there was to be ongoing antagonism between Alexander and his new son-in-law. The successful businessman continued to be concerned about Dowie’s apparently impecunious state.⁹ As for Jeanie, in years to come, she was to be a valuable partner in the ministry, especially to the sick.¹⁰

⁶ Sheldrake, 1912, p.39.

⁷ Sheldrake, 1912, p.58.

⁸ The *Jubilee Souvenir of the Municipality of Newtown*, c.1912, p.75, notes that the building ‘seats easily 800 people.’ The building still stands in King St, Newtown. Today it is the Church of St Helen and St Constantine, a Greek Orthodox church.

⁹ Sheldrake, 1912, p.73ff.

¹⁰ Sheldrake, 1912, p.339.

Divine Healing

Eighteen seventy-five was a hard year, although the congregation continued to grow. Dowie recorded that he conducted some 25 funerals, 20 of them for members of his own church. There was a terrible time of sickness, with ‘fevers of every sort’¹¹. Years later, he claimed he had buried some 30 of his flock, and conducted 40 funerals altogether. The nature of the illness was not specified. It was possibly measles or scarlet fever, or perhaps a combination of both as there were major epidemics of each along the east coast of Australia in 1875-76.¹² The large number of deaths caused Dowie great concern. Why were the sick not healed in 1875 as they had been in AD 75?

There I sat with sorrow-bowed head for my afflicted people, until the bitter tears came to relieve my burning heart ... How my heart longed to hear some words from Him who wept and sorrowed for the suffering long ago, the Man of Sorrows and Sympathies. And then the words of the Holy Ghost inspired in Acts 10:38¹³ stood before me all radiant with light revealing Satan as the Defiler and Christ as the Healer. My tears were wiped away, my heart was strong, I saw the way of healing, and the door thereto was opened wide, and so I said, ‘God help me now to preach that word to all the dying round.’¹⁴

At that very time, he was urgently summoned to the home of a young lady who was dying.

The doctor, a good Christian man ... said, ‘Sir, are not God’s ways mysterious?’ ... ‘God’s way!’ I said ..., ‘How dare you, Dr. K — , call that God’s way ...? No, sir, that is the devil’s work, and it is time we called on him who came to “destroy the work of the devil,” to slay that deadly and foul destroyer, and to save the child. Can you pray, Doctor, can you pray the prayer of faith to save the sick?’ At once, offended at my words, my friend was changed, saying, ‘You are too much excited,

¹¹ Sheldrake, 1912, p.96.

¹² See J.H.L.Cumpston, *The History of Diphtheria, Scarlet Fever, Measles and Whooping Cough in Australia*, Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia Department of Health, 1927, p.513. In 1875, there were 1,541 deaths from measles in Victoria, 752 in New South Wales and 178 in Queensland. In the following year, there were 1,097 deaths from scarlet fever in New South Wales and 2,240 in Victoria.

¹³ Acts 10:38 — ‘How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him’ (AV).

¹⁴ G.Lindsay (ed), *The Sermons of John Alexander Dowie*, Dallas: The Voice of Healing, 1951, p.28.

sir, 'tis best to say "God's will be done." ... Excited! The word was quite inadequate for I was almost frenzied with Divinely imparted anger and hatred of that foul destroyer.

Dowie prayed for the girl and she fell into a deep sleep. Later she awoke, completely recovered. Lindsay records that there were no further deaths in the Newtown congregation from that time.¹⁵ Years later, Dowie claimed that he 'went about laying on hands and saved thousands from dying' and that in the next twelve years, he was called upon to bury only five people.¹⁶ In October 1877, however, he was still lamenting the fact that there was much sickness among the people in Newtown, just as there had been in 1875. The Newtown death rate was higher than elsewhere and he feared another 'dread time of fever'.¹⁷ Then, early on the first Sunday morning in November, 1885, he and his wife faced the death of their own little daughter, Jeanie. Before she died, Dowie realised there was 'no hope of recovery'. He preached that morning on 2 Samuel 12:23 — 'But now she is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring her back again? I shall go to her; but she shall not return to me'.¹⁸ And Dowie himself, suffered from persistent nausea, probably a result of stress.¹⁹

The next year, he wrote to a friend describing himself as 'one whom the Lord has used for four years in the Ministry of Healing, and for nearly twenty years in the Ministry of Salvation through faith in Jesus'. This marks his healing ministry as beginning in 1882.²⁰ Clearly, his ventures into the practice of divine healing were initially spasmodic, with uneven results, and his own recollections were not always accurate.

Dowie was not the first in recent times to promote the ministry of healing. German evangelical leader Johann Blumhardt (1805-1880) began to do so in 1843 in the small village of Mottlingen, in Germany, and in 1852 established a

¹⁵ Gordon Lindsay, *The Life of John Alexander Dowie*, Dallas: The Voice of Healing Publishing Co, 1951, p.26; *Leaves of Healing*, Vol XCVI, No 4, April 1959, p.30.

¹⁶ Lindsay, *Sermons*, 1951, p.28.

¹⁷ Sheldrake, 1912, p.160.

¹⁸ Sheldrake, 1912, p.320.

¹⁹ Sheldrake, 1912, p.218.

²⁰ Sheldrake, 1912, p.328. Carl Lee, Overseer in 1951, claimed that it was in 1884 that Dowie entered 'fully upon that enlarged ministry.' See LH, Vol LXXXVIII, October, 1951, p.77.

healing centre.²¹ About the same time, in 1851, Dorothea Trudel acted on James 5:14f²² and anointed with oil some of her co-workers in the Swiss village of Mannedorf, on Lake Zurich. Their recovery projected her into a healing ministry, and she, too, opened several healing homes. In 1867, Otto Stockmayer launched a healing ministry in Switzerland and later wrote on the subject. It may also be noted that Charles Spurgeon regularly prayed for the sick, with evident success. In America, in 1846, Ethan O. Allen began to teach a correlation between Christian perfection and physical healing. He was followed by Charles Cullis, ‘the single most important figure in the development of the divine healing movement in America.’ After reading the life of Dorothea Trudel, he embarked on a ministry to the sick in 1870. The early 1880’s saw a blossoming of books on divine healing. Carrie Judd Montgomery wrote *The Prayer of Faith* (1880), which was widely distributed. In 1881, Cullis published *More Faith Cures; or, Answers to Prayer in the Healing of the Sick*. In the same year, William Boardman issued ‘*The Lord That Healeth Thee*’ and A.B. Simpson, founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, experienced divine healing. In 1882, the year Dowie began his public healing ministry, South African pastor and writer Andrew Murray became convinced of the veracity of divine healing and A.J. Gordon published his first treatise on this subject, *The Ministry of Healing*. This was soon followed by R.L. Stanton’s *Gospel Parallelisms: Illustrated in the Healing of Body and Soul* (1883) and *The Atonement of Sin and Sickness* by R. Kelso Carter (1884). In 1885, the American revivalist Maria Woodworth Etter began to pray for the sick publicly. Books by Blumhardt, Trudel, Boardman and Cullis were all available in Australia very soon after publication.²³

If 1875 marked the beginning of his belief in divine healing, it seems improbable that Dowie was seriously influenced by this movement. Even in 1882, when he began his public healing ministry, there is little likelihood that

²¹ P.G. Chappell, ‘Healing Movements’ in Burgess et al, 1988, pp.353ff. Following details on the healing movement are mainly from this source. See also Blumhofer, Vol 1, 1989, pp.26ff.

²² James 5:14-15 — ‘Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven.’ (NIV)

²³ SC II:26 30 June 1883.

he would have yet been aware of it. However, it was not long before this situation changed. In 1885, he was invited by William Boardman to attend the London International Conference on Divine Healing, to which he responded with a letter affirming his desire to preach the message of divine healing around the world within three years.²⁴ Later, in 1888, after crossing the United States, he intended to visit England, 'where he planned to meet others who had come to know the truth that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Healer as well as the Savior (sic) of men.'²⁵ Ultimately, he was to take a more radical stance, by opposing the use of medicinal care completely, whereas most of the other advocates of healing saw any valid form of care for the sick as appropriate.²⁶

Social issues

In his Newtown days, however, Dowie was clearly more stirred by other problems. The liquor industry continued to arouse his ire. So, too, did gambling and smoking. He also found himself at frequent odds with Roman Catholicism and Spiritualism. He was regularly critical of the press. He was also still much concerned over the 'languid state' of the churches, including his own.²⁷ He soon began to realise that to be outspoken on these issues might endear him to many people, but it would not win him friends among the leaders of either community or church.²⁸

By October 1877, Dowie was planning to found his own Free Christian Church. In a long letter to his wife, he explained how he would never again accept a denominational church.²⁹ He would be truly independent, something which the Congregational Union, for all its proclaimed liberty of creed, did not allow. Indeed, the spirit of popery was to be found even there.³⁰ Moreover,

²⁴ Hollenweger, 1988, p.116.

²⁵ Carl Lee, 'God's Messenger', LH, Vol LXXXVIII, No 10, October, 1981, p.77.

²⁶ Blumhofer, 1989, p.32; M.Mintern, 'The Founding of the Christian Catholic Church', LH, Vol XCVI, No.4, April 1959, p.27 — 'I took my last medicine in 1902.'

²⁷ Sheldrake, 1912, p.98-106.

²⁸ Sheldrake, 1912, p.134 — 'I was never popular anywhere with our ministers as a whole.'

²⁹ Clearly this was the kind of decision that caused his father-in-law constant concern. Much of Dowie's correspondence to his wife at this time is actually defending himself against charges of irresponsibility from his uncle Alexander. Dowie's approach was simple — the Lord would provide.

³⁰ Sheldrake, 1912, p.138, 188ff.

over the previous five years, only 535 new members had been added to the 43 churches in the Union, which Dowie saw as a cause for ‘humiliation and shame,’ especially since he believed that at least 100 of these had been the result of his own ministry.³¹

Again, it is interesting to reflect on Dowie’s motives for such change. One has already been mentioned — the desire for freedom to minister as he saw fit. The other was ‘a holy passion for the misguided, ignorant, uncared for, and perishing thousands who are in the bondage of Satan in our cities’.³² The third was what might be called a constant sense of destiny. Dowie clearly believed he was made for greater things. Constantly through his letters and comments in the Newtown years, there are hints of dreams of greatness.³³

The Free Christian Church

Dowie resigned from the Congregational Union at the end of 1877 and began independent meetings in the Theatre Royal. Within four weeks, over 1000 people were in attendance. But the venue was costly, and they were forced to move to the Protestant Hall, and then to the Masonic Hall where Dowie was surrounded by a group of several hundred ‘loyal and devoted people’, most of whom were converted through his ministry. However, the winter weather did not help attendances here, the place proved unsuitable for their purposes and money was in short supply.³⁴ Dowie’s father had to come to the rescue to save their furniture from being sold. Gradually Dowie was able to assemble a committee who took responsibility for the financial affairs and the position improved.³⁵ For the first time, members of the new church found themselves being called ‘Dowieites’ — a factor which annoyed Dowie, who only wanted

³¹ Sheldrake, 1912, p.217. The source of Dowie's figures is not known. Recorded statistics for the decade suggest an average growth over the decade of just over 500 members per annum. Congregational membership in NSW rose from 9,253 in 1871 to 14,328. See W.W.Phillips, ‘Religion’ in Vamplew (ed), 1987, p.421. In South Australia, Congregationalism declined from 5.3% of the population in 1861 to 3.7% in 1901. See Hilliard, 1980, p.6.

³² Sheldrake, 1912, p.139.

³³ eg Sheldrake, 1912, p.111, 112, 175.

³⁴ Sheldrake, 1912, pp.206ff, 237ff. Following details are also from this source.

³⁵ Financial embarrassment was to prove an ongoing problem to Dowie. When Wilbur Voliva came from the USA to lead the Zion work in Australia, he found a few people in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide who claimed Dowie owed them money and the debts were settled. See J.Taylor, *Wilbur Glenn Voliva* Zion, Ill: Zion Historical Society, n.d., p.6.

his name 'hidden behind the One Great Name of Christian, which alone God's people should bear.'

By 1879, he was preaching in the large Victoria Theatre, in Pitt Street, Sydney. Here again, crowds of 1,000 people regularly attended his Sunday services. A large number of these were men between twenty and fifty and many free thinkers were drifting into his meetings, some to stay.³⁶ Not only were Dowie's preaching gifts 'extraordinary',³⁷ he was also a prolific writer and pamphleteer. In addition to his voluminous letters, in 1877, he wrote *Rome's Polluted Springs*, a reply to statements by Catholic Archbishop Vaughan. In 1879, he published *The Drama, the Press and the Pulpit*. There were 2,000 copies printed of each.³⁸ In the main, these were the substance of lectures he had delivered in the Victoria Theatre in mid-1879.³⁹ In 1882, *Spiritualism Unmasked* was issued.⁴⁰

Dowie told his father that he had written twenty tracts and distributed some 210,750 copies by late 1879⁴¹ and to an anonymous critic, he replied that there was a weekly average of 6,000 leaflets given away, of which 89,500 were 'direct appeals to the heart and conscience to accept God's gift of pardon, peace and life in Christ', 79,250 dealt with social evils and 42,000 were addressed to Roman Catholics, setting out the errors of their faith.⁴²

During his three years of independent ministry in Sydney, Dowie made two major errors. The first was to offer himself as a candidate at a by-election for the seat of East Sydney in the New South Wales Parliament. There were four

³⁶ See I. Breward, *Australia: The Most Godless Place Under Heaven?*, Mitcham, Vic; Beacon Hill Books, 1988, p.34; Clark, Vol IV, 1978, pp.366f, 385, 399; Roe, 1986, pp.40ff. Dowie would have seen rationalists joining his church as a significant achievement.

³⁷ E.S. Kiek, *An Apostle in Australia*, London: Independent Press, 1927, p.297.

³⁸ Sheldrake, 1912, p.253.

³⁹ See the relevant title pages.

⁴⁰ *Spiritualism Unmasked* contained correspondence between Dowie and Thomas Walker, a lecturer for the Victorian Association of Spiritualists, with an introduction by Dowie. Walker had threatened Dowie with the publishing this material himself, but then prevaricated, so, with the assistance of friends, Dowie became the publisher. All profits went to charity.

⁴¹ Sheldrake, 1912, p.224.

⁴² Sheldrake, 1912, p.253.

candidates — Arthur Renwick, Robert Tooth, T.D.Dalveen and John Dowie.⁴³ Renwick and Dowie were seen as Temperance campaigners. Tooth, on the other hand, was both a Catholic and a supporter of the liquor industry. Dowie had been a late entrant into the election. His supporters saw a seat in Parliament as a short cut to prominence in the community and possibly to the success of the new church.⁴⁴ Dowie campaigned enthusiastically on several issues. He defended the national system of education against denominational (mainly Catholic) schools; he advocated land reform, to make ownership more equitable; he argued for limiting liquor licences; he declared he had no pecuniary interest in standing for parliament; he saw the need for better public services, especially of water and gas; he wanted Chinese immigration restricted; he saw the need for taxation reform; he felt that his habits of life qualified him as a worthy candidate.⁴⁵

But Dowie was unpopular with the community at large, a fact acknowledged by his church secretary and prime supporter, Thomas Hutchinson, who in proposing him as a candidate, admitted that Dowie ‘had made himself obnoxious to a certain section of the community, because he had rebuked iniquity in high places, and therefore ... was not liked’.⁴⁶ Dowie himself felt he was betrayed. He had been assured of support from both the Temperance Platform and the Protestant League, but they both abandoned him. He was not defeated, but sacrificed.⁴⁷ Furthermore, he was scurrilously attacked by his opponents who used his personal financial position against him.⁴⁸

In the final analysis, Dowie was never in the race. The votes were — Renwick, 4,663; Tooth, 2,748; Dowie, 147; Dalveen, 28.⁴⁹ Dowie admitted that this loss

⁴³ SMH, 16 December 1879, p.3.

⁴⁴ A letter which Sheldrake dates 3 September, 1880, refers to Dowie standing for the seat of South Sydney for an election due to take place in November of that year. It is not clear whether this is referring to another by-election after the East Sydney loss, which seems unlikely, or to an earlier attempt to gain a seat in Parliament, in which case, the date of the letter is wrong. See Sheldrake, 1912, p.257ff.

⁴⁵ SMH, 13 December, 1879, p.3.

⁴⁶ SMH, 16 December 1879, p.3.

⁴⁷ Sheldrake, 1912, p.266, 270f.

⁴⁸ SMH, 16 December, 1879, p.3.

⁴⁹ SMH, 18 December 1879, p.5.

seriously affected attendances at his services. Even faithful supporters like Hutchinson fell away for a time. Meetings were now being held in the International Hall, which was too small and cramped, but which was apparently all they could afford. They were hopeful of soon acquiring a property of their own.⁵⁰

Money matters

The second problem Dowie faced involved money. A friend named Holding promised him a sum of 21,000 pounds for the establishment of the work in Sydney. In spite of the improbability of this happening, Dowie believed Holding to be honest and trusted him to provide the money. Dowie's dreams of a tabernacle where they could establish a true church and share the Lord's table blinded him to reality. Also, there was, in Dowie's mind at least, a strong bond of affection between the two men, whom he addressed in one letter as his 'best beloved'.⁵¹ Holding went to England, ostensibly to get the money. Meanwhile, malicious rumours were being circulated that Dowie had already received (and misused?) it. So he left Sydney, in an attempt to visit England himself, but stayed in Adelaide, where letters from Holding continually delayed him. Finally, news arrived of Holding's death. It was with great surprise and considerable outrage that Dowie later met him in Melbourne, posing as a Salvation Army officer.⁵² The whole episode undermined Dowie's credibility and was a factor in the closing of the Sydney work. It was no wonder that Dowie later described Holding as 'a clever scoundrel, with forged credentials, a smooth tongue, great simplicity of manners, and most accomplished hypocrisy'.⁵³ But the matter was to hang over him for a long time. Some fifteen years later, a correspondent to *The Bulletin* gleefully retold the tale.⁵⁴

For a short time, Dowie was associated with the Salvation Army in Adelaide.⁵⁵ Then, in Melbourne, in 1882, he sought employment with a Temperance

⁵⁰ Sheldrake, 1912, p.283; SMH, 31 January 1880, p.1.

⁵¹ Sheldrake, 1912, p.258.

⁵² Sheldrake, 1912, pp.303ff.

⁵³ J.A.Dowie, *Sin in the Camp* Melbourne, Vic: Henry Cooke, 1883, p.8.

⁵⁴ *The Bulletin*, 3 March 1904, p.15.

⁵⁵ Sheldrake, 1912, p.302f.

organisation. The move was unsuccessful. ‘Once more,’ he wrote to his wife, ‘I have to write the discouraging word “failed”’.⁵⁶ Then he was invited to take over the pastorate of the Collingwood Tabernacle, an independent church in Melbourne, Vic, while the minister, C.M.Cherbury, was taking leave of absence. Dowie gladly accepted. Although himself a strong advocate of temperance, he became concerned that unconverted temperance speakers were being allowed the use of the church. Again, this brought the church into conflict. By the time Cherbury returned at the end of the year, Dowie had attracted a measure of support, so much so, that he was accused of being unwilling to hand the church back again. He did leave, but again, took to the pen, this time writing a whole book defending his actions at the Tabernacle.⁵⁷

Ministry in Melbourne

In February 1883, Dowie launched the Free Christian Church, in Fitzroy, an inner suburb of Melbourne, with services in the Town Hall. Probably, some of Cherbury’s congregation followed him. About 100 people attended the first meetings. By the end of 1884, Dowie finally saw the realisation of a dream — the Free Christian Tabernacle was built, a large building in Johnston St, with seating for some 3,000 people.⁵⁸ Dowie later claimed that thousands were turned away daily.⁵⁹

The attendances were impressive, although not exceptional for Christian gatherings with skilled preachers. During this same period, Anglican Bishop James Moorhouse preached regularly to crowds of four thousand people at the Town Hall.⁶⁰ The difference lay in the fact that Moorhouse had an existing constituency to draw on: Dowie had to create his. He was not unsuccessful.

⁵⁶ Sheldrake, 1912, p.397.

⁵⁷ Dowie, *Sin in the Camp*, 1883.

⁵⁸ This building no longer exists, but in 1885 it occupied numbers 52-80 of Johnston Street, which gives an indication of its size. See *Sands and McDougall's Melbourne and Suburban Directory* for 1885 and 1888. When Wilbur Voliva came to take over the work in October 1901, the numbers had dwindled, but rose again under his leadership. The Free Christian Tabernacle building was disposed of, and in May 1904, the building containing the Atheneum and Hibernian Halls was purchased for \$165,000 and became the Central Zion Tabernacle, seating some 1,600 people. The sign ‘Zion’ was said to be readable from a mile away. See Taylor, *Voliva*, p.5f.

⁵⁹ *The Register*, 11 March 1907.

⁶⁰ Roe, ‘Challenge and Response,’ JRH 5:2 December 1968, p.159.

Lindsay claims that at least once, as many as 20,000 people attended an open air rally.⁶¹

Services were an interesting blend of non-conformism and traditional liturgy.⁶² It was now that Dowie began to preach more consistently on the subject of divine healing. Health has always been a common concern and there have always been those willing to profit by it. In times of uncertain medical care, in particular, people may be more open to experimentation in alternative treatment. Certainly, in the press of the day, health remedies were prominently advertised.⁶³ Dowie's preaching about healing began to attract people, and as a result, several notable cures were recorded. A young pregnant married woman named Lucy Parker was blind in one eye, the result of cancer. After healing prayer at the Free Christian Tabernacle, sight was restored to her eye and later, her baby was born normal and healthy. A sixteen year-old boy, crippled from tuberculosis in the bones, recovered.⁶⁴ In December 1887, 3,500 copies of a *Record of the Fifth Annual Commemoration* were published which included these and over 70 further testimonies of healing.⁶⁵

Soon Dowie formed the International Divine Healing Association with branches in various parts of the world.⁶⁶ Dowie was careful to insist that divine healing was very different from spiritist or occult healing.⁶⁷ His own understanding of it is clearly outlined in the following extracts from an address to a ministers' conference in the US —

First: That Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever, and being so, is unchanged in power.

⁶¹ Lindsay, 1951, p.76.

⁶² LH XV:3 7 May 1904, p.58.

⁶³ In the 3 May 1906 edition of *The Bulletin's* 44 pages, for example, some 35 health remedies were advertised — ranging from Hudson's Eumenthol Jujubes to Carter's Little Liver Pills to Dr Ricord's Essence of Life to Dr Williams' Pink Pills.

⁶⁴ Lindsay, 1951, p.75.

⁶⁵ *Record of the Fifth Annual Commemoration of the Rev John Alexander Dowie and Mrs Dowie's Ministry of Healing through Faith in Jesus held in the Free Christian Tabernacle, Fitzroy, Melbourne, on Lord's Day, December, 4th & Monday December 5th 1887. Containing Testimonies from those healed and Ebenezer Addresses.* Melbourne: M.L.Hutchinson, 1887; Sheldrake, p.343; *Age*, 17 December 1887, p.9.

⁶⁶ *E.Mintern (ed), This We Believe! Zion, Ill: Christian Catholic Church, n.d., p.5.*

Second: That disease like sin, is God's enemy, and the devil's work, and can never be God's will (Act 10:38).

We do not present our theories. Jesus did three things. He taught, he preached, he healed. This is the divine order, and the kingdom can only be extended by that three-fold ministry.

Divine healing points to a still more beautiful thing — holiness of life (Is[aiah] 35). If you defile your body by any nicotine poison ... then you sin against God and your own soul. To pollute the body with alcohol is a sin. The doctrine of divine healing comes with great force to them that are sick, causing them to quit sin.

That Christ is the healer does not depend on any human testimony; it rests upon the word of God ... We need to get back to the old church lines, as laid down in the New Testament.

We teach what is recorded in the 12th chapter of First Corinthians, that the Gifts of Healing are in the Holy Spirit, like all other Gifts of God.⁶⁸

Polemic and controversy

Not only did Dowie teach the efficacy of divine healing, but he rejected any other kind. Doctors, drugs and devils were all denounced as 'foes of Christ the Healer.'⁶⁹ Dowie also continued to attack the liquor interests. There is little doubt that he enjoyed polemic and controversy. The temptation to arraign and pour scorn on the views of those with whom he disagreed seemed irresistible.⁷⁰ Because of his outspoken opposition to the use of alcohol, there was some lobbying resulting in a by-law forbidding street meetings. Dowie saw this as preventing him from obeying God's commands to go into the 'highways and byways' to preach the Gospel, and said so publicly. He promptly advertised and organised a street procession. He was duly prosecuted. He attended a meeting of the Council and unsuccessfully endeavoured to persuade them that

⁶⁷ Sheldrake, 1912, p.329.

⁶⁸ Lindsay, *Sermons*, 1951, pp. 98-104.

⁶⁹ J.A.Dowie, *Doctors, Drugs and Devils* Zion: Zion Printing and Publishing House, 1901.

⁷⁰ See for example his 'First Reply to Robert Ingersoll' and his 'Reply to Ingersoll's Lecture on Truth' in Lindsay, *Sermons*, 1951, pp.79-97.

the charge was *ultra vires*. On 20 April, 1885, the case was tried before four magistrates who found him guilty.⁷¹

He refused to pay the fine and was imprisoned for 30 days. He promptly took to the streets again and was again imprisoned. Seven of the church members joined him there and hundreds of others expressed a willingness to be incarcerated if necessary. After two days, there was such public concern that the Governor of Victoria, Sir Henry Brougham Loch, ordered his release.⁷² More trouble was to come. In September 1885, Dowie arrived at the Tabernacle to find his office demolished as the result of an explosion.⁷³

In spite of the problems, things were still going well over all for Dowie. He had founded his own church; hundreds of people were attending his meetings; his preaching was growing in effect; there were significant results in the healing ministry. Yet there was still a restlessness in his spirit. Part of this was a growing conviction that the time for preaching the gospel was short. Earthquakes, international tensions, a Tory government and resultant warfare were all signs of the near return of Christ.⁷⁴ But there was also a sense of compulsion in his heart that he had not yet arrived at the place of true calling. In 1886, he told his wife of a strange encounter with God where he was sleeping only four hours a night and experiencing ‘a fresh baptism of Power from on High’ for witness and service.

Wave after wave of Holy Power has come upon me, and it remains. All else seems trivial compared to this. Christ is unspeakably dearer, clearer, and nearer to me in

⁷¹ Sheldrake, 1912, pp.322ff. Dowie conducted his own defence claiming that he had only been exercising common rights to the use of highways; that the procession had been orderly and in accordance with the distinct commands of Scripture in Luke 4:21 and Mark 16:16; that he had already held street meetings for two years in Melbourne without let or hindrance; that there was no such restriction in other States; and that the new law was *ultra vires*. His arguments were all overruled.

⁷² According to a statement attributed to Dowie in *The Register*, 11 March 1907, these two periods were 25 days and five days respectively. See also *The Age*, 4 May 1885, p.5; 20 June 1885, p.12; 24 June 1885, p.7.

⁷³ In a letter written at the time, Dowie noted that he had felt a premonition of death on him during that day, and that he had gone home early, although there were four people waiting to see him, which was ‘an unprecedented thing’. Years later, he claimed that there were some 20 or 30 people waiting to see him, and that he had actually heard a voice saying, ‘Rise! Go!’ Sheldrake, 1912, p. 325f; Lindsay, 1951, pp.79ff.

⁷⁴ Sheldrake, 1912, pp.332f.

all things ... If you are like Sarah of old, we shall have a glorious future here and hereafter.⁷⁵

Then there was a growing concern for humanity. His faith in Christ, he wrote to a friend in 1888, forbade him from being narrowed down to a denomination or sect⁷⁶. Dowie believed there was a score of places open to him at the time (he was being pressed to go to England).⁷⁷ Looking back on these days, he later wrote —

Then suddenly, the earth seemed to be vocal. I could hear the wail of pain and the cries of the dying from all continents, swelling up from all the cities and hamlets and villages and solitudes. I could hear the cry of suffering coming up from all the earth ... and I knew it was right to leave the lovely Australian land, and go forth on a pilgrimage carrying leaves of healing from the Tree of Life to every nation I could reach.⁷⁸

America

Finally, he decided to resign from the Free Christian Tabernacle and sail for America. There were long meetings for prayer, both with office-bearers and people, and amidst many tears, his resignation was accepted, to take effect from 19 February 1888. Meanwhile, the Fifth Annual Commemoration of Dowie's ministry of healing took place in December 1887, during which over 70 people presented convincing testimonials of healing.⁷⁹ After an 'All-night of Prayer and Teaching' in January 1888, Elders Joseph Grierson and John S. Wallington were ordained to lead the work⁸⁰.

A few days after his last meetings, the church presented him with a cheque for 100 pounds and an 'address' to mark the occasion of his departure to America and Europe to engage in 'the Divine Healing Mission' to which the Holy Spirit had called him. Part of the address read —

⁷⁵ Sheldrake, 1912, pp.334-335.

⁷⁶ Sheldrake, 1912, p.338.

⁷⁷ Sheldrake, 1912, p.340.

⁷⁸ Quoted in Lindsay, 1951, p.86.

⁷⁹ This also indicates that Dowie's healing ministry only began in earnest in 1882.

⁸⁰ Sheldrake, 1912, pp.342ff.

We ... beg to present this testimonial as a very small token of the love and appreciation borne toward you for your untiring and devoted zeal in bringing very many in these lands from darkness into God's marvellous light, and for the promotion of Divine Healing. You have been made the Divine Agent in doing many mighty works. The Lord has, in a most manifest manner, heard your prayer of faith, and raised up many, in some cases more than ten thousand miles distant. Truly the Lord has made you a chosen vessel, in leading hundreds, by your teaching from His Holy Word, to the sanctification of spirit, soul and body. We cannot even estimate the number blessed under your ministry, — eternity alone will reveal them — but we know that hundreds, who have been both saved and healed, regret, as we do, your departure from these shores. The loss of your spiritual exhortations, your kindly counsels, and your faithful prayers, will be deeply felt throughout Australasia; but your Church and people have felt, from the date of your letter of the 16th April 1885, to the London International Conference on Divine Healing ... till now, that the Holy Spirit was leading you to visit America and Europe, to preach Christ as the Saviour and Sanctifier of the spirit, soul, and body, and we submit to the will of the heavenly Father, and pray that you may be used to a far greater extent than you have been, and that, if it be His will, you shall return again to this land.⁸¹

An elderly man who had been healed of a cancer in the face, presented Dowie with a new Bible.

At midnight, on Saturday 3 March, 1888, the family boarded the *Maranoa*, and hundreds of friends sang and prayed with them before they sailed. They journeyed via New Zealand, where successful meetings were held in Auckland and the groundwork laid for the later formation of a branch of the Christian Catholic Church.⁸²

Sixteen years later, John Alexander Dowie returned to Australia. In the intervening period, he had become an international figure.⁸³ The Christian

⁸¹ Sheldrake, 1912, pp.345f.

⁸² J.Worsfold, *A History of the Charismatic Movements in New Zealand*, Julian Literature trust, 1974, p.86.

⁸³ American journalist, Fred Leroy, in a syndicated report, wrote of Dowie, 'As a preacher, Dowie is a failure to all except those who believe in him. He has a rasping voice, a pompous air, delivers a disconnected sermon, becomes extremely radical, at times offensively so, and yet withal he is at the present time a wonderful success and one of the world's prominent men' — *The Independent Times*, January, 1904 in one of the Dowie *Srapbooks* held by the Zion

Catholic Church which he founded in Chicago in February 1896, with 500 members⁸⁴ had rocketed to an estimated 40,000 members world-wide.⁸⁵ Not only had he established a new church, he had built Zion city as well — a theocratic community where there were no taverns, no vaudeville theatres, no doctors, no chemist shops, no places of gambling and certainly no smoking or drinking. The new Tabernacle seated some 8,000 people. Citizens came from all over the United States and from overseas as well — including a large contingent from Australia.⁸⁶

During this period, Dowie adopted the practice of baptism by triune immersion. He also became an American citizen.⁸⁷ And on 14 May, 1902, he and his wife suffered the horrific tragedy of the death of their 21 year-old daughter Esther, who was burned to death in a fire caused by an upturned lamp fuelled by alcohol.⁸⁸ Notwithstanding, the healing ministry continued with great effect, with dozens of crutches and braces and the like being mounted on display as ‘trophy captured from the enemy’.⁸⁹ Land was available on an eleven hundred year lease — on the assumption that the return of Christ would occur within one hundred years to be followed by a 1000 year millennium.⁹⁰

Historical Society in Shiloh House, 1300 Shiloh Boulevard, Zion, Dowie's former residence which is now a museum.

⁸⁴ Carl Lee, ‘God’s Messenger’ in LH, October, 1951, p.77.

⁸⁵ Jabez Taylor, *The Development of the City of Zion*, Zion, Ill; Christian Catholic Church, n.d., p.4; J.A.Dowie, *The Love of God in the Salvation of Man* Chicago: Zion Publishing House, 1900, p.38.

⁸⁶ Taylor, *Voliva*, pp. 5,6. There seems to be little general knowledge of this migration. Marjorie Newton, for example, is clearly unaware of it. See M.Newton, 1991, p.157.

⁸⁷ A.Darms, *Life and Work of John Alexander Dowie 1847-1907* Zion: Christian Catholic Church, n.d., pp. 9,13.

⁸⁸ Lindsay, *Life*, 1951, pp.214ff. Lindsay argues that Esther's death was a factor in the aberrations in Dowie's thinking in the following years, especially his rising fury against alcohol.

⁸⁹ See Lindsay, *Life*, 1951; Darms, *Dowie*, pp.7ff; P.Cook, *Zion City, Illinois: John Alexander's Democracy*, Zion: Zion Historical Society, 1970; Mintern (ed) *This We Believe*; Taylor, *Development*, p.4; LH, Vol XCVI, No 4, April 1959; Vol CXXII, No 1,2, January-February, 1986; R.Ottersen, *Peace to Thee!*, Zion: Christian Catholic Church, 1986, p.9.

⁹⁰ M.J.Mintern, ‘Fifty Years Nearer the Rapture’ in LH, October, 1951, p.74. In a Christmas sermon in December 1903, in Shiloh Tabernacle, Zion, Dowie was reported as saying, ‘Within 100 years Christ will return again to this very spot to reign for ten centuries. I, whom you know to be the prophet Elijah, will come back with Him, and that is why I have made all leases in Zion City run for 1,100 years. At the end of Christ's reign the world will smash up, the bad will be burned in hell fire and the good will be called to their reward... All Zion knew I was a prophet before I announced it and I had hard work keeping them from exploiting the fact

There had also been a shift in Dowie's perception of himself. Somewhere he acquired the title 'Dr', although he does not seem to have earned it in an academic sense.⁹¹ He was later to add more controversial designations. In 1896, when one of his associates suggested he was a modern apostle, Dowie replied —

I say to you from my heart, I do not think that I have reached a deep enough depth of true humility; I do not think that I have reached a deep enough depth of true abasement and self-effacement, for the high office of an apostle ... In becoming an apostle, it is not a question of rising high, it is a question of becoming low enough ... Power in the church is shown in this, that a man gets lower and lower, and lower and lower, until he can put his very spirit, soul and body underneath the miseries and at the feet of a sin-cursed and a disease-smitten humanity and live and die for it and for Him who lived and died for it. That is what I understand by the Apostolic Office.⁹²

'The Elijah Declaration'

Yet in 1901, Dowie declared that he was Elijah the Restorer and in 1904 that he was the First Apostle of the Lord Jesus the Christ in the Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion. He had special robes prepared, which reputedly took 40 women three months to make. Part of the 'Elijah Declaration', written in his own hand, reads —

As Elijah the Restorer, God has sent me to you and to all the World, with Authority to advise

First, A Message of Purity (Malachi 3)

Second, A Message of Peace (Malachi 2:6)

Third, A Message of Power (Matthew 17:11)

before I was ready.' See a cutting from the *Chicago Record-Herald*, 26 December 1903, in one of the Dowie *Scrapbooks*. It should be noted that it is unlikely that Dowie would have used some of the terminology contained in this statement. So its authenticity as a direct quotation is probably questionable. However, see also *Australian Christian Commonwealth*, 13 May 1904, p.4; Darms, p.13.

⁹¹ Dowie was not poorly educated. His treatise on drama, for instance, indicates an extensive knowledge of the Greek playwrights. Schools were established in Zion City with solid curricula which included church history and systematic theology. Similarly, as an Evangelical, Dowie took the opportunity to attack liberal theology. Hollenweger, 1988, pp.117, 123.

⁹² Lindsay, 1951, pp.155f.

More than two thousand of Zion's [illegible] will carry these words to every Continent saying, PEACE BE TO THIS HOUSE!⁹³

Wilbur Voliva, his American associate who had come to Melbourne in 1901 to take over the leadership of the church, was an efficient organizer. Although, in Dowie's absence, the work had declined, under Voliva's supervision it soon regained its strength. By 1904, the year of Dowie's 'visitation' in Australia, there were some 1300 members in the Melbourne congregation.⁹⁴ Voliva promoted the visitation well. Furthermore, news of Dowie's new roles had also preceded him to this country. When he arrived in Sydney in February 1904, there was a mixed reaction. From the moment he set foot on the wharf he was greeted by a crowd both of his own followers and of those who came to jeer.⁹⁵

Australia

By this time, Dowie was a balding, portly 57-year old, with a kindly face and clear, warm eyes over a long, bushy, white beard. He began his visit with two meetings on Sunday 14 February in the newly completed and imposing Town Hall. Week night meetings were also proposed, together with early morning prayer meetings, 10.30 am teaching meetings on divine healing and healing services at noon each day when 'those who are seeking the Lord for Healing will pass into the Prayer room and the General Overseer and Ordained Officers of the Christian Catholic Church in Zion will conduct a Prayer service of one hour, laying hands upon as many as are prepared for that ministration.'⁹⁶ A contemporary report noted that when Dowie announced the offering, there was a significant element who objected either by interjecting or leaving.⁹⁷ There

⁹³ A copy of the Declaration was printed in the *Quiz*, 23 October, 1901, p.14.

⁹⁴ Taylor, *Voliva*, p.5.

⁹⁵ Chant, 1984, p.20.

⁹⁶ From newspaper advertisements of the Sydney meetings.

⁹⁷ From an unidentified news clipping c. Feb 1904. Part of the report reads — 'Rev J.A.Dowie... wore a surplice of blue, white, yellow and purple. He was accompanied on the platform by his son (Mr Gladstone Dowie), several officers from Zion City, and two personal attendants, members of Zion Guards, wearing the uniform of police. Mr Dowie delivered short addresses. Some amusement was caused when he made an appeal for offerings to pay the cost of the meetings in Sydney. He questioned the audience as to whether such a thing was fair or not, and there were loud cries of 'Yes, yes,' and 'No, no.' He was perfectly surprised at anybody answering in the negative, and said he would keep them in fine order — he meant the element that had answered 'No.' He then called upon those who would like to retire before

were continued interruptions to the meetings in Sydney and the final service had to be closed early.⁹⁸ American newspapers carried reports —

‘Dowie forced to flee from mob ...’; ‘... Meeting in Sydney, New South Wales, is Broken up by a Crowd of 5,000 men ...’; ‘... howling multitude ...’; ‘... Dowie flees...’.⁹⁹

Dowie, by contrast, sent the following cable home —

Enthusiastic receptions at Auckland and Sydney. Ten thousand attendance today at City Hall and Sydney deeply stirred. Australia awake everywhere. All glory to God alone. Overseer Jane Dowie is well. I am informed that she addressed crowded intelligent audiences in Adelaide in city hall this afternoon. Many are coming to Zion City from Australia this year. See Zechariah 10. Love to all. Zion, pray for us. Dowie.

Hooliganism also occurred in Melbourne, Victoria, where rallies were held in the Exhibition Building. Again, the press reported that meetings were broken up by a mob and that Dowie asked the US Consul for protection. Dowie cabled from Adelaide —

Read Psalms 124th and 125th. We continued the visitation in Melbourne until Friday 4th. The authorities surrendered to riotous rabble, and the commissioner of police and the secretary of State declared their inability to preserve order, and refused adequate protection at the Exhibition Building today. We held ten meetings in Zion Tabernacle during the week and God blessed them. A brutal mob surrounded us Monday afternoon, grossly insulted Mrs Dowie, seized the horses’ heads, and tried to cut the traces and overturn the carriage ... Their newspapers — *The Southern Cross*, *The Argus* and *The Age* — were full of lies, which encouraged the disorder. The powers of hell united in church, in State, in press, secret empire and criminal populace. The Masons were especially mad because of our exposures. The lawless one will soon be revealed. We will begin the visitations here March 29. Mizpah. Pray for us. Love to Zion. Dowie.¹⁰⁰

free-will offerings were taken up to do so, and there was a ready response from a large number, especially in the rear of the hall.’

⁹⁸ Chant, 1984, p.20.

⁹⁹ These and the following reports are quoted from the Dowie *Scrapbooks*.

¹⁰⁰ Cutting from the *Chicago Tribune*, 13 March 1904, in one of the Dowie *Scrapbooks*.

The Bulletin, cynical about religious matters in general, found in Dowie a continuing source of fun. A front cover cartoon on 10 March shows him teaching Abraham how to raise money. In the same issue, he is seen flying ‘Zionwards’, accompanied by angels singing, ‘We want Dowie!’ A week later, he is portrayed ejecting a Methodist clergyman from his meetings. Signs outside the building proclaim, ‘Millions are relieved of everything immediately’ and, ‘Diseases cured while you wait [No limit to the time you may wait].’ The following week, Dowie goes *down* in a chariot of fire. A couple of weeks later, he arrives in heaven, only to see Peter smoking.¹⁰¹

Adelaide

In Adelaide, his old home town, there was great interest in his visit. Some 25,000 tickets were issued for his meetings. Six thousand people thronged to the Jubilee Exhibition Building for the first meeting on Sunday 21 March. The crowd was basically orderly, being partly composed of ‘prominent business men, stock-brokers and other hard-headed citizens’ who ‘desired to hear what Elijah had to say.’¹⁰² A newspaper reporter described him as attired in a long, flowing black gown, with a white surplice and a beautiful purple stole while ‘his high, round, shining forehead, his flowing hair, and his streaming grey beard gave him a patriarchal aspect,’ and ‘looking as much like the conventional idea of Elijah as possible ...’¹⁰³

On the platform with Dowie were W.G.Voliva, C.Hawkins, who was in charge of the work in Adelaide, J.S.McCullagh, Voliva’s assistant, and leader of the Sydney branch, and their wives. Both Hawkins and McCullagh were later to turn against Dowie and publish a booklet exposing what they called the ‘Zion City Mockery.’¹⁰⁴ Dowie’s wife, Overseer Jane Dowie and his son, Gladstone were also on the platform. So was Colonel Carl Stern, in his uniform of black and gold, as leader of the First Regiment of the Zion Guard. The reporter noted that the service was ‘of a purely evangelical character’ and that

¹⁰¹ *Bulletin*, 10 March 1904, p.7, 18; 17 March 1904, p.22; 24 March 1904, p.15; 14 April, 1904, p.20.

¹⁰² *Advertiser*, 21 March 1904. Following details are also from this source.

¹⁰³ *Advertiser*, 21 March 1904.

¹⁰⁴ *The Downfall of Dowie!* Hawthorn, Vic: J.H.Edmonson, n.d.

Dowie responded to occasional interjections by pointing out that he regularly preached to 7000 people in Chicago without interruption and that in one service some 6000 affirmed that they had been healed by faith.

At this point, there was an interruption as a policeman tried to remove an interjector, and Dowie pleaded for respect and courtesy from the people of Adelaide, his wife's birth-place. Finally, he closed with 'the solemn assertion that he preached no other gospel than that of salvation by the healing and cleansing power of God through Jesus Christ.' After the meeting, a sizeable crowd paraded through the streets seeking to make fun of Dowie, but he eluded them.

There was continued disorder in the meetings. At the Adelaide Town Hall, on Monday 22 March, the meeting had to be abandoned. The newspaper headlines, modest by modern standards, but bold for the time, summarise succinctly what happened —

DOWIE IN ADELAIDE

RIOT IN TOWN HALL

A WILD RABBLE STOPS THE MEETING

GREAT DISORDER IN THE STREETS

POLICE INJURED AND WINDOWS BROKEN

YORK HOTEL BESIEGED BY A VAST CROWD

MR J.DARLING'S HOUSE DAMAGED

NIGHT MEETINGS ABANDONED¹⁰⁵

A huge crowd had gathered for the meeting, until finally, the attendants closed the doors. Many with tickets could not gain entry, and thousands of others thronged outside. Taking their cue from Dowie's frequent description of smokers and drinkers as 'stinkpots', someone smashed a bottle of 'sulphurated hydrogen' which resulted in a repulsive odour spreading through the building. Another 'stinkpot' soon followed. After the meeting got under way, some of

¹⁰⁵ *Advertiser*, 23 March, 1904, p.5. Following details from this source.

the congregation broke into an offensive song.¹⁰⁶ Outside a crowd estimated at between 10,000 and 15,000 had gathered, mostly of boys and youths. All the city's police force assembled in an attempt to control the mob, using mounted policemen to hold the crowd back from the entrance. There was some scuffling, with police suffering minor injuries. By nine o'clock, things were growing nasty. Two Town Hall windows were broken. Then a tram car passed, and several windows in the tram were smashed by a youth from the crowd. The lad was arrested.

Meanwhile, inside, seats were being overturned and people were running about the hall. There were constant interjections and heckling. Dowie appealed for the right to speak, but without success. There were cries of, 'Dowie is a fraud!' and, 'Flap your wings, Elijah!' and, 'You call us all stinkpots!' and, 'We'll hang old Dowie on a sour apple tree.' Finally Dowie closed the meeting. While the police diverted attention, he slipped out unobserved.

The crowd then moved to the York Hotel, assuming Dowie had returned there, and there was more violence. Windows were broken, and more 'stinkpots' smashed. A knife was thrown at a policeman who was trying to remove a disorderly youth. Fortunately no harm resulted. When there was no sign of Dowie, some of the crowd went to the home of his brother-in-law, Mr J. Darling, JP. Again, windows were smashed, but Darling courageously addressed and dismissed the mob. Dowie returned to the hotel late that night, when most of the crowd had dispersed.

As a result of these events, Dowie announced that there would be no more night meetings, but that afternoon services would continue. The press reported this under the heading 'Message from Elijah.' Dowie continued to denounce the use of alcohol (which he called 'liquid fire and distilled damnation') and the smoking of tobacco. He fulminated against the eating of pork. He lamented the coldness of the churches.¹⁰⁷ He attacked Freemasonry and other lodges. And he proclaimed the validity and efficacy of Divine Healing.

¹⁰⁶ *Bulletin*, 10 March 1904, p.13.

¹⁰⁷ Dowie claimed that Victorian Methodists, for instance, had only increased by one member in the previous year — *Advertiser*, 22 March 1904, p.5. In this, he may well have been right as

Two of the men arrested were fined and Dowie publicly announced that he would pay for the damage to both the Town Hall and the York Hotel, which he did.¹⁰⁸ The next day, the afternoon meeting was quiet and orderly. Several hundred people attended, and there were no major problems. Letters began to appear in the press both attacking and defending Dowie. Even some who disagreed with Dowie's teaching and beliefs, nevertheless deplored the refusal to allow him freedom of speech. The editor of *The Advertiser* was particularly outspoken, arguing that there was 'no valid excuse' for the disorder and that mob rule constituted 'the most terrible kind of tyranny.'¹⁰⁹

Methodists lamented his attacks on the church, and complained that Sabbath-school classes and regular church services had been abandoned on the first Sunday of Dowie's visit by people 'prompted by nothing higher than vulgar curiosity.'¹¹⁰

Dowie's Adelaide meetings came to a sudden end. On Friday 25 March, he commented that not only was King Edward of England subject to the King of Kings but that everybody knew he had 'no religion to spare.'¹¹¹ This was ill-taken by the good citizens of Adelaide. The Mayor, Mr L.Cohen, wrote to Dowie warning him against repeating such statements and informed him that he could no longer use the Town Hall because of his 'disloyal utterances concerning his Majesty the King.' A similar letter from the Superintendent of Public Buildings forbade him the use of any building under Government control.¹¹²

the number of Methodists in Victoria declined from 180,272 in 1901 to 176 662 in 1911 — W.W.Phillips, 'Religion' in Vamplew, 1987, p.422.

¹⁰⁸ *Advertiser*, 24 March 1904, p.6.

¹⁰⁹ *Advertiser*, 23 March 1904, p.4; 24 March 1904, p.6; 25 March 1904.

¹¹⁰ *Australian Christian Commonwealth*, quoted in the *Advertiser*, 25 March 1904, p.4.

¹¹¹ Dowie reaffirmed these sentiments after his return to America — 'I said that the King of England had no piety to spare... that if he was saved it would be by the skin of his teeth ... Call him defender of the faith? What faith has he to defend?' — Unidentified news clipping, June 1904.

¹¹² The Town Clerk's letter read as follows: 'I have the honor [sic], by direction of the Mayor of Adelaide, to inform you that he has cancelled the remainder of your engagements at the Adelaide Town Hall. This action has been taken in consequence of your disloyal utterances concerning his Majesty the King, as reported in the press yesterday afternoon and morning. The balance of the hire paid will be refunded to you on application to the city treasurer's office.' See *Advertiser*, 28 March 1904, p5.

A columnist in *The Bulletin* was not slow in pointing out the hypocrisy behind these actions.¹¹³ A large cartoon showed Dowie running before King Edward's chariot, as 'in a previous state of existence' he had done before King Ahab.¹¹⁴ So Dowie was forced to leave his old home-city, and, according to one report, still fleeing the mob, had to hide in a small boat before boarding his vessel the *Mongolia*.¹¹⁵ He was never to visit these shores again.

In 1905, Dowie was partly paralysed as the result of a stroke. In April, 1906, his own associates in Zion felt they could no longer accommodate his increasingly irrational behaviour, and deposed him as General Overseer. Just twelve months later, on 9 March 1907, after a time of illness, he passed away.¹¹⁶ The Melbourne branch of the Free Christian Church, now the Christian Catholic Church, continued and today a small congregation still exists in that city.¹¹⁷

As a pioneer of the ministry of healing, he was possibly without equal. One writer says —

A.B.Simpson's lifelong associate Kenneth Mackenzie identified Dowie as 'unquestionably the apostle of healing in his day.' At the peak of his ministry from 1894 to 1905 he was known by more people throughout America than any other propagator of the message of divine healing in the nation's history. His periodical *Leaves of Healing* enjoyed the largest circulation of any publication of

¹¹³ *Bulletin*, 7 April 1904, p.12; see also *Quiz*, 1 April 1904.

¹¹⁴ *Bulletin*, 7 April 1904, p.18.

¹¹⁵ *Bulletin*, 21 April 1904, p.12.

¹¹⁶ Chant, 1984, p.22.

¹¹⁷ At Dowie's death, there was a group of about 100 of his followers in Sydney and a sizeable congregation of over 800 in Melbourne meeting in the imposing Central Zion Tabernacle (formerly the Hibernian Hall) in Swanston Street. The rear wall of this building was decorated with crutches, boots, plaster casts, surgical appliances, aprons and regalia from orders such as Freemasonry. By now, a Zion liturgy had been developed which included strong preaching but also a processional and a robed choir singing the *Te Deum*. Also, from Kangaroo Island, a few miles south of Adelaide, there were some who migrated to Zion City. See M.Sollit, 'Australian Dictator In Zion,' *People* 10 August 1966, p.50; LH, XV:3, 7 May 1904, pp.57f; Kiek, 1927, p.299.

the movement ... No individual within the healing movement has ever reached so many people worldwide with the message of divine healing as John Dowie.¹¹⁸

Influence on Pentecostalism

Some of the pioneers of the Pentecostal movement had their interest in the things of the Spirit awakened by Dowie. Although Dowie was never himself a Pentecostal, he expressed strong belief, not only in divine healing, but in all the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In his charge to the Christian Catholic church at its founding on 22 February, 1896, he declared —

We shall teach and preach, and practice (sic) a Full Gospel ... May this Church be endowed with the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit, with the word of Wisdom, the word of Knowledge, Faith, Gifts of healing, Workings of Miracles, Prophecy, Discernings of Spirits, Divers kinds of Tongues and Interpretation of Tongues, and with the gift of Love which is the crown of all ...¹¹⁹

Dowie was recognised not only as being a prophet in the general sense, but also as exercising gifts of prophecy. He foresaw the link between smoking and cancer, for example¹²⁰ and he foretold the preaching of the gospel through radio and television.¹²¹ Moreover, Dowie saw the need for being baptised in the Holy Spirit and hence, empowered for service. He spoke of his own experience of a baptism of 'Power from on High', which he believed was given to him for witness and for service.¹²² 'If the Holy Spirit does not witness for us and back up our Witness [sic],' he once wrote, 'where shall we be?'¹²³

A significant number of Dowie's followers took seriously what he said about spiritual gifts and, when the new Pentecostal movement started, they found a

¹¹⁸ Chappell in Burgess et al (eds), 1988, pp. 366f. *Leaves of Healing* was a weekly publication which contained sermons by Dowie and reports of his ministry, together with testimonies, news items and photographs.

¹¹⁹ Ottersen, 1986, pp.14,16.

¹²⁰ 'The Five Porches of Bethesda' quoted in Chant, 1984, p.281.

¹²¹ I came across references to these predictions in the Dowie papers in Zion, but unfortunately did not record the sources.

¹²² Sheldrake, 1912, p.334.

¹²³ Ottersen, 1986, p.13.

congenial spiritual home there.¹²⁴ Australian Earl Mintern was a member of the Zion Headquarters staff. The third General Overseer of the Christian Catholic Church from 1942 to 1959, was the ‘greatly loved’ Michael Mintern, who migrated to Zion in 1905.¹²⁵ Twenty years later, another member of the Mintern family, R.A.Mintern, a farm implement merchant from Horsham, Victoria, joined the newly-formed Pentecostal Church of Australia. The following article appeared in the pages of the newly-published *Australian Evangel* in 1926 —

MEMBERS OF THE ZION MOVEMENT HEALED AND BAPTIZED.

The Lord worked mightily in the great Zion movement introducing the miraculous powers of God in the healing of multitudes everywhere it went, preparing the way for further steps of faith, which steps many are now taking into the fullness of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Then followed the Mintern’s testimony of being baptised in the Spirit.¹²⁶

J.Ellis, a seed merchant, had been a deacon in the Zion movement for 23 years. He was grateful for what he had received, but felt impelled to go further —

I shall always thank God for Zion and the experiences and blessings received in it. I believe it was right and taught the truths of the Scriptures, with the one exception of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues. They were also wrong in teaching that everyone else was in error.... So I set out to investigate a new move that had come to Australia, which taught the Baptism of the Holy Ghost according to Acts 2: 4...¹²⁷

I had to ask the Lord to enlarge my heart to receive it all. Our church could not receive our message because of the speaking in tongues so we reluctantly left, but many have followed and received their baptism and we are trusting and believing

¹²⁴ Chant, 1984., pp.23f. It is interesting to note that many of the early Pentecostals in America, South Africa and Sweden can also trace their origins back to Dowie. See relevant articles in Burgess et al, 1988; Hollenweger, 1988.

¹²⁵ Mintern, (ed) *This We Believe* pp.1f ;Taylor, *Voliva*, p.40f.

¹²⁶ AE, July 1926, p.10.

¹²⁷ Acts 2:4 — ‘All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.’ (NIV)

that they will all come, for we know how earnestly they wish to serve the Lord Jesus.¹²⁸

Another significant Pentecostal leader was John A.D. Adams, a New Zealand barrister. In 1887, Adams, a Grand Master in Freemasonry, was wasting away with palsy and the medical prognosis offered no hope. Dowie ‘knocked all the Masonic devilry out of him,’ prayed for him and his wife Maggie, who was also seriously ill, and they both recovered.¹²⁹ In 1926, Maggie died at the age of 85 and Adams was still active in ministry in Good News Hall, North Melbourne, Australia’s first Pentecostal church.¹³⁰ C. L. Greenwood, one of Australia’s best-known Pentecostal preachers, was first interested in the Pentecostal message as a result of a testimony that owed its origin to John Dowie.¹³¹ Evangelist William Booth-Clibborn’s family made the transition from the Salvation Army to the Pentecostal movement through Zion.¹³² Many early Pentecostals recognised their debt to Dowie. As the *Australian Evangel* put it, he ‘prepared the way for further steps of faith.’

The Zion movement was not the only parent of the new-born Pentecostal movement, and Pentecostalism was not its only child. But through it the family was certainly started, at least in part. It was Evangelicalism which was to provide, unintentionally, another source of gestation.

¹²⁸ AE, July 1926, p.10.

¹²⁹ J.Dowie, ‘Satan the Defiler,’ LH 14 May 1904, p.99.

¹³⁰ J.Adams, ‘God Hath Spoken,’ GN 17:7 July 1926, pp.3f.

¹³¹ Greenwood, *Life Story*, 1965, pp.10ff.

¹³² See Chapter Nine and Appendix Ten.