

Leaves of Healing The Life

The Life, Ministry, and Message of John Alexander Dowie

Editor's note: This biography of Dowie was written by Gordon P. Gardiner, author of [Radiant Glory - The Life of Martha Wing Robinson](#), and first appeared in Bread of Life, a publication of the Ridgewood Pentecostal Church of Brooklyn, NY in 1957. Gardiner, 1915-1986, lived in Zion City as a boy and later was a personal friend of many of the saints and ministers mentioned in this biography, including Martha Wing Robinson.

The Apostle of Divine Healing

The Story of John Alexander Dowie

By Gordon P. Gardiner

John Alexander Dowie “was unquestionably the apostle of divine healing in his day.”* This considered judgment concerning such a radical and controversial figure is particularly valid coming as it does from a conservative Episcopalian clergyman, Dr. Kenneth Mackenzie (1853-1943), a man of God universally recognized not only for his deep spirituality but also for his sound scholarship. Furthermore this opinion was quite unprejudiced, for Dr. Mackenzie held it in spite of the fact that he did not agree with much of what Dr. Dowie said and did, and to defend him opened himself to sharp criticism from his fellow evangelical leaders. Still Dr. Mackenzie boldly acknowledged Dr. Dowie was as “a giant of faith” and “If God was not in [his work] then we have little ground for ascertaining His hand in any movement.”

* MacKenzie, Kenneth, *Our Physical Heritage in Christ* (Fleming H. Revell & Co., New York, 1923) p.20

Dr. Mackenzie was further ably qualified to render an opinion on Dr. Dowie because he had been a careful student of the entire divine healing movement since its beginning in the United States under Dr. Charles Cullis, a Boston physician. In addition to this, he was a personal friend and lifelong associate of A. B. Simpson, another man who was mightily used of God in the ministry of healing. And yet Dr. Mackenzie in discussing “the recurrence of the doctrine” of divine healing concludes that of these “three great figures” it was the “doughty Scotchman” who under God was primarily responsible for restoring this truth to the Church of Christ. This he was forced to believe as a result of his personal investigation of Dr. Dowie’s work and from reading his weekly, *Leaves of Healing*.

Dowie “brought to his task every element of stolid, uncompromising devotion to truth as he saw it. If he angered men by his caustic epithets, they were compelled to honor him for his sincerity. He produced fruits; and no one dared to deny the fact.”

John Alexander Dowie was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, May 25, 1847. An unusually brilliant child, he learned to read at a very early age so that when he was six years old he was able to read the entire Bible through, himself. The following year he heard the call of God while he was listening to the preaching of the gospel at a street meeting and was immediately converted. About the same time he became curious as to the meaning of his names, John Alexander. His parents sent him to a Bible dictionary, and there he found out that together these signified *By the grace of God – a helper of men*. This discovery made a deep impression upon him and came to serve as his life motto.

In 1860, when John Alexander was thirteen, he moved with his parents to Australia and for the next seven years was secularly employed. His industry and acumen resulted in rapid advancement so that before he was twenty-one he was holding a high position with a large salary in a fine firm which annually did a business of more than two million dollars. During these years he had his first experience with divine healing when in answer to prayer he was delivered from chronic dyspepsia.

In spite of the promising business career which lay before him, however, he knew that he had been called of God to be a helper of men. To further prepare himself for his life work he returned to Scotland in 1868 in the University of Edinburgh. Here he studied under some of the leading scholars of the day and came in contact with the godly divines of Scotland. At the same time he engaged in practical gospel work especially in the Edinburgh infirmary where he was regarded as a lay chaplain. Desirous to gain as great a fund of knowledge in every field possible, he took the opportunity to attend the lectures and the clinics of the famous surgeons there, especially Sir James Simpson. In addition he was permitted to witness many operations and to observe their too-often tragic results. He heard the doctors acknowledge among themselves that often they were really guessing, blindly groping in the dark, in their well-meant efforts to help mankind.

The things he saw and heard at this time had a profound effect on the young theological student. They furnished him not only with an acquaintance with anatomy and disease that was much greater than that of the average minister but also a firsthand knowledge of the beliefs and practices of a number of the best surgeons of the day, including their many wrong diagnoses and unfortunate mistakes. This information was to be a powerfully sharp sword in the hand of this champion of divine healing in later years, giving him additional boldness in quoting the Word of God: “Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm” (Jer. 17: 5). “It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man” (Ps. 118: 8).

After two years in Edinburgh, reverses in family finances resulted in his father’s cabling him to return home at once. This ended his formal education. Back in Australia he engaged in business for the next two years while studying on the side and preaching as opportunity afforded. In 1872 he was ordained to the ministry of the Congregational Church and had pastorates successively in Alma, Sydney, and Newton. “The latter position was one of great influence, being at that time the collegiate church of the Congregational denomination, and so he had the duty of ministering to the resident professors and students preparing for the Congregational ministry.”

Throughout these years he became increasingly impressed with the teaching of the Word of God that “Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses” (Matt. 8: 17). This led to hours of diligent and prayerful study of the Gospels

in particular, resulting in a deepening conviction that Jesus Christ is the same today as yesterday. Then occurred the event which crystallized his convictions and confirmed his beliefs, a story best told in his own graphic words:

Early in 1876, one noontide, I sat in my study in the parsonage of the Congregational Church, at Newtown, a suburb of the beautiful city of Sydney, Australia. My heart was very heavy, for I had been visiting the sick and dying beds of more than thirty of my flock, and I had cast the dust to its kindred dust into more than forty graves within a few weeks.

Where, oh where was He who used to heal His suffering children? No prayer for healing seemed to reach His ear, and yet I knew His hand had not been shortened. Still it did not save the death even those for whom there was so much in life to live for God and others. Strong men, fathers, good citizens, and more than all, true, faithful Christians sickened with a putrid fever, suffered nameless agonies, passed into delirium, sometimes with convulsions, and then died. And oh, what aching voids were left in many widowed, orphaned heart. Then there were many homes where, one by one, the little children, the youths and the maidens were stricken, and, after hard struggling with foul disease, they, too, lay cold and dead. It seemed sometimes as if I could almost hear the triumphant mockery of fiends ringing in my ears whilst I spoke to the bereaved ones the words of Christian hope and consolation. Disease, the foul offspring of its father, Satan, and its mother, Sin, was defiling and destroying the earthly temples of God's children, and there was no deliverer.

And there I sat with sorrow-bowed head for my afflicted people, until the bitter tears came to relieve my burning heart. Then I prayed for some message, and oh, how I longed to hear some words from Him who wept and sorrowed for the suffering long ago, the Man of Sorrows and of Sympathies. And the words of the Holy Ghost inspired in Acts 10: 38 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, and tell them how 'tis Satan still defiles, and Jesus still delivers, for 'He is just the same today.'"

A loud ring and several loud raps at the outer door, a rush of feet, and then at my door two panting messengers who said, 'Oh, come at once, Mary is dying come and pray.'" With just such a feeling as a shepherd has who hears that his sheep are being torn from the fold by a cruel wolf, I rushed from my house, ran hatless down the street, and entered the room of the dying maiden. There she lay groaning, grinding her teeth in the agony of the conflict with the destroyer, the white froth, mingled with her blood, oozing from her pain-distorted mouth. I looked at her and then my anger burned. "Oh," I thought, "for some sharp sword of heavenly temper keen to slay this cruel foe who is strangling that lovely maiden like an invisible serpent, tightening his deadly coils for a final victory."

In a strange way it came to pass I found the sword I needed was in my hands, and in my hand I hold it still, and never will I lay it down. The doctor, a good Christian man, was quietly walking up and down the room, sharing the mother's pain and grief. Presently he stood at my side and said, "Sir, are not God's ways mysterious?"

Instantly the sword was flashing in my hands – the Spirit's Sword, the Word of God. "God's way!" I said, pointing to the scene of conflict. "How dare you, Dr. K_____, call that God's way of bringing His children home from earth to Heaven? 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 the deadly foul destroyer, and to save the child. Can you pray, Doctor; can you pray the prayer of faith that saves the sick?"

At once, offended at my words, my friend was changed, and saying, "You are too much excited, sir. 'Tis best to say God's will be done," he left the room.

Excited! The word was quite inadequate, for I was almost frenzied with divinely imparted anger and hatred of that foul destroyer, disease, which was doing Satan's will. "It is not so," I exclaimed; "no will of God sends such cruelty, and I shall never say God's will be done to Satan's work, which God's own Son came to destroy, and this is one of them." Oh, how the Word of God was burning in my heart: "Jesus of Nazareth went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the Devil: For God was with Him." And was not God with me? And was not Jesus there and all His promises true? I felt that it was even so, and turning to the mother I enquired, "Why did you send for me?"

To which she answered, "Do pray, oh, pray for her that God may raise her up."

And so we prayed. What did I say? It may be that I cannot now recall the words without mistake, but words are in themselves of small importance. . . . Still, I can remember much of that prayer unto this day. . . .

I cried: "Our Father, help! and Holy Spirit teach me how to pray. Plead Thou for us, One Jesus, Savior, Healer, Friend, our Advocate with God the Father. Hear and heal, Eternal One! From all disease and death deliver this sweet child of Thine. I rest upon the Word. We claim the promise now. Thy word is true, 'I am the Lord, I change not.' Unchanging God, then prove Thyself the Healer now. Thy word is true, 'These signs shall follow them that believe; in my Name, they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.' And I believe, and I lay hands in Jesus' name on her, and claim this promise now. Thy word is true, 'The prayer of faith shall save the sick.' Trusting in Thee alone, I cry, oh, save her now, for Jesus' sake, Amen."

And, lo, the maid lay still in sleep so deep and sweet that the mother said in a low whisper, "Is she dead?"

"No," I answered in a whisper lower still, "Mary will live; the fever has gone. She is perfectly well and sleeping as an infant sleeps." Smoothing the long, dark hair from her now peaceful brow, and feeling the steady pulsation of her heart and cool, moist hands, I saw that Christ had heard and that once more, as long ago in Peter's house, "He touched her hand and the fever left her."

Turning to the nurse I said, "Get me at once, please, a cup of cocoa and several slices on bread and butter." Beside the sleeping maid we sat quietly and almost silently until the nurse returned, and then I bent over her and snapping my fingers said, "Mary!"

Instantly she awoke, smiled and said, "Oh, sir, when did you come? I have slept so long." Then stretching out her arms to meet her mother's embrace, she said, "Mother, I feel so well!"

“And hungry too?” I said, pouring some of the cocoa in a saucer and offering it to her when cooled by my breath.

“Yes, hungry, too,” she answered with a little laugh, and drank and at the end again, and yet again, until all was gone. In a few minutes she fell asleep, breathing easily and softly. Quietly thanking God we left her bed and went to the next room where her brother and sister lay sick of the same fever. The following day all three were well. As I went away from the home where Christ as the Healer had been victorious, I could not but have somewhat in my heart of the triumphant song that rang through Heaven, and yet I was not a little amazed at my own strange doings, and still more at my discovery that

HE IS JUST THE SAME TODAY.

And this is the story of how I came to preach the Gospel of Healing through faith in Jesus.

That very day I went to the cemetery and laid in the grave the bodies of three who had died two days before: but I rejoice to add that in more than twelve years of ministry in Australia which followed, I only buried five, although ministering to many, many thousands. And yet it was not all at once that I could discover how to teach the lessons that I learned that day. Now until six years after did I fully enter upon the ministry of healing as part of the ministry of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Step by step, however, the Holy Spirit led His child on into the deeper truths of God. Two years later he resigned his pastorate in Newton “to devote himself to evangelistic work amongst the masses” and because he had been convinced that it was wrong for a minister to sell and for a church to buy any man’s spiritual power or services.” Thus he entered upon a life of faith trusting God alone to support him and his wife, whom he married in 1876, and his family. For the next ten years the center of his activity was Melbourne where a large tabernacle was erected to hold the numbers who came to hear him and where in 1882 he formed the International Divine Healing Association.

As he preached the word, the Lord confirmed it with signs following. Especially notable was the miracle of healing in 1883 of Mrs. Lucy Parker who for almost three years had been “under the care of some of the ablest surgeons of Melbourne.” Cancer had entirely destroyed the sight of her left eye. Within a few minutes of the time Dr. Dowie laid his hands on her, the cancer burst, and when he bade her to open her eye in Jesus’ name, she could see perfectly.

At length Dr. Dowie became persuaded that God would have him “leave that lovely Australasian land, and go forth on a pilgrimage carrying Leaves of Healing from the Tree of Life to every nation I could reach.” His first stop was New Zealand, and from there he proceeded to the United States, entering the Golden Gate at San Francisco, June 9, 1888.

Dr. Dowie’s reputation had preceded him to America so that it was not long before the hotel lobby where he was staying was crowded with those desiring to be prayed for. Many of these whom he described as “fine-feathered birds with polluted hearts” he refused to pray for because they were seeking healing for their bodies only and were unwilling

to repent of their sin first. Exactly one week after his arrival in San Francisco, however, an aged, ignorant woman who described herself as “poor white trash” came leaning upon a crutch, and in great pain.” She did not know if she as a Christian but eagerly desired to have that assurance. Once Dr. Dowie had led her “into a simple trust in Christ as her Saviour,” he asked her, “Now will you trust Jesus as your Healer?”

“Show me how.”

“If Jesus were to enter this room now and present Himself to you, would you ask Him to heal you, believing that He would?”

“Oh, yes, Doctor, and I believe He would.”

“Then,” Dr. Dowie continued, “He is present.” When the woman looked around the room in search of Him, Dr. Dowie explained, “Invisibly present, for He has said, ‘Lo, I am with you always.’ If that is true, He is here now in spirit and in power.”

“I believe He is.”

Without another word Dr. Dowie knelt and, asking her to put her diseased foot in his hand, prayed. When he arose, he said, “In Jesus’ name, rise and walk.” She did, walking across the room several times, unable to speak for deep emotion. Her backslidden daughter, who was with her, was restored to God.

As the two were leaving, Dr. Dowie called to the old lady, “You have left something which belongs to you.”

“What?”

“Your crutch.”

“Oh, I don’t need it any more, I am healed.” She left it and “walked more than eight blocks to her daughter’s home.”

This incident we have narrated quite fully, not simply because it was the first healing of Dr. Dowie’s “American Mission,” but primarily because it illustrates one of the fundamental principles of his ministry. Dr. Dowie maintained that the Word of God clearly teaches that healing for the body is “the children’s bread.” Therefore *he refused to pray for the sick until he felt certain that they had met the conditions outlined in God’s Word, especially that they had fully repented of all known sin.* Conversion he regarded as essential to healing. Hence, repentance was one of the principal themes of his sermons.

“The sermons half the time do not touch upon healing,” wrote Martha Wing Robinson when she attended services conducted in Dr. Dowie’s home. “There is so much less about healing than there is about spirituality.”

This feature of Dr. Dowie’s ministry has been regarded by impartial observers of his work as well as by his followers as one of the main reasons for his marked continued success in praying for the sick. Furthermore, this insistence on thorough repentance, including restitution wherever possible, resulted in a host of strong, earnest Christians. These converts have attracted the attention of many. One keen student of revivals in the United States believes that a higher percentage of his converts – possibly 98 percent – have remained true to God than those of any other evangelist up to his time. All because of Scriptural repentance!

For two years following his first healing in America Dr. Dowie held missions in various cities along the Pacific Coast from Mexico to Victoria, B. C. In one of these missions, held in the First Presbyterian Church in Oakland, Mrs. Deliah King, who for five years had suffered with a cancer in her tongue which was extending into her throat, was healed. She was then sixty-nine years old and lived after she was healed for about thirty-five years, dying at the age of 104 – completely freed from the oppression of the devil, an irrefutable testimony to the performance of healings wrought in Jesus’ name.

In 1890 Dr. Dowie moved to Illinois where in August he held a convention in Chicago. During the last service he was presented with a prayer request for Mrs. Jennie Paddock, who at that moment lay at death’s door some fifteen miles away. She had a large fibroid tumor in her abdomen which had grown so firmly to the blood vessels that the doctors believed an operation would prove fatal. Dr. Dowie first satisfied himself that the woman was a Christian. Then he offered prayer for her, at the same time telling God that he would consider her healing as a sign that he should hold a mission in Chicago. Mrs. Paddock was perfectly delivered, and her case attracted such attention that a year later the details of her healing were published in the *Chicago Inter-Ocean*, one of the leading newspapers of the day.

The time, however, for his Chicago mission was not yet, for he had numerous engagements to fill. During the next three years he traveled extensively throughout Canada and from Minnesota to Pennsylvania. It was while he ministered in Minneapolis that F. A. Graves, the well-known hymn writer, was delivered from epilepsy with which he had been afflicted since boyhood.

Finally, on May 7, 1893 Dr. Dowie began his Chicago mission in a tabernacle seating about 400. He strategically erected it near the entrance gates to the World’s Fair where multitudes passed daily on their way to what he delighted to call Vanity Fair. Enemies derisively nicknamed the tabernacle “the little wooden hut,” and a professor in the nearby University of Chicago called it a “bit of kindling-wood.” Dr. Dowie accepted the epithet and responded that he “would use that bit of kindling wood to start a fire which would sweep all over the world.” And that’s exactly what he did!

As people began to come from far and near, Dr. Dowie saw that it was imperative to have a place to care for the sick who came to be prayed for. This led to the opening of Divine Healing Home No. 1 in May, 1894.

“The Home is neither a hospital nor a hotel but just what its name implies, ‘a home,’” Dr. Dowie explained, for he and his family made it “their private home and all its inmates are treated as his private guests. Services of praise, prayer and teaching of the Word of God are held twice daily in a large assembly room. . . In

addition to these services Dr. Dowie usually meets the guests several times each week for special healing services. . . . The Home has been established for purpose of receiving:

First. The sick children of God who are seeking Him alone for the healing in the name of Jesus and through the power of the Holy Spirit; and

Second: Those who are receiving instruction in God's way of healing as set forth in the Holy Scriptures."

A change was made for room and board, but many who could not pay were entertained absolutely free – some of these for several weeks when Dr. Dowie deemed it advisable for them to remain for the strengthening of their faith. Many more guests applied than could be accommodated in the Home so that as many as a hundred had to find rooms in the boarding-houses of the neighborhood. This necessitated the opening of two more Homes within five months.

One of those who came to Dr. Dowie for prayer was the cousin of Abraham Lincoln, Miss Amanda M. Hicks, president of Clinton College, Clinton, Kentucky. "All of us know," *The Clinton Democrat* subsequently stated in the account of her healing, "how our best physicians battled for months with the insatiate destroyer . . . that human skill and science were powerless." Wealthy and influential friends offered Miss Hicks the best surgical help in the United States, but she felt she should commit her case to God. Now she had been brought to Chicago on a cot, dying "from a cancerous tumor in the region of the saecum, which had burst and discharged into the alimentary regions."

The friends who had brought her told Dr. And Mrs. Dowie "of the long months of pain night and day which their friend had endured, the paroxysms of which were but partially and temporarily relieved by large doses of morphine." Dr. Dowie was most deeply moved with compassion, but he astonished her friends by saying he "required in the name of the Lord" that she give up the use of morphine and drugs of every kind before he would pray for her. "That was our first and final determination," said Dr. Dowie, "for there is not an atom of hope for the healing of anyone who will not first abandon that diabolical drug. We will nigh brake our hearts and wasted time and strength until we learned that lesson."

Miss Hicks agreed and kept her promise though for hours, as she said, she had "a hand to hand struggle with the devil." During this time Dr. And Mrs. Dowie remained at her bedside in prayer. The next day he prayed for her healing. "In a moment the terrible agony of months departed, and later in the evening she rose and walked freely. Several days of cleansing followed, gallons of cancerous matter passing away, and she was reduced by six inches in circumference."

This healing illustrates another of the principles of Dr. Dowie's ministry. According to his light a person could not trust God and at the same time use medicine. With him there was no middle ground or compromise. It was either one thing or the other, and he consistently refused to pray for anyone who in any way was "leaning on the arm of flesh." When anyone entered the Divine Healing Homes, he did so with the full understanding that he was to trust God alone and could use no medicine while in the Home. Any medicine he might have brought with him was to be left with the one in charge of the Home.

There were a number of advantages in this position beyond the spiritual one of bringing people into complete and implicit faith in God alone. For one thing, it was a protection to Dr. Dowie, for it nullified the charge of his enemies that he was practicing medicine without a license or conducting a hospital. This was very important when he was subsequently arrested on such charges. Furthermore, when prayer was answered, the healings were clear-cut demonstrations of the power of the Lord alone to heal, and no one could say that medicine had been, even in the least degree, a contributing factor in the recovery of the person.

On the 31st of August of 1894 the first issue of Dr. Dowie's weekly publication, *Leaves of Healing*, appeared. "His paper," wrote Dr. Mackenzie, "a commendable product of the printer's art, gave weekly testimonies to the constant healings. Photographs of the sick before their healing and of the recovered were geographically descriptive of the wonderful work being done." In publishing individual testimonies Dr. Dowie made it a habit to wait some time so that there could be no question as to the healing. As far as possible the names and addresses of all doctors who had attended the person as well as that of the ones healed were given so that the readers could investigate the testimony for themselves. "We do not want the testimony of Mr. Nobody who lives Nowhere," said Dr. Dowie. "You look along the *Leaves of Healing*, and you will find the names and addresses of the people healed. . . The people can be found. They stand as living witnesses." Thus "the little white dove," as the paper was affectionately called, began to carry the message of healing the world over and proved to be one of the most effective instruments of his ministry.

Directly opposite "The Little Wonder Hut" Colonel W. F. Cody, better known as Buffalo Bill, conducted his "Wild West Show" during the World's Fair. For six long months "the howling hideous cries of the Indians who 'massacred Custer and his cavalry' . . . and the shouts of tens of thousands of spectators" were quite disturbing to the preacher and congregation across the street. "In defiance of all the law Sunday was the maddest, wildest day of all the week," wrote Dr. Dowie. "Whilst reading, preaching or praying, showers of small shot would fall on the Tabernacle, or the strains of the Wild West Band playing the 'Marsellaise' or 'Yankee Doodle' would break in our hymns, 'We're Marching to Zion' or 'What a Friend We Have in Jesus.'"

A year after Buffalo Bill closed his show, his niece, Sadie Cody, was brought to Dr. Dowie's home from Indiana on a cot – "with a diseased spine, abscess, tumor, internal disorders, and her right leg three inches shorter than the left." After prayer was offered in her behalf, she was completely healed. Thus Dr. Dowie could say, "We have had our revenge on him and the Wild West Show. He captured Indians. . . We have captured a Cody from the murderous demons of disease."

The year of 1895 was a "year of persecution," for Dr. Dowie was arrested, in all, about one hundred times. Dr. Dowie's ministry, especially the healing of persons with such prominent connections could not fail to attract the attention of the public and the medical profession in particular. Opposition arose and charges were brought against him on the count either of practicing medicine without a license or of operating a hospital without a license. Sometimes this took place "near midnight, in his own home, and often when in the act of preaching or praying with the sick." Two of these arrests occurred on a Sunday "in the presence of thousands."

Dr. Dowie spent many weary weeks in court fighting these ridiculous charges, and in the end won the battle against city and state officials single-handed. This unequivocal victory was not merely a personal one, but one for every minister of the gospel in the United States. Since that time the right of a minister to pray for the sick has been unquestioned. He had won a permanent victory for the Kingdom of God.

This “year of persecution,” had a very salutary effect on the work, for it gave Dr. Dowie a tremendous amount of free publicity in the press of the city and the nation. One result was that many came to see for themselves, were persuaded that of a truth God was with him, and joined the despised congregation. Thus the enemy defeated his own purposes.

It had long been necessary to have larger quarters. In 1895 Dr. Dowie had moved into a hall seating about fifteen hundred. In May, 1896, he and his family moved into the Hotel Imperial which he had leased for a divine healing home. This place which he called Zion Home was right in the heart of Chicago at the corner of fashionable Michigan Avenue and Twelfth Street. Here he continued his healing ministry along the same lines but on a much larger scale, assisted by an ever increasing and very able number of solid ministers. About a year later he secured a church four blocks south of the Home on Michigan Avenue, remodelled it to seat about three thousand, and named it Central Zion Tabernacle.

Among the multitudes who came to Zion Home was a physician, a graduate of Ann Arbor, whose father was a United States Army surgeon and whose mother was also a regular physician, Dr. Lillian Yeomans. Through overwork in her practice of medicine and surgery she had begun to take narcotics. Soon she was a slave and at the time of her coming to Zion was in “the last stages of narcotic addiction.”

“When I came here,” Dr. Yeomans testified, “I took five grains of the sulphate of morphine each 24 hours, and I was also taking from 90 to 100 grains of chloral hydrate every 24 hours, which is about twenty times the ordinary dose of chloral hydrate. . . Well, my reason for coming to Zion was not that I had lost confidence in the efficacy of means, but because it seemed to me God told me very clearly that He would not deliver me from this by means. I asked again and again under what physician’s care I might place myself; what sanitarium I might go to, but God never satisfactorily answered me; I seemed to get an absolute negative answer. I saw divine healing plainly in the Bible, but for me to accept it was like trying to walk on air. I prayed and prayed, but it seemed that God would not heal me in that way. He said, ‘I have no healing medicines.’ God seemed to say plainly, ‘I am the Lord that healeth thee,’ and so I came down to Zion and brought a large quantity of morphine and chloral with me. Of course, everything was taken away from me at once. I doubt if any competent physician would have dared to take it away from me. Now I am completely delivered from morphine and chloral, for which I Give God the praise.”

This was the beginning of more than 40 years of “divine help, life more abundant, super abounding vitality!” according to her own testimony. These were also years in which she was “engaged in confidently pointing others to the Source of strength, vigor and tireless energy,” for she had a nationwide ministry of divine healing herself personally and by means of her writings.

Another one delivered from the bondage of Satan in Zion Home was Sara Leggett Brooks who was brought on a cot five hundred miles from her home in Canada, having suffered for months with a large tumor. In Zion Home she was carried into the healing meeting on her cot.

In these meetings Dr. Dowie patiently taught the word of God on the subject of healing. Often he spent hours doing little more than quoting the “exceeding great and precious promises,” for he knew by experience that “faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.” Often the cooks and dining room staff of the Home had to hold the diner

for long periods of time awaiting the close of these services. Dr. Dowie remained completely indifferent to this. His one purpose was to see that the work of God was done and he knew that it took time to create faith in people's hearts for the accomplishing of miracles.

Little wonder that at the end of such a session when Dr. Dowie came to Brooks and asked, "Are you willing to do what I tell you?" she replied, "Yes, I believe I am." Then when he took her by the shoulder and said, "In the name of the Lord, arise and walk," she who had been unable to get out of bed for months rose from her cot, went into the diningroom, and ate her first regular meal in months.

Mrs. Martha Wing Robinson give a vivid description of Zion Home in a letter from there in 1899 when she came there seeking her own healing.

"The conversations here would astonish anyone [who stepped] into the Home and [did] not know what was going on. Groups gather together and talk about God and Christ just as if They were personal friends. . . . Everywhere you meet those who have been wonderfully healed. Here is a woman who was instantly cured of cancer. There is [one who] received instant eyesight . . . was healed of paralysis, etc., etc. . . . People, strangers to each other, meet in halls and elevator and smile at each other . . . and usually fall into conversation. . . The maids, even, one may feel glad to get into conversation with. And you will see a richly-dressed, elegant, educated woman in earnest conversation with a poorly-dressed, ignorant person, maybe asking advice or trying to get help from the poor one."

The way in which these Homes contributed to the success of Dr. Dowie's ministry is very important. In calling attention to their significance Gordon Lindsay, editor of the *The Voice of Healing*, who has been closely associated with the leading evangelists engaged in a healing ministry today says:

"Every evangelist who ministers to the sick in a large city-wide campaigns realizes his greatest handicap is that fact that people coming from considerable distances, usually because of expensive involved, plan to stay only long enough to get prayed for and then to return to their communities. Because of this many do not get sufficient of the Word of God to give them the proper faith for healing. The Healing Homes made it possible for even the desperate cases to receive a repeated ministration of the Word, or until their faith mounted to that degree that the miracle took place."*

*Lindsay, Gordon, *The Life of John Alexander Dowie* pp 147-8

"You can't imagine what a busy man Dr. Dowie is," wrote Mrs. Robinson to her sister during her stay in Chicago. "He has slept only three nights this week, I think he said. Sundays he preaches and teaches and prays from early in the morning until half-past ten at night. And the wonderful part of it is people will go to the Tabernacle at half-past six in the morning and stay till ten at night. Just eager to stay! Pour in, and in no hurry to get out! There is something more than 'eloquent preaching' behind that. And something more than healing, for it is the well people that come and stay like that. To go to meetings where a thousand people will stand up, eager, in complete consecration, and they mean it! This is a wonderful place. It grows on one as one stays here!"

What was the act of consecration referred to in this letter? At the close of his forceful sermons Dr. Dowie would call on those who had been convicted thereby to stand and repeat after him, clause by clause, a “prayer of consecration,” varied to apply to the sermon, but always the same in substance:

My God and Father, in Jesus' name I come to Thee. Take me as I am. Make me what I ought to be in spirit, in soul and in body. Give me power to do what is right. If I have wronged any, give me power to repent, and to confess, and to do right in Thy sight, no matter what it costs. Give me Thy Spirit and lead me into a holy life, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Elder Eugene Brooks tells the effect his praying that prayer had on him when he attended Dr. Dowie's service for the first time seeking healing: “Along with many others, I rose in response to his call for consecration and promised to do anything God wanted me to do. This meant something for me, but when I did it a conviction came over me that I had never felt before in my life. Though I had been preaching for about twelve years I found I had a den of devils in my heart, a cage of unclean birds.”

And his testimony to the power of this prayer was but one of thousands!

In 1898 Dr. Dowie was deeply moved by the statement of a nineteen-year-old criminal uttered just before his execution: “I never had a chance.” Brought up in evil surroundings, he had been arrested over one hundred times. Now he was paying the penalty for a murder he had committed. Dr. Dowie determined that as far as he was concerned no one in the city of Chicago would ever again be able to say that. Forthwith he organized his congregation into groups called “Zion Seventies” whose mission was to go out two by two and visit every home in every street of that great city bringing them the message of the gospel of peace.

These Seventies were thoroughly consecrated, trained, effective personal workers. Most of them were powerful witnesses having had outstanding conversations themselves and, in many cases, miracles of healings. Thus they spoke with the authority that comes from personal experience. Later this group was reorganized under the name of Zion Restoration Host.

After Mrs. Robinson, whose comments have been already quoted, joined Zion, she was recognized as one of the most zealous and hard-working members of this group. One of her poems dealing with this subject we quote in full:

*Lo, a call for help has reached us,
Sweeping on from sea to sea;
Echoing back from tow'ring mountains,
“Come, the world hath need of thee.”
Listen to the great creation,
Groaning 'neath its curse of woe;
Who will carry forth the message,*

Who to save the lost will go?

*Great the vineyard, few the workers;
White the harvest, brief the day;
See, the sun goes lingering downward,
Hasten, labor while you may.
Hark! e'er scarce has ceased the echo,
Rolling back from sea to sea
Rings the ans'ring voice of thousands,
"Here am I Send me! Send me!"*

*Ha, the Lord hath found Him workers,
Soldiers, ready for the fray,
Not a coward there is among them,
Brave to fight, and to obey.
Clad in all their gospel armor,
Sword of Spirit, Shield of Faith;
Helmet of Salvation wear they,
And they're girt about with Truth.*

*Satan's armies, called to conflict,
Know at last that they must face
Mightiest warriors earth hath shown them
With their blessed message "Peace."
Heavenly Hosts have watched with gladness
Gathering of this band to win
Out of earth, for God, the wanderers,
Lost in sorrow, shame, and sin.*

*Woe to them in ease in Zion!
Shall there be an idler who
Loiters in the lengthening shadows,*

Knowing not there's work to do?

Let us, then, bring in the workers,

Forward! be our ringing cry ;

We are ready for the labor,

And we're not afraid to die.

Up then, Zion! Sound the watchword!

Listen for the bugle call;

Not a man must be found wanting,

Not a worker faint or fall.

Not a man must fail his duty,

Every soldier at his post;

Yea, the world will bless thy coming,

Zion's Restoration Host.

In the latter months of 1899 Dr. Dowie began to realize the accomplishment of a dream he had had for years – a city composed entirely of Christians. To that end he purchased 6,500 acres of beautiful, fertile farm land with a frontage of two and a half miles on Lake Michigan, midway between Chicago and Milwaukee – Baal and Beer, as he descriptively called them. Here Christians from literally all over the world soon flocked and contributed their brain and brawn and resources to building Zion City, a city of God on earth wherein righteousness would dwell. Everywhere one was reminded of the Bible – parks were called Beulah, Sharon, and Shiloh; typical streets were Enoch, Eschol, Ezekiel, Gideon, Gilboa; and broad boulevards were Carmel, Bethel, and Shiloh. The physical plan for the city has long been recognized as well-nigh a model of perfection.

Numerous industries were established, among them Zion Lace Factory with machines and workmen imported directly from England. This was the first lace factory in the United States, and thus Dr. Dowie was credited with being an industrial pioneer along with his other achievements.

His perspicacity in scientific fields was uncanny, to say the least, amounting almost to prophecy. In the course of one of his sermons in 1897 he said, “Do you know that one day. . . we are going to have a great big thing to catch the sound and I am going to have them turn on Zion to Zion's friends in New York? See! And by the beds of sick and sorrowing, some day, I am going to have them hear the testimonies that they cannot hear except [by this means]. . . . It is going to be done, because the mouth of the Lord spoke that a long time ago.”

Seven years later he uttered another prophecy which like the other he himself did not live to see fulfilled but which is today a common, daily phenomenon:

“I know not the possibility of electricity. It is possible that it may yet convey the face of the speaker, and, by photoelectricity, show the man as he is talking. Perhaps a discourse delivered here in every city of the United States.”

The gigantic task of maintaining full control of the church organization, the development of Zion City as a community, and the founding and establishment of an industrial system, was undertaken by Dr. Dowie and over the entire project he maintained control,” relates Carl Q. Lee.

“Those who worked with him during these years say that often he labored from twenty-four to thirty-six hours continuously without sleep. This was particularly true toward the end of the week when it was necessary to correct the final proofs of *Leaves of Healing*. Besides this, a heavy preaching schedule was maintained. . . . The sermons preached were not twenty-minute or half-hour addresses. Often the meetings were several hours in duration and the addresses delivered were seldom less than one-and-a-half hours long. More often than not the addresses would extend to three hours in length. Those who sat under John Alexander Dowie’s ministry during these years marveled at the dynamic vitality which bore him up under this tremendous strain. The work began to have its effect, however.”*

* Lee, Carl Q. John Alexander Dowie, Chicago, 1944 pp 34.35

At length on the last Sunday of September in 1905 after administering the Lord’s Supper to some six thousand people at the close of a long service, this servant of God suffered a stroke of paralysis before the vast multitude. His public minister was ended.

During the year and a half of earthly life which remained to him many sad and unfortunate things transpired. Misunderstandings and bitterness arose. Through it all, however, God still owned the prayers and the faith of His servant for others even though he did not get his prayers answered for his own recovery.

One day Marie Burgess (who later married Robert Brown and this year is celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of her ministry in New York City) met a cripple in a wheelchair outside the Zion General Stores where she was employed as a demonstrator. Stopping to talk with him she learned that he was on his way to the railroad station to return to his home disappointed and disheartened that he had not been healed. Despairingly he told Miss Burgess how he had sold his possessions to make the long and expensive trip to Zion City. “I came here all the way from Australia,” he said, “because I wanted Dr. Dowie to pray for me. I *know* if he would have prayed for me, I would have been healed.”

“I would go to Dr. Dowie then,” Miss Burgess replied.

They won’t let me. People say he isn’t what he used to be, that he doesn’t have the power to heal anymore.”

“They don’t know anything about it,” was Miss Burgess’ reassuring comment. “Go and try it. I would. If I had come all the way from Australia, believe me, I wouldn’t go back without trying.”

“How will I get there?” asked the man, hope reviving.

“Go right up to his house.”

“Do you think I’d get in?”

“I know you would. Tell them just what you told me. Tell them you want Dr. Dowie to pray for you.”

“Before I go to the train,” the cripple concluded, “I’m going there.”

An hour or so later the man came back to the store – walking and praising God. His companion was wheeling his now empty chair. “How did he get healed?” Miss Burgess queried.

Then he told how they had gone to Dr. Dowie’s house and presented their case. They were told that Dr. Dowie was a very sick man but finally agreed to take him to his room. They carried him in his chair and set him beside Dr. Dowie’s bed. The valiant warrior, himself a cripple, had to have the assistance of his attendants. These took his paralyzed arm and placed his hand on the head of the crippled suppliant. Fervently Dr. Dowie prayed the simple prayer, the same one he had for each one of the untold thousands he had prayed for the world over:

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, and in accordance with the will of God, our heavenly Father, let this man be free from every infirmity.

The attendants lifted Dr. Dowie’s impotent hand off his head. Instantly the cripple jumped out of his chair completely delivered.

Soon the time came for Dr. Dowie to “put off the earthly house of this tabernacle.” His last night came and he slipped into semi-consciousness. In his delirium he was again “talking to the assembled multitudes or his people,” said his friend, V.V. Barnes. “He preached during that night. . . . the principles of the gospel to the assembled thousand. . . . At last he sang, ‘Joy cometh in the morning.’ The last song that he ever sang as the morning light began to appear was

‘I am a soldier of the cross –

A follower of the Lamb,

And shall I fear to own His cause,

Or blush to speak His name?’ ”

Thus John Alexander Dowie, “by the grace of God a helper of men,” went to his eternal reward.

For a full half-century Dr. Dowie has rested from his gigantic labors, but throughout this period his influence has been exceedingly powerful and his works still follow him. Naturally, many of those associated with him have fallen on sleep, but considering the time which has elapsed there is an unusually large number of people still living who rise up and call him blessed because of the simple prayer of faith he uttered in their behalf whereby they were raised up from death’s door completely healed. Furthermore, throughout all these years a large group of strong, forceful ministers have continued to proclaim truths of “salvation, healing, and holy living” which he taught and which they learned from him. To a man, they would agree with one of the greatest of these, Marie Burgess Brown, who in speaking of Dr. Dowie and his work, has said:

“That’s where I got my foundation. And if it hadn’t been for the truths of the Word of God as I learned them there, I would not be here today. I would never have been able to go through all these years.”

Many of these have occupied positions of leadership in the Pentecostal movement, for it is not without the greatest significance that one of the first places to receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit after Los Angeles in 1906 was Zion City, Illinois.*

*Among those baptized in the Holy Spirit who had been connected with Dr. Dowie and subsequently went out to minister are: Edith Baugh, an early associate of Mrs. Robert Brown in her work in New York City and who later went as a missionary to India; Harry Bowley, missionary to Africa; B.W. Brannan, evangelist; Elder and Mrs. Eugene Brooks of the Faith Homes, Zion, Illinois; Mrs. Robert Brown, pastor of Glad Tidings Tabernacle, New York City; Marie Burman, home missionary for Glad Tidings Tabernacle, New York City; Mr. and Mrs. H.E. Cantell who had a large healing home in London, England, for many years; Mrs. George W. Finnern, missionary in Jamaica; J. Roswell Flower, General Secretary of the Assemblies of God and his wife; Cyrus Fockler, pastor in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; F.A. Graves, pastor and hymn writer; L.C. Hall, minister and author of “Who Took My Burden?” and “Deeper in Thy Love, O Jesus,” and his wife; Mrs. L.M. Judd of the Faith Homes, Zion, Illinois; John Lake, missionary to South Africa and evangelist; Bernice Lee, missionary to India; Mr. and Mrs. George A. Mitchell of Faith Homes, Zion, Illinois; W.E. Moody, pastor; Mr. and Mrs. W.H. Piper, founders of the Stone Church, Chicago; Mrs. Earl Pottinger, missionary to South Africa; Anna Reiff for many years the able editor of **The Latter Rain Evangel**; “Dad” Ritchie and his five sons, all evangelists with headquarters in Texas; Charles E. Robinson, author and for many years Assistant Editor of the **Pentecostal Evangel** (he once told the editor of **Bread of Life**, “Dr. Dowie had a way of saying things that made them stick”); Mr. and Mrs. Henry W. Robinson of the Faith Homes, Zion, Illinois; H.A. Ulrich, pastor in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Fred Vogler, former Assistant Superintendent of the Assemblies of God; Mrs. Joseph Wannemacher, minister, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; “Mother” E.M. Whittimore of Door of Hope fame of New York City; Dr. Lillian B. Yeomans, evangelist; and Dr. Phinehas Yoakum who conducted a very successful healing home in California for many years.

In this community there was a people which had been prepared by deep repentance and by the teaching of Dr. Dowie that God desired to restore all the nine gifts of the Spirit to operation in the church, and that they should continually pray for the Holy Spirit. All this, together with the many experiences they were permitted to go through immediately prior to this outpouring of the Spirit, made them very hungry and receptive. And after they had been endued with power from on high they went out to extend the kingdom of God throughout the world.

“Some people say that Dr. Dowie’s work is dead,” said Dr. Lillian Yeomans once. “No! It is more alive today than ever.”

[Leaves of Healing home page](#)