

**JOHN ALEXANDER DOWIE
AND THE CHRISTIAN CATHOLIC
APOSTOLIC CHURCH IN ZION.
A DISSERTATION**

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John Alexander Dowie and the Christian Catholic apostolic church in Zion. A dissertation by
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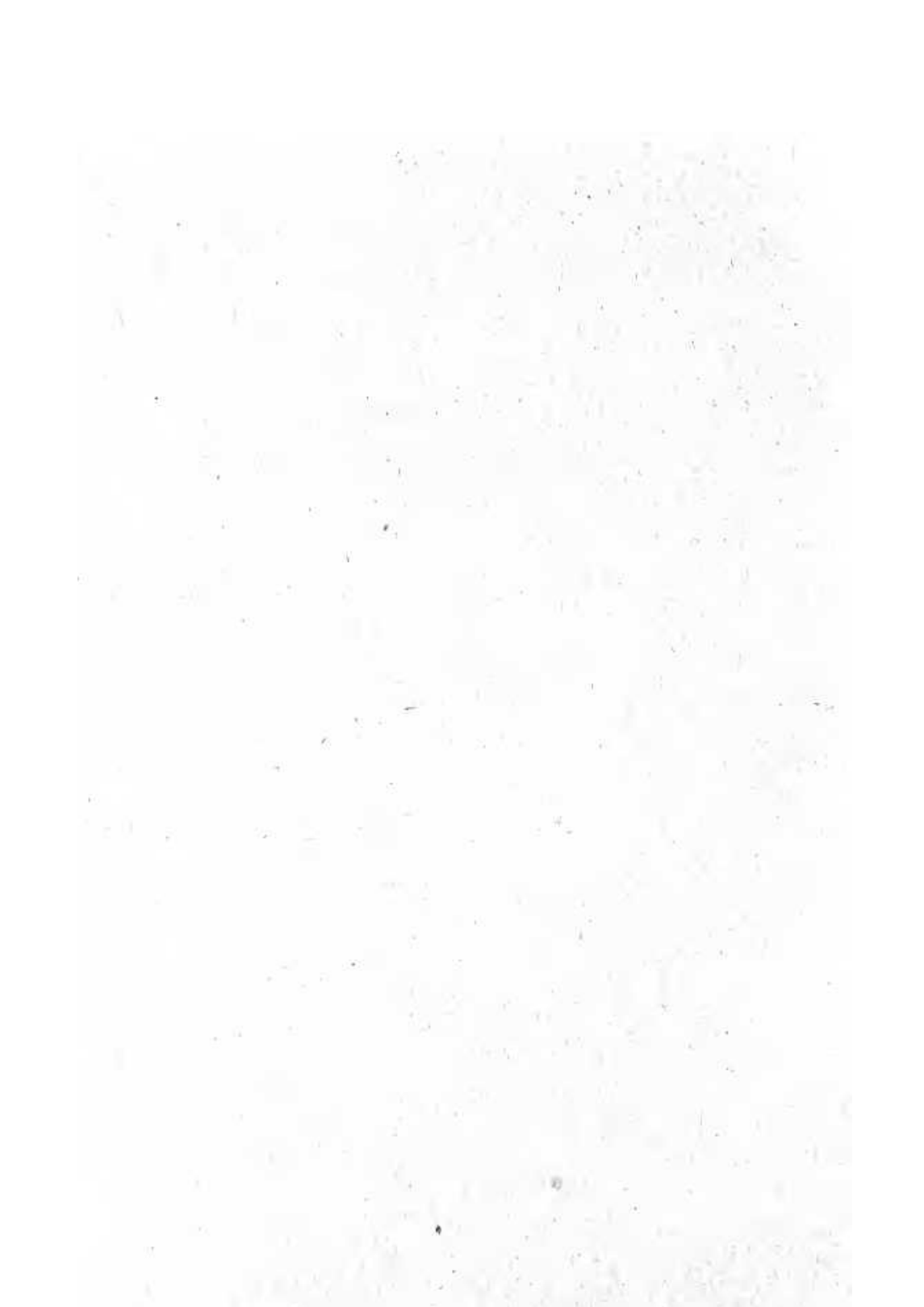
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A DISSERTATION**



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
FOUNDED BY JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER

John Alexander Dowie *and* the
Christian Catholic Apostolic Church
IN ZION.

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
OF THE
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BY
ROLVIX HARLAN

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INTRODUCTION*

The religious movement inaugurated and inspired by Mr. Dowie came to be known as the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion, after Mr. Dowie announced himself First Apostle in September, 1904. It has been through an evolutionary process, which with the progress of Mr. Dowie's assumptions of office and authority, will appear in later chapters. Since the revolt in April, 1906, the word Apostolic has been dropped, not by Mr. Dowie of course, but by the new regime under Deputy General Overseer Voliva.

Mr. Dowie has been variously designated by his followers. They were accustomed to refer to him affectionately as the "Doctor," or "the General Overseer," or as "the First Apostle." This of course was before the overthrow of his authority, for now scarcely any one can be found so submissive as to do him reverence.

His organization is popularly called Zion, which to the "knowing" means the Kingdom of God referred to in the Old Testament under the name Zion.

The C. C. A. C. in Zion is regarded as one of the agencies for establishing the Kingdom of God. The denominational churches are regarded as "apostate," but are also, so far as they are preaching the gospel, considered to be a part of the Kingdom of God. The members who are truly Christian are a part of Zion, altho they may not be in the restored, primitive C. C. A. C. in Zion. This is their theoretical attitude, altho Mr. Dowie would hardly be thought to be willing to concede as much, when we hear him saying: "The purpose of Zion is to smash every other church in existence. . . . The

* Much of this was written while Mr. Dowie was still in power and for the sake of vividness it has been thought best not to change the tenses.

churches of today have gone in the way of Baal . . . There are multitudes of good people within these churches. There are multitudes of Godly ministers within these churches. . . . They are deceived by their leaders. . . . God's will is the destruction of every organization which does not extend the Kingdom of God . . . Zion has arisen, a Kingdom which cannot be shaken, the Kingdom of God** Mr. Voliva is practically a ditto of Mr. Dowie at this point. (See L. of H. Vol. 18, No. 26, p. 458.)

In this discussion we will use the term Zion as referring to the C. C. A. C. in Zion, or the people whom Mr. Dowie has so organized.

The first organization was effected in February, 1896 as the C. C. C. in Zion, and altered in September, 1904 to C. C. A. C. in Zion. Mr. Dowie was known as General Overseer, then as Prophet, and since September, 1904, as First Apostle. This he has demanded of his followers. In the organization of the church are found various officers. Overseers, who have the supervision of fields of labor or departments of work, e.g. the Overseer of Zion City, or for Africa, or for Australia, etc.; Elders, who administer appointed branches or stations; Evangelists, who teach the way of the Kingdom of God and who hold missions at various points; Deacons and Deaconesses, who are resident in branches or gatherings, devoting their time to secular duties of their own choosing or church appointment.† A woman may hold any of these offices. Mrs. Jane Dowie is the only one who has held the office of Overseer.

* Voice from Zion, Vol. 4, No. 8, pp. 12, 13.

The bitter opposition of the churches to Mr. Dowie and the abuse merited and unmerited which he has received from the ministry have doubtless led him to the practical attitude towards the churches which contradicts his theoretical attitude which was one of strategy as much as conviction. Mr. Dowie has praised or blamed, approved or derided the churches as the mood was upon him or as the particular occasion seemed to demand for the purposes of his propaganda among those in the churches. (See chapter on Propaganda of Zion.)

† Pamphlet, Many Sided Views of Zion.

being in charge of the woman's work. No unmarried man may hold office above that of Deacon, and the wife of an Overseer is usually made an elder. This was Mr. Dowie's general scheme of organization.

The statistics of Zion are not to had from any trustworthy Zion source. Mr. Dowie said, April 29, 1900,* "Thanks be to God that a church four years old, with less than five hundred members at its organization may be safely counted as composed of fifty thousand members." This is only one sample of his exaggeration, as at that time not more than 12,000 had been baptized by triune immersion, and it is doubtful if at any time his following has aggregated more than 25,000. In the Literary Digest, Vol. 30, No. 5, p. 170, the report of the Commissioner of U. S. Statistics is partially reproduced and gives the estimate forty thousand as a maximum figure for Mr. Dowie's followers. About 22,000 have been baptized by triune immersion up to the present, and this includes practically all the members: However with lapses and deaths the decrease has been large. It is to be hoped that the new regime will at least be honest in reporting the strength of their church. †

In this membership are found the rich and poor, some (officers) of University education, but mostly humble unlearned

* Voice from Zion. Vol. 4, No. 8, p. 14.

† The manager of Zion Lace Factory writes as follows: "Dowie gives and has given since 1902 ten thousand as Zion's population. I happened to be once in a cabinet meeting with him and other officers when this question came up. His personal attendant, C. F. Stern, who has recently died had had a census taken of houses and people. This was somewhere in spring 1903. He said there was one thousand houses and allowing eight persons to a house you have eight thousand; fine way to get at the population. He found his census was coming short on actual count by a long way from Dr.'s given statement and he stopped the actual count and adopted the eight people to a house method, and to get his average as high as that he sampled for counting big houses where boarders were kept. Dowie wouldn't accept his figures and said he knew there were more people. My own opinion is that between six and seven thousand is the right estimate." As a matter of fact when Mr. Voliva made a census of the city it was found to contain just 5,387 persons.

people. It is claimed that over seventy nationalities are to be found enrolled in Zion.* Branches and stations are to be found in many parts of the world. All over the United States and in Canada, Zion has established preaching points and carries on an aggressive evangelistic campaign. In the United Kingdom, in many provinces of Europe, in Asia and Africa, Zion's representatives are preaching their threefold gospel of Salvation, Healing and Holy Living.

The publications of Zion are now printed or have been, in German, French, Danish, Norwegian, Dutch, with some little work done in Chinese and Japanese.†

In an interview at Havana, Cuba, published in *Leaves of Healing*, Vol. 16, No. 20, p. 638, Mr. Dowie says, "The C. C. A. C. now extends over the whole world. We have many branches in Australia under an Overseer and Elders for instance—"

Interviewer, "Are you in touch with them and do they recognize you as their leader?"

Mr. Dowie, "Yes, and our organization is very close. I am the First Apostle and General Overseer of the church. There are Overseers, which are the same as Bishops; Elders, Evangelists, Deacons and Deaconesses. And then we have a peculiar organization—peculiar because it has never been in its present form, in the church before—called Zion Restoration Host. They are picked members of the church whom we first organized in two's then made them ten's, and then made them seventies, and thoroughly trained them. We have from eight to ten thousand of them in all parts of the world and they are under a special vow to God, to myself as Elijah the Restorer—foretold by Malachi, by St. Peter and by the Christ himself. I can take a legion of them, as I did for instance to New York, three thousand strong, in October of 1903."‡

* Mr. Dowie's statement in *L. of H.*, Vol. 16, No. 20.

† Pamphlet, *Many Sided Views of Zion*. Since the sickness of Mr. Dowie the publication work has been very irregular.

‡ The vow to which the members of the Zion Restoration Host sub-