

# THE AIMS AND METHODS OF ZION.

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## Letter of the General Overseer to the Associated News, Stating the Creed and Discipline of the Christian Catholic Church.

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As the American Hamburg Streamer *Graf Walderssee* was slowly passing the statue of Liberty at Bedloe's Island, and steering for the open sea at Sandy Hook, on the morning of Saturday, August 11, 1900, a "Deck Steward" handed me a little bunch of letters and telegrams.

One of these was from the Editor-in-chief of the Associate News (Main Office, 102 Fulton Street, New York) from which I make the following extract.

Rev. John Alex Dowie,  
Christian Catholic Church in Zion.

*Dear Sir:*—Leading newspapers throughout the country, which are supplied by us, will publish a signed editorial from you, if you will kindly send it to us at once, explaining the discipline and creed of the Christian Catholic Church in Zion.

The trouble which your ministers have encountered in Ohio leads us to believe that the doctrines of your Church have been grossly misunderstood, and the means we offer you is that best way of putting the true facts before the people. The editorial should be about fifteen hundred words in length. In sending same, please enclose also copy of latest photograph to be used in connection with the above.

Thanking you in advance for the courtesy, we beg to remain  
Yours truly, FREDERIK GRANT, Editor-in-Chief

This article, therefore, is my response to the foregoing courteous invitation, and I ask the kind consideration of readers in all parts of the United States of America to this attempt to put within so small a limit the facts concerning the discipline and creed of a movement which requires a volume rather than an article. I will slightly alter the order suggested by Mr. Grant, and deal first with our "Creed" and second with our "Discipline". The actual written creed contains but four articles, which are as follows:

*First.* That we recognize the infallible inspiration and sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures as the rule of faith and practice.

*Second.* That no persons can be members of the Church who have not repented of their sins and have not trusted in Christ for salvation.

*Third.* That such person must also be able to make a good profession, and declare that they know in their own hearts that they have truly repented, and are true trusting Christ, and have the witness, in a measure, of the Holy Spirit

*Fourth.* That all other questions of every kind shall be held to be matters of opinions and not matters that are essential to Church unity. These four articles were unanimously adopted as the basis of fellowship in the Christian Catholic Church in Zion by two "Conferences on Organization" which were held in Zion Tabernacle No. 2, Chicago.

Our addresses and the discussions of these conferences have been published fully in our weekly paper, LEAVES OF HEALING, and also in pamphlet form, by Zion Publishing House, Chicago.

The details of these proceedings give our views as to many of the things which, in our judgment, are included in an acceptance of the first article; and it is only fair that these should be taken into account in considering the question of our creed.

We plainly stated the conditions upon which we are willing to accept the responsibility of organizing the Christian Catholic Church in Zion and of assuming the responsibilities for the Government of that Church under the title of General Overseer.

I will be observed that many of the distinctive features of our teaching, therefore, of our creed—that is, our belief—are not expressed in the basis of fellowship, nor indeed in some cases in the discussions and addresses.

The fact is that every item of belief is found far better expressed in the Word of God than we could possibly express it in any attempted condensation thereof.

There is nothing, it will be seen, in our written creed that can possibly be objected to by any individual, or by all Christians who hold to that old Protestant definition

that The religion fo Protestants is the Bible.

The difference between our creed and those of the churches which we call apostate, including in that term both the Greek and Roman Churches and the Protestant denominations generally, is that while many of these so-called churches hold in theory as we do, they have invented creeds which destroy the supremacy and infallibility and sufficiency of the word fo God, and establish another foundation unknown to the Holy Scriptures; namely , the definition of Councils, Synods, Popes, and other official bodies and persons, as being of Divine authority.

Our creed is that neither councils, synods, nor popes, can in any degree modify, omit, or add to the fundament principles upon which God has established His Everlasting Kingdom.

Hundreds of times have we declared that the opinions of men are utterly valueless in themselves; that it does not matter one straw what any man thinks; the only thing that does matter eternally is what God thinks.

Hence we are at absolute issue with any attempt to define the Infinite; for everything that is Divine must be Infinite.

It is extremely absurd, in our judgment, to limit by any human definitions that which of necessity is incapable of being limited by the boundaries of man's mind.

We hold with Faber:

But we make His love to narrow  
By false limits of our own;  
And we magnify His strictness  
With a zeal He will not own.

For the love of God is braoder  
Than the measure of man's mind  
And the heart of the Eternal  
Is most wonderfully kind.

If we attempted to express in a sentence that which seems to us increasingly to be the essential difference between our creed and that of the churches, it would be in these words:

The Christian Catholic Church in Zion preaches the "Everlasting Gospel fo the Kingdom of God" as it is set fort by Jesus Christ and the inspired Evangelists and Apostles in the pages fo the New Testament, whilst all churches with which we have any acquaintance preach a more or less temporary gospel fo their particular church as it is set forth in their creeds—in short, "The Gospel of the Denominations.'

Or, still more brief, Zion believes and preaches the Gospel of the Kingdom, while the churches believe and preach the Gospel of the Churches.

These are daring words, and must, of course, in the very nature of things, create offense.

And here, let me add, is the great trouble with the churches; that the offense of the cross has ceased, so far as their teaching are concerned. The denominations and the ungodly world are on excellent terms with each other.

It is bad for the people when the police and thieves are on too good terms.

We do not shrink from the charge that Zion is "offensive," in a Scriptural and good sense, and we deplore that the denominational churches have seemed to place Christianity on the defensive.

Aggressive Christianity, absolutely refusing all alliance with the Word, the Flesh and the Devil, is the only Christianity known to the New Testament, and the only Christianity which God can approve.

Believing this, our creed of necessity declares that the Gospel is as unchangeable as God Himself. That Gospel which began to be preached by John the Baptist, who was, in his day, the Messenger of God's Covenant and the Forerunner of the Christ, begins with Repentance and demands of individual men and of every community and nation that "all men everywhere should repent" and, furthermore, immediately "bring forth fruits meet for Repentance."

The basis of individual, social and political well-being is therefore true Repentance for past transgression. This Zion proclaims, not as an abstract doctrine, but demands that it find immediate expression in action.

Herein lies the first step of that to which we now proceed, namely,

### *THE DISCIPLINE OF THE CHRISTIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN ZION.*

Zion denies the right of the people to rule themselves.

Zion affirms the right of God to rule the people.

Zion is in no sense a Democracy.

Zion is not a Republic, after the model of existing Republican Institutions in America and Europe and elsewhere, in which cunning bosses amuse the people with the idea that they rule themselves when they are really ruled by expert political tricksters.

Zion, in short, is a Theocracy.

We shall never advocate and resort to arms or force of any kind to establish Theocracy, even whilst Zion proclaims its unalterable opposition in principle to every form of government except Theocracy, and its determination to restore that Divine and Original Form of Government which was established in Eden ere man fell into transgression, and was only disestablished by the advent of Satan, sin, disease, death, and all the other powers of hell which came in the horrid train of that *Fallen Being* whom Paul calls *The God of the World*.

Zion, therefore, exercises the severest and yet the most loving kind of discipline. Zion shows no mercy to, and will make no terms whatever with evil of any kind or description.

Sin must be put away by righteousness: not the theoretical imputation merely of Christ's righteousness.

"The Kingdom of God is Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost."

Hence in demanding Repentance, Zion also enforces it by all the spiritual power which she possesses.

In using the word Zion, let me here interject, I use it as a larger term than the Christian Catholic Church: of the Christian Catholic Church is but an organization of men and women *who are in Zion*, and we cheerfully recognize that Zion is in the hearts of millions who are not in the Christian Catholic Church, and of vast numbers who are not in any Church whatever.

"Zion" in all this article must be held to stand for the Kingdom of God.

To continue, therefore: Zion refuses to recognize spiritual fellowship with the impenitent who only pretend Repentance, but do not bring forth "Fruits meet for Repentance," as being possible.

Zion demands that falsehoods shall be confessed; that wrongs of every kind shall be redressed by the guilty parties at no matter what cost, be it loss of property, reputation, or even life itself.

Under no circumstances will Zion, therefore, make compromise with evil or permit the sinner to profess faith in Christ the Saviour until he has fully resolved, without any conditions, to put all things right to the utmost possible extent, both with God and man.

Every defilement, therefore, of the flesh and spirit must be instantly and absolutely put aside.

Filthy reading, thinking and associations; filthy eating, drinking, smoking; filthy remedies, so-called, whether they be narcotics or any other poisons; filthy companionships of every kind, must be instantly and

permanently set aside.

Any return to these Zion will visit with instantaneous severity, at the same time patiently pleading with the offender; but, failing Repentance, will resolutely sever the corrupt person from further fellowship, until God's conditions of restoration are obeyed.

But Zion's discipline is not merely punitive.

It is only so in order that it may be beneficial; and the sharp pruning knife is only used to make the tree fruitful.

Hence Zion seeks, by patient teaching and toil, through all her ministers, to train her people for the most happy and useful of lives on earth, and for preparation for heaven when earthly life shall cease.

To this end Zion at once undertakes for her people to lead them to the fountains of perennial salvation and healing and cleansing to be found in Christ, the "Fountain opened for sin, for all uncleanness," and, therefore, into the king's highway of Holy Living, where no defilement can come. To this end mutual exhortation forbearance and co-operation are taught.

Obedience to the Law of Purity in All Things is demanded.

Hence Zion enters into the home, and requires that the relations of husband and wife shall be established upon a Christian basis, and that the family shall be ruled in accordance therewith.

Respect, reverence and obedience are taught, as not only due to parents, but as due to God in whose ever present sight every moment of life must be conspicuously lived; and to all good laws and lawful authority which do not conflict with the laws and authority of God as set forth in the Holy scriptures.

Zion demands that children shall not go from a prayerless home into a godless world, and that no member of the family shall engage in any traffic or occupation which injures humanity in any degree.

In order to make it easy to do right, Zion aims to isolate her people entirely from the world and its ungodly occupation, both in business and in pleasure.

Zion will not withdraw from the world. But Zion aims to rule the world, and to compel the world, which is so largely now in rebellion, to submit to the love and rule of God.

In order to effect these purposes, Zion "pools its interests," so to speak.

Zion requires, first, in accordance with the Word of God a Tithe of all earnings to be given into God's Storehouse that there may be "meat" in His House and

that the gospel may be extended throughout the world.

Zion further expects that the people shall co-operate in all her Financial Institutions, and in the industries which are springing from these, which will find their first embodiment in Zion City, near Chicago, where it is our hope that an objet lesson will be taught to all the earth.

Prosperity is synonymous with obedience to God and His Laws. Adversity is synonymous with Disobedience to God and His Laws.

Zion demands obedience, and enforces it by every Divine power which God has committed to her care and keeping.

Zion loyally renders unto Cæsar, whether he be President, Czar, Emperor, or King, that which belongs unto Cæsar; and yet Zion absolutely refuses to recognize the right of Cæsar to enter the domain of the conscience or to interfere with the actions of those who offend the righteous law, but live quiet, peaceable and good lives.

Zion will avail herself of every God-given power which can be represented by education, money or voting power, and will not hesitate to avail herself of help from all who are willing to concede her right to rule her people in matters which do not infringe upon the rightful powers committed to those power that be, which are ordained of God.

But, on the other side, Zion will contend against the powers which be that are ordained of the Devil, and will never submit to mob, boss, presidential, monarchial, imperial, or autocratic power, in matters where God has, in Christ, given universal Liberty.

RATHER THOSE WHO ARE IN ZION SACRIFICE THEIR LIVES THAN COMPROMISE WITH THE DEVIL, whether he sits in an ecclesiastical or a political seat of power.

All who do not approve such principles do not belong to Zion, are not welcome in Zion, and if there are any such who have come into Zion who object to these principles, they are heartily invited to retire from Zion.

But all everywhere who desire the Supremacy of God in the heart, the home, the business, the city, the State, the Nation, the world, are heartily invited to submit themselves to God and enter into association with Zion, and co-operate with us in the Extension of the Kingdom of God.

The discipline of Zion is that of an army, which does not vote as to who shall be its officers, but believing that God has given apostles, prophets, and teachers, obeys those whom God has set over His Kingdom, in so far as these obey the plainly revealed Word of God.

If in the above definition there seems to be pride and imperious harshness to any reader, we can only say that so far as any man can judge his own heart, pride or imperious lust for power is not within the heart of the write, nor, so far as he knows, in the hearts of those associated with him.

There is no heavier responsibility than Power or Authority.

May we not, inclosing, answer a possible word that may be uttered by some reader who says, "Such principles are tyrannical and destructive of love"?

May we not direct attention to the fact, that the present union existing between the writer and his people who know him best, is a bond which is one supremely of love, and that the nature and the Name of God, who is the Absolute Ruler of this universe, is Love.

I am the friend of all, and the servant of the servants of God, in Jesus Christ.



*General Overseer of the Christian Catholic Church in Zion.  
London, October 24, 1900.*

Leaves of Healing vol 8 No. 3 November 10, 1900