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VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER. THE MESSENGER OF THE COVENANT.

WE ARE loth to utter one word of personal criticism in these columns: we much prefer to discuss doctrines rather than persons. And yet at times it seems absolutely to the interest of the Lord's flock to identify persons with false teachings. But even in such cases we seek to deal with the doctrines of the persons and not with their personal affairs. This rule has Scriptural precedent. See the references to Hymenaeus, Philetus and Alexander. – 1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 2:17.

A man styling himself "Rev. John Alex. Dowie" has come prominently before the public during the past ten years. His specialty until about two years ago was the healing of the sick, in which he was to a considerable extent successful, according to his own accounts. We are informed that he used neither hypnotism nor medicine, but prayed for the sick in the name of our Lord Jesus. Being as sympathetic with every good work done in Jesus' name as we are opposed to every such work done by sorcery, hypnotism and other Satanic influence to deceive – such as Christian Science, Spiritism, etc. – we watched Mr. Dowie's career with a very friendly interest.

Appealed to by WATCH TOWER readers for advice as to whether or not Mr. Dowie's work were of God, and whether or not it would be proper for them to seek divine healing as he proposed, we were obliged to answer them, and now think proper to summarize our reply for the benefit of all our readers and their friends, as follows: –

We are expecting, according to the Scriptures, that our day will abound in deceptions specially prepared by the Adversary to

"deceive if it were possible the very elect;" and that in his extremity Satan will even cast out Satan, and heal the sick, with a view to perpetuating his hold of power, and to deceive God's people and turn their attention away from present truth. We must remember our Lord's words, "Many will say unto me in that day, Master, Master, have we not taught in thy name? and in thy name expelled demons? and in thy name performed many wonders? And then I will plainly declare to them, I never approved you. Depart from me, you who practice iniquity." (Matt. 7:22,23, *Diaglott* translation.) This implies that Satan will have not only false teachers, but also false miracle-workers who will deceive themselves, as well as others, as respects the source of their power and teachings, – and only awake to a realization of their true position – that they are rejected from membership in the elect church – that they have failed to make their calling and election sure to a place in the Kingdom class, when "the harvest is past and the summer is ended." – Jer. 8:20.

Nevertheless we are not to hastily assume that Mr. Dowie is of this deceived class; – let us wait a little, and not hastily decide, lest we think or speak evil of a servant of the Lord. However, there are a few very unfavorable symptoms in this case – foreign entirely to the spirit of Christ as we understand it. (1) Mr. Dowie's very apparent vanity and boastfulness – so different from the Lord's example followed by the apostles – manifested in his continual reference to himself in laudatory, boastful terms and in the publication of sundry photographs of himself in his own publications. (2) The gentleman uses extremely harsh, vulgar language in referring to any and all who oppose him; – manifesting a hatred rather than a love for his enemies. (3) One of the charges against the Pharisees was that they were covetous or literally **[R2837 : page 212]** "money-lovers"; and this seems to be one of Mr. Dowie's weaknesses. The poor were drawn to the Lord and got most of his favors, but the poor have very small chance of participating in Mr. Dowie's favors. If they cannot pay

\$20 to \$25 per week to stop at the hotel, Zion's Headquarters, they have little chance of contact even with the great man's shadow as he steps from his palatial hotel into his carriage. The occupation and salary of Mr. Dowie's followers are inquired about considerably too; and each is given to understand that the only way to live at peace with God and Mr. Dowie is by faithfully giving one-tenth of his income to the Lord – to Mr. Dowie. These are unfavorable symptoms, and unless they are outgrown we can hope for nothing as respects Mr. Dowie and the harvest work; for it is written that "The Lord resisteth the proud but showeth his favor to the humble."

As respects the Lord's people expecting miraculous healing in answer to prayer: we do not think that they should expect miraculous healing, or pray for it. All of God's people are surely welcome at the throne of grace, and they are invited to bring all their burdens and cares there and to obtain mercy and find grace to help in every time of need. But the *saints* are never invited to pray for their own physical healing. They are, however, assured that it is the Father's good pleasure to give the *holy spirit* to them that *ask it*. And the intimation clearly is that physical ailments, sorrows and pain work out for God's people the graces and fruits of the spirit if properly received and patiently endured. It is to those so afflicted that the Lord speaks as to St. Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee." With this assurance the Apostle could glory in *afflictions*; and so may we also learn to do. – 2 Cor. 12:7-10.

This one prayer of the Apostle, repeated, he tells us, three times, is the only prayer for physical healing by any of the apostles, so far as the Bible-record [R2838 : page 212] shows. It was offered early in the Apostle's experience, before he had learned that his high calling was not to health and wealth and earthly blessings and ease in their enjoyment, but to *sacrifice* all these, that thus becoming a sharer in the sufferings of Christ he might attain to the heavenly condition – glory, honor and

immortality – by and by. Thus also our dear Redeemer prayed not for earthly blessings for himself, and used not his powers selfishly. He could have commanded the stones to become bread, but he would not, and fasted forty days. He could have asked, and would have received for his defence and deliverance from his persecutors, twelve legions of angels; but he would not do so – instead he would endure whatever the Father might permit to be poured into his cup of bitter experience; accepting only the common blessings of nature open to all mankind. When weary he *rested*, or became so weak that he could not carry his cross, and sank under it. But he would not pray for strength. It would have been in opposition to his covenant or *consecration unto death* to have thus sought divine aid in resisting death.

But while there are no evidences of the apostles praying for relief from physical ills (except the one instance above mentioned) we have records of their illness, and the illness of others whom they loved. In one instance the Apostle declares of Epaphroditus, – "He was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy upon him; and not on him only, but on me also; lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow." (Phil. 2:27.) Can we doubt that if his recovery had been miraculous the thing would have been so declared to the glory of God? It is evident, then, that it was as stated, of divine *mercy* and not of prayer that the recovery took place. And so it is with us now: "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of" and fulfils his promises of love and mercy, that all things, even *sickness*, etc., shall work for good to those called according to his purpose.

Physical healing in answer to prayer, as described in the Bible, was performed upon the public, not upon the Church, except (as in James 5:14-16) the saint had gotten into sin and into sickness as a chastisement for sin and so could not go to God in prayer for himself. Such should send for the Elders of the Church, and they should pray over him, for the forgiveness of his sin; "and

tho he have committed sins they shall be forgiven him, and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and God will raise him up."

Altho we are chronologically in the dawn of the Millennium we incline to doubt that any special restitution blessings will be dispensed to the world until the Gospel Church, the elect royal priesthood, is completed and glorified; for this is to be their very work.

THE LEAVEN OF PRIDE AT WORK.

Within the past two years Mr. Dowie's income from "tithes" of his followers (one-tenth of their incomes) has amounted to a handsome sum, so that he is now rated a millionaire. He has started a bank, purchased land and laid out a city, and embarked in various commercial enterprises. He has also taken the title of "Overseer" (bishop), and has ordained assistants to represent him in various cities, and the gatherings of his faithful are called churches of Christ; – tho they show no sign of recognizing Christ as their head. Rather, since they are ruled by Mr. Dowie in every particular, and their preachers are appointed by him at his pleasure, they have Mr. Dowie, and not Christ, for their *head* and ruler, and in all propriety should be considered Mr. Dowie's churches. [R2838 : page 213]

Even to thus Lord it over God's too credulous people (Col. 2:18; 1 Pet. 5:3) does not seem to have satisfied Mr. Dowie, but rather to have still further intoxicated his pride; until during the past six months he has represented himself as being –

THE MESSENGER OF THE COVENANT.

– MAL. 3:1.

Altho quite a number of his followers left him when this was fully understood (for it was broached carefully to "feel" how it would be received before stating it bluntly), yet the majority of

the poor "sheep" under his influence seem to be thoroughly deluded – entrapped by his pomposity, which, on the contrary, they ought at once to have recognized as alien to the Lord's spirit, had they known and given close attention to the voice of the true Shepherd, who declares, – "My sheep hear my voice and follow me. A stranger will they not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers." We still have hope, however, that the delusion will not last long with many of the distracted and deluded ones, who in many respects give evidence of being of the Lord's flock.

Whoever will refer to Mal. 3:1 should have no difficulty in seeing what Mr. Dowie evidently has not discerned, namely, that *two* messengers are referred to in the verse: first the antitypical Elijah to prepare the way, and second Jehovah's special servant, "the Messenger of the Covenant" – the Lord, the Christ. A New Covenant had long been promised, more favorable than the Law Covenant. Its Mediator would be greater than Moses – his antitype – Messiah. (Heb. 8:5-13.) Israel delighted to think of this coming Messenger of the New Covenant and of the blessings which would then be theirs.

ELIJAH THE PROPHET.

Emboldened by his success with *his people* under the title "Messenger of the Covenant," Mr. Dowie made great preparation for a public declaration of his greatness. He rented the immense Auditorium, made previous announcement that something great and unusual was to be expected, and thus gathered several thousand people including newspaper reporters, who give the following details of the speaker's words, etc.: –

"I am Elijah, the prophet, who appeared first as Elijah himself, second as John the Baptist, and who now comes in me, the restorer of all things. Elijah was a prophet, John was a preacher, but I combine in myself the attributes of prophet, priest and ruler over men. Gaze on me, then; I say it fearlessly. Make

the most of it, you wretches in ecclesiastical garb. I am he that is the living physical and spiritual embodiment of Elijah, and my coming to earth a third time has been prophesied by Malachi, by God himself, by his Son Jesus, by Peter, and three thousand years ago by Moses. All who believe me to be in very truth all of this will stand up.

"(Over three thousand people rose to their feet and greeted the blasphemous declaration with cheers and hand-clapping.)

"Understand well what I mean (he continued, striding down to the edge of the platform), I will take no counsel in my methods of government. I have come to proclaim theocracy pure and simple, the government of God by God, and for God, and I will never rest till all other forms of government have been driven from the earth.

"You talk about your democracy. Bah! I tell you democracy has been tried in the balance and has failed. The government of the people, by the people, and for the people is twaddle. I stand loyal to the flag and countenance no revolution, but I demand, here and now, that the name of God must be placed foremost in the Constitution of the United States, and the supreme authority of God over all things must be recognized.

"Listen to the first message of the prophet: You must pay your tithes and offerings into the storehouse of God. Accursed be ye if ye would seek to rob his house of its fulness by not obeying this, his will, sent through Elijah. I am come among you to fight the worship of mammon in all its forms."

**CONSIDERS ELIJAH AND THE MESSENGER OF THE
COVENANT ONE AND THE SAME PERSON –
HIMSELF.**

Poor man! The kindest view of his course is to presume that his reason has become unbalanced; – in a manner, by the way, that is

extremely common. A large proportion of the inmates of insane asylums have the organ of self-conceit too largely developed, and reason is unbalanced. Some think themselves Jesus, some apostles, some Mary, some kings and queens of earth, and dukes, etc., etc. Others of an opposite cast of mind accuse themselves of sins never committed, or imagine themselves given over to devils for torture.

Mr. Dowie's reasoning is faulty: that John the Baptist was not the Elijah because he did not have faith enough to believe it, and to so proclaim himself. Was it a proof that Jesus was not the Christ because he did not so declare until near the close of his ministry? Then, he asked the apostles, "Whom say ye, that I am?" and Simon Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father....Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the *Christ.*" (Matt. 16:15-20.) How different from Mr. Dowie's course!

Our Lord's words respecting John the Baptist explain the matter much better than does Mr. Dowie. Jesus told his disciples after John was dead that John was the Elias – thus contradicting Mr. Dowie's statement that he had failed to comprehend his privilege and [R2838 : page 214] never became the Elijah. (See Matt. 17:12,13.) However, our Lord intimates that John did not do *all* that is to be done by Elijah, and hence that a greater Elijah is to be expected, when he said, – "*If ye will receive it*, this is Elias which was for to come." – Matt. 11:14.

John's work as Elijah did not fail because of his own lack of faith, but because of the Jews' unreadiness of heart to be influenced by him. Not many had faith to receive the message, and hence not many were ready to receive Messiah.

The fact that Jesus came to the Jews as their Messiah in the flesh and was introduced by John *as* a forerunner or introducer (in the power and spirit of Elijah – Luke 1:17) does not hinder the fact that the Messiah (Head and body, 144,000) is shortly to be [R2839 : page 214] presented to the world in spiritual power and great glory. And as the man Christ Jesus was introduced by the man John doing an Elijah work of preparation, so the great and glorious Christ must be preceded by a great Elijah who will make ready for the Second Advent, by testing the people whether they will receive the King in peace and joy, or whether the earth must be smitten with the curse of a great time of trouble in order to make ready for the Heavenly Kingdom.

This *great* antitypical Elijah is greater than Mr. Dowie and John the Baptist, as the glorified Christ is greater than Jesus of Nazareth in his humiliation. This antitypical Elijah, as we have already shown, is clearly proven to be the entire Gospel Church (Head and body) in the flesh. For nearly nineteen centuries this Elijah has been *coming*, and been doing his work in the world. Had men received the message joyfully the world would now be longing for the Lord of glory as do we, praying, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." But as John's message was heeded by but few in nominal fleshly Israel, so also but few have heard the message of the antitypical Elijah. As a consequence the earth must be smitten with a *curse*, a blight – a terrible trouble of anarchy to make mankind ready and anxious for the Kingdom. On this subject see our detailed proofs that the Church in the flesh is the antitypical Elijah. – MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. II., page 249.
