

THE SEARCH FOR THE ANCIENT ORDER

A History of The Restoration Movement
1849-1906

BY

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Vol. 2
1866-1906

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722 N. Payton Rd.
Indianapolis 19, Indiana

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Religious Book Service
34 N. Layman Ave.
Indianapolis 19, Indiana

CHAPTER X

A CHRISTIAN PRESIDENT

The attention of the brethren turned in June, 1880 toward the nation's capitol. There was a very definite reason. One of its members, a prominent gospel preacher was nominated by the Republican convention that year as its presidential nominee. The following November the public elected him to the nation's highest office—the presidency of the United States. James Abram Garfield had traveled that difficult road from the log cabin in the wilderness of Cuyahoga County, Ohio to the White House. It was a long, rough and toilsome way, but Garfield by sheer determination accomplished the feat.

There was nothing new in a leading member of the church seeking a political office. R. M. Bishop, an elder in the church in Cincinnati, was mayor of the city during the Civil War, and was elected Governor of Ohio in 1874. The father of D. S. Burnet, Jacob Burnet, was mayor of Cincinnati in earlier days. In 1880 preachers of the church apparently became very much interested in politics. D. R. Dungan, that year, was a candidate for Governor of Iowa but was defeated. J. M. Pickens ran for Governor of Alabama the same year and also was defeated. The citizens of Indiana got out a petition urging O. A. Burgess to run for Governor on the Republican ticket, but the urge was not strong enough to get him the candidacy. R. M. Gano of Dallas, Texas, one of the brotherhood's prominent Texas preachers, was urged by the Greenbackers of Texas to run for Governor, but Gano refused. The *Christian Preacher* wrote, "Brother Gano could do more good preaching the gospel than ten Congressmen could making laws, even if they always made good ones. The Gospel of Christ is superior to the Greenback gospel." Still later, Ira J. Chase was governor of Indiana in 1892. Chase was one of Indiana's gospel preachers before running for Lieutenant-Governor. J. A. Brooks was vice-presidential nominee on the Prohibition ticket in 1888.

The Populist State Convention of Texas nominated Addison Clark for Superintendent of Public Instruction in 1894. David



JAMES A. GARFIELD

Lipscomb complained that gospel preachers were forsaking the pulpit and seeking honors in governmental positions. From the small village to the nation, church members were filling offices ranging from constables now to the presidency. This tendency touches a study of the restoration on its periphery, and a consideration of it is of value to this total study to see the different points of view aroused in James A. Garfield's election to the presidency.

In 1831 the Western Reserve, in northeastern Ohio, was a dense wilderness, the scattered population being predominately New Englanders. James A. Garfield's parents were typical of the

inhabitants. Abram, Garfield's father, was born in December, 1799. His mother, Eliza Ballou, was born in Richmond, New Hampshire on September 21, 1801. Both had immigrated from New England to the promising lands to their west. Settling in Cuyahoga County, they built a log cabin thirty by twenty feet long consisting of one door and three windows, and a puncheon floor. The roof was made of oak clapboards held down by long weight poles. The family slept on straw in the attic.

James Abram Garfield was born in this log cabin on November 19, 1831. The hardy pioneer parents worked hard to have a home for the children. In May, 1833 the beginning of a tragedy occurred. A forest fire broke out. The neighbors pitted their efforts against this demon of nature, finally conquering it, but Abram exhausted himself, caught cold and died. James A. was now only eighteen months old. The rearing of the family was left up to Garfield's mother who patiently labored to provide for it, and guide the children. Consequently, Garfield had a respect for his mother in later years that caught the admiration of the nation.

Garfield's brother, Tom, was eight years older. At night they slept together in the attic. Garfield would often kick the covers off, and half awake, would cry, "Thomas, cover me up." After a battle during the Civil War, Garfield lay on the ground beside a distinguished Union officer. The covers came off, and Garfield murmured in his sleep, "Thomas, cover me up." The words awakened him. Memories of the childhood days drifted before his eyes. He covered his face and wept softly.

At the age of sixteen, Garfield agreed to cut wood at twenty-five cents a cord and his board for his uncle who lived near Newburgh. All the while he entertained the dream of being a sailor. The idea was a disappointment to his mother who desired for her son something greater. But she patiently acquiesced temporarily in his planning, thinking the dream might be exploded. In July, 1847 Garfield went to Cleveland to a cousin, Amos Letcher, and secured a position running a boat on the Ohio and Pennsylvania Canal. At the end of the summer, he returned to his home, still determined to become a sailor, and thoroughly satisfied with himself for the summer's work.

Wise guidance was now needed. The mother suggested that he go to school so that he could teach school in the winter and

work at the canal in the summer. Her hope was that an education would make him forget the canal work. The plan worked perfectly. Through the influence of Samuel D. Bates, a gospel preacher who lived at Marion, Ohio, Garfield decided to enter Geauga Seminary at Chester. So, on March 6, 1849 he presented himself to this school. The next winter he taught school, and the following spring returned to Geauga. During the summer of 1850 he worked as a carpenter near Chester, and that winter, returned to the seminary once more.

That same fall, Western Reserve Eclectic Institute was born at Hiram, Portage County, Ohio with A. S. Hayden as president. Garfield continued to finish his term at Geauga, and the following year transferred to the Eclectic Institute. He remained here until the fall of 1854 when he transferred to Williams College to study under the famous educator, Mark Hopkins. He graduated from this school in 1856 taking the highest honors in the class, and then, returned to Hiram to become president of the Eclectic Institute, a position he held until he entered the Ohio State legislature.

GARFIELD'S RELIGION

Elder A. A. Lillie went to a school house at Organge in March, 1850 to conduct a meeting. The school was located about forty rods from where Garfield was reared. During the meeting, Garfield came to him privately, frankly admitting that he had some skepticism, and asking for reassurance that the Bible was the word of God. Lillie, instead of censuring the boy for his doubt, admired his frankness and absolute honesty in seeking after truth. The next night, he preached a sermon on "What Is Truth?" that thoroughly satisfied Garfield's inquiring mind. At the close of the sermon, Garfield and seven others stepped forward. The next day all were baptized. The date was March 4, 1849.¹

From his mother Garfield had learned the practical walks of the Christian life. Upon his leaving home, she asked him to remember that every evening at sunset she would be reading the Bible. It became Garfield's practice through life to pause at sunset and read the Bible, for he had the consciousness that he was now reading with his mother. Likewise did she teach him to

pray. While in the army, Garfield never forgot this, and was often referred to as the "praying colonel." Moreover, he was always faithful to meet with the church for worship. He met with the church in Washington D. C. for the first time in the fall of 1861 while he was yet in the army. Later, when president, Garfield attended every service, even to the regular social gatherings. He mixed and mingled with the people, shook hands with them, and inquired of their personal health. It was his constant conviction that "there is nothing that can make youth so shapeful, manhood so strong, and old age so beautiful, as the religion of Jesus Christ."

The first sermon Garfield preached was at Hiram in the winter of 1853-54. After that, he was a popular speaker in the town. Garfield and Alexander Campbell met in August, 1860. Campbell was then seventy-two and Garfield was only twenty-nine. The meeting was at Alliance, Ohio. Campbell preached in the morning, and Garfield spoke in the afternoon. In a letter dated June 19, 1855 Garfield wrote to a friend:

Your favor of the 4th inst was received about ten days ago, but I have been entirely unable to answer until this time. A day or two after it came I left for Pittstown, New York, to attend a yearly meeting of Disciples, where I spent some four days, and last Saturday I left again for Poestenkill, and spoke to the people Saturday evening, and three discourses on Lord's Day. . . We had good meetings in each place, and much interest. I cannot resist the appeals of our brethren for aid while I have the strength to speak to them. . . I tell you, my dear brother, the cause in which we are engaged must take the world. It fills my soul when I reflect upon the light, joy and love of the ancient gospel, and its adaptation to the wants of the human race. . . I long to be in the thickest of the fight, and see the army of truth charge home upon the battalions of hoary-headed error. . .²

Garfield's regard for the religious conception he espoused may be easily seen. While in later years, his political career far overshadowed his religious, he remained faithful to Christ until his death. His preaching was often criticized, it is said, by the older pioneers in that it dealt more in the ethical realm than upon the "first principles." Still members of the church never doubted his allegiance to these principles.

In the halls of Congress he later gained much fame as a debater

¹F. M. Green, *A Royal Life* (Chicago: Central Book Concern, 1882), p. 153.

²F. M. Green, *A Royal Life*, p. 121.

on political issues. Earlier he was winning considerable fame as a religious debater. At Chagrin Falls in Cuyahoga County, Ohio he debated an infidel by the name of William Denton. Brethren were highly pleased with his success.

The family of Garfield needs special mention. At the time of his death, Garfield's family consisted of eight persons—himself, his wife, Lucretia Rudolph Garfield, his aged mother, and five children. His children were Harry, James, Mollie, Irwin and Abram. Two of his children had died in infancy.

During the winter of 1850, 51, Garfield taught school at Warrensville, Ohio. One of his pupils was a girl by the name of Mary L. Hubbell. Later she went with him to school at the Eclectic Institute. It was generally assumed around the school that they were engaged, although many felt that she was not suited for Garfield. Garfield himself soon came to realize this, but the affair had gone so far that to break it off without offending the girl became with him a major problem. Often he talked to his close friend, C. E. Fuller, about the matter, and Fuller's advice was to go ahead and break it. But considerable criticism came to Garfield over it.

Garfield first met Lucretia Rudolph, the girl he married, at Geauga Seminary in Chester. Her father, Zeb Rudolph, shortly afterwards moved to Hiram to open up a boarding house for boys attending the Eclectic Institute. Rudolph had four children—Lucretia, John, Joseph, and Ellen. At this time, 1851, Lucretia was about nineteen, the oldest child of Zeb Rudolph. She taught a school two and a half miles north of Hiram, and was only home on the week ends. By disposition, she was a little reserved although attractive. She and Garfield were married on November 11, 1858 by the president of Western Reserve College at Hudson.

Through their thirty-two years of married life, Garfield displayed a devotion to his wife that was the contributing factor to their marriage success. In those months previous to his assassination his wife was severely sick. The newspapers carried daily stories of her condition, and the country watched anxiously for her recovery. Garfield was deeply concerned, and often said he would resign his position as president if it would help his wife to recover. But just as news came forth that she was better, he was himself shot down.

The first years of their married life were spent at Hiram. Gar-

field purchased a small farm, adjoining the college campus. When he went to Washington as a congressman, he at first rented the property. There is no indication that Garfield was ever materially wealthy. After his third election to Congress, he borrowed money from an old army friend, and bought him a lot and built a house on it.

Garfield's national fame came first as a soldier before he gained popularity in politics. Shortly after the outbreak of the war, he applied to Governor Dennison of Ohio for a commission with the right to raise a regiment. On August 14, 1861 he was commissioned a Lieutenant-Colonel of the Forty-Second Regiment of Ohio Volunteers. Two days later he was mustered into service at Camp Chase, Columbus, Ohio. Many of the soldiers in Garfield's regiment came from students in Hiram College. (Western Reserve Eclectic Institute) Three months were spent in drilling the soldiers, and by the first of December, they were ready to march Southward toward the conflict.

On December 15, 1861 Garfield reported to General D. C. Buell at Louisville, Kentucky. General Buell was a stern soldier, and was somewhat skeptical of Garfield's ability. Nevertheless, an assignment was forthcoming. General Zollicoffer was advancing from Cumberland Gap through Kentucky to Mill Spring. Confederate General Humphrey Marshall was threatening to over-run the whole of eastern Kentucky. General Buell's plans called for a main drive on Bowling Green southward, but the attack could not be risked until the pressure from the east could be relieved. General George H. Thomas, then a rising colonel, was assigned the task of stopping Zollicoffer, and Garfield was assigned the one of halting Marshall.

Marshall was known to be encamped at Paintsville up the Sandy Valley with five thousand men. Garfield gathered four regiments of infantry and eight companies of cavalry and drove on Marshall. The confederate general was forced to retreat from Paintsville to Prestonburg, but Garfield pressed the battle winning decisive victory. For this triumph, President Lincoln made him a Brigadier-General. The commission came on January 10, 1862, giving Garfield the distinction of being the youngest general in the army.

He was now summoned to return to Louisville, but upon his arrival found that General Buell was at Nashville, and was ordered

to follow him there. When he got to Nashville, the battle at Shiloh was shaping up, and Buell had already gone to join Grant. Garfield was ordered to Shiloh, and on April 5 was reassigned to the Twelfth Brigade of the Sixth Division of the Army of Ohio. The Sixth Division was one of Ohio's most active early in the war. It fought in upper Virginia until late in November, 1861 when it was ordered to Louisville to join General Buell. The Sixth was on the way to join Grant at Donelson when it heard of the fort's surrender. It turned up the Cumberland to Nashville. It was the first of the Union armies to march through the city, and was the first to hoist the national flag over the Tennessee state capitol building.³ Garfield joined the division in time to take part in the last day's fighting at Shiloh.

After the Shiloh battle, he pursued the enemy southward to Corinth, then eastward through northern Mississippi and Alabama. Later he made headquarters at Huntsville. In August that year he became ill with ague and was sent home. Early in the fall he reported to Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton in Washington where he was detailed as a member of a court of inquiry to investigate the case of General McDowell. On November 25, he was detailed to try the case of General Fitz-John Porter in a trial which lasted forty-five days. This trial demonstrated Garfield's ability as a lawyer.

In January, 1863 he was ordered to report to Major-General Rosecrans at Murfreesboro, Tennessee. He was made Rosecrans' chief of staff to reorganize the Army of Cumberland into a more efficient fighting unit. During this time, General Grant was sweeping down the Mississippi basin, threatening to cut the confederacy in two. But Rosecrans was immobile. People inquired why. The President and the war department were pushing Rosecrans to advance against the enemy, but Rosecrans refused. He addressed letters to each of the seventeen generals under him, asking their opinions and all agreed that an advance was impossible.

Garfield had by now come to an independent decision but the same one that the President, the war department and General Grant had already reached. Unlike European wars, this war was not to be won by occupying strategic cities, for the South

³T. J. Lindsey, *Ohio at Shiloh* (Cincinnati: C. J. Krebhiel & Company, 1903), pp. 58, 59.

had no strategic points. Victory lay only in meeting the enemy and destroying her army and the sooner this could be done, the sooner the war would be over. Garfield, therefore, studied the matter thoroughly, and recommended to Rosecrans a march eastward against General Bragg. He figured that discounting the number of soldiers needed to remain in Murfreesboro and hold the city, Rosecrans would still have over sixty-five thousand with which to face the enemy. Rosecrans and his army generals disagreed, and let it be known that Garfield alone would be personally responsible for what happened. Garfield assumed the responsibility, and the army moved eastward fighting a series of battles climaxing in the battle at Chickamauga.

Chickamauga was Garfield's last battle, and here he won national fame. The prize at Chickamauga was the Rossville Road, and General George H. Thomas was told to hold it at all costs. The enemy got reinforcements, and besieged relentlessly Thomas' right flank. General Thomas was swept back in retreat. Longstreet paused to reorganize the attack, thinking victory now certain. Enemy forces three times as strong as Thomas were surrounding him, and the general could not know it. Garfield made a daring run on a horse fully exposed to enemy fire to convey the news to Thomas. Thomas immediately retreated further saving the Army of Cumberland from complete destruction. The War Department now made Garfield a Major-General.

But Garfield's army career was now at an end. With no effort at all on his part, his friends had placed his name before the public, and had elected him as a representative of the nineteenth district of Ohio in the national Congress. Reluctantly, Garfield gave up an army career, and on December 5, 1863 took his seat in the House of Representatives at Washington.

His interest in politics went back only to about 1856. In the fall of 1855, while he was yet a student in Williams College, John Z. Goodrich, a Congressman from Massachusetts, delivered an address on the Kansas-Nebraska bill that held Garfield speechless. Afterward he confided in a friend that he was ignorant of this subject and would familiarize himself completely with it. Much later Garfield became one of the best informed men in the nation on slavery question. Up to this time he had been a Whig. He was disinterested in the Know-Nothing Party, but afterward be-

came an ardent Republican. His first political vote was cast for John C. Fremont.

His first political speeches were delivered at Hiram in 1856. Three years later he began to speak at County Mass Meetings. That year he was elected to the Ohio state legislature. During the winter of 1861 he was admitted to the bar. In January, 1860 he took his seat in the Ohio legislature, becoming its youngest member.

For seventeen years he was a member of the House of Representatives. He delivered forty speeches before Congress, addresses that were classics in rhetoric and logic.

On the night of the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln, Garfield was in New York City. In the early morning it was learned that Lincoln was shot. The streets were immediately filled with silent crowds. There was no business transacted. People milled around—no laughter, no mirth, but each anxiously awaiting news of the President's well being. The morning papers blazed the story more fully. The president had died; Secretary Seward's throat had been cut, and attempts were made upon the lives of other cabinet members. It looked as though the government itself was being overthrown, and people feared for what news might yet be forthcoming. Posters asking the crowd to meet around the Wall Street Exchange were placed up, and fifty thousand came. They were angry. The South, they felt had caused this. Two men were heard to say, "Lincoln ought to have been shot long ago!" In a matter of moments their bloody bodies lay still on the ground—one dead and the other dying. A frenzy swept the crowd; silence changed to hateful words, and the swearing of vengeance. Suddenly, Garfield stepped out on a balcony before them all and spoke:

Fellow-citizens!

Clouds and darkness are round about Him. His pavilion is dark waters and thick clouds of the skies! Justice and judgment are the establishment of His throne! Mercy and truth shall go before His face! Fellow-citizens! God reigns and the Government at Washington still lives!

The effective of this speech was to cool the rising temperature of the crowd, and put some semblance of reason back on the throne. Garfield's reputation in politics was on the whole excellent. His

⁴F. M. Green, *A Royal Life*, p. 299.

enemies in the presidential campaign laid three charges against him which the nation never seriously accepted. It was charged with corruptly purchasing ten shares of stock in the Credit Mobilier Corporation. He was accused, also of fathering a bill in Congress to raise the salaries of the congressmen, and of a corrupt practice in the DeCalyer contract for the pavement of the streets in Washington D. C. The South had a strong dislike for Garfield due to his part in the war, and his strong Northern political bias. Once Garfield favored the confiscation of all southern property, a thing for which David Lipscomb found it hard to grant forgiveness.

Early in life Garfield had formed a resolution against seeking for a position, but to allow the position seek him. He went to the Republican Convention in Chicago on June 2, 1880 with no thought at all of receiving the nomination for a candidacy. Grant, Sherman and Blaine were the three most likely prospects to get the honor to carry the Republican banner in the coming presidential campaign. Garfield ardently backed John Sherman of Ohio. Thirty-three ballots were taken, and on none of them was the name of either man enough in the majority to receive the nomination. Garfield's name appeared on the thirty-fourth ballot. On the thirty-sixth he was swept into the position as the Republican party's candidate for the presidency. Three weeks later the Democrats nominated General Winfield Scott Hancock as his opponent.

As a matter of repeating a historical fact, Garfield was elected in November, and the following March 4th, was duly inaugurated into office.

That which proved the cause of so much trouble at the outset of Garfield's term of office proved to be the cause of his death in only a few months. Civil service examinations to fill governmental positions were as yet unknown. Close to one hundred thousand positions were to be filled either directly or indirectly by the President. Members of the church were quick to take advantage of Garfield's presidency. They flocked into Washington from as far away as Texas with letters from churches, thinking they would now have an easy picking of political jobs. But Garfield refused. He would not be guilty of appointing his own brethren for positions for fear of the charge of biasness. He said to his Chaplain Mullins: "Keep my brethren away from me; it annoys and wounds me for them to come asking for office be-

cause of our religious relations." Brethren would meet him in public places, rush up to him, shake hands with him, and say, "How are you, Brother Garfield?" Mullins stated that John B. Bowman would have been made Secretary of Interior and B. A. Hinsdale, ambassador to England except for the fact they were members of the church.⁵

Charles J. Guiteau, a French Canadian by birth, and a "vagabond and dead-beat" by profession came to Washington D. C. on Sunday evening March 6, 1881—two days after the inauguration ceremonies. He stopped at the Ebbitt House for one day, and then moved around in Washington from place to place. On Wednesday, May 18th, he determined to kill the President. The last of May he went into O'Mara's store, corner of Fifteenth and F Streets and looked at the pistols. He came back on Wednesday, June 10th and purchased a gun for \$10.00. The next day he spent practicing.

On Sunday morning, June 12th, Guiteau sat in the park across from the White House. He watched the President and his family come out, get in their carriage, and drive off to church. He hurried to his room, got his pistol, and started to church. Garfield entered the building at five minutes past eleven, during the reading of the Scriptures. Dr. Bayton and wife, friends of the Garfields, from Cleveland were his companions. F. D. Power, regular preacher for the congregation, was out of town, and S. D. Moore of Hagerstown, Maryland, was the visiting speaker. Guiteau took a seat several rows behind Garfield. His intention was to shoot the President then, but he feared hitting someone else. He noted, however, that the President sat near an open window, and determined upon another plan. Guiteau was outside the window the next Sunday morning, but Garfield was out of Washington on official business, thus thwarting the vile purpose.

On Saturday, July 2nd, Garfield arose early at the White House, and spent the early hours attending to considerable executive business. He was preparing to leave for a two weeks trip into New England. First on the itinerary was a scheduled stop at Williams College to address a graduating class. Other members of the party went ahead to the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad Depot to take their seats in the President's car. Secretary of State,

⁵Chaplain Mullins, "Garfield's Religion," *Gospel Advocate*, Vol. XXV, (March 8, 1883), p. 156.

Blaine and Garfield drove up in a carriage as the time was nearing 9:30 A. M. The carriage stopped at the B Street entrance, and both men stepped out to walk arm in arm into the station. They passed through the outer "Ladies' Room," on into the main corridor. Just as they did Guiteau darted from behind a door directly in back of Garfield, lifted his gun and shot twice. The last shot was fired only four feet from Garfield's back. The President staggered and fell. Mrs. S. V. White, the woman in charge of the Ladies' Room was standing only six feet from the President and watched the deed. She was the first to reach him. She lifted his head and found he was deathly pale but still conscious. One of Garfield's sons rushed up, bent over his father, and began sobbing frantically. A Dr. Sunderland, a former Chaplain in the Senate, was near. He rushed to Garfield and said: "Mr. President, you are in the hands of the God you have long trusted, and I say to you that the heart of this whole people will go out to God in prayer that you may be spared." The President calmly replied: "I know it, Doctor. I believe in God and trust myself in his hands."⁶

In ten minutes a thousand people were at the depot. The President was placed upon a mattress, and vomited violently. He was carried to an office. The ambulance drove up, and surrounded by twelve mounted police, it moved the President to the White House. Meanwhile, the ticket agent grabbed Guiteau, and he was quickly placed under arrest.

The nation watched anxiously through the months of July and August and up to the middle of September. At times, there seemed to be indications that the President would recover. Finally, on September 19, the eighteenth anniversary of his famous ride at Chickamauga, Garfield passed quietly away. Some years earlier an agreement had been made between Garfield, Isaac Errett, Dr. J. P. Robinson and J. Harrison Jones that the survivors would attend and take part in the funeral services of the other. Each of these men, therefore, spoke at Garfield's funeral.

The election of a member of the church, and a former gospel preacher at that, to the presidency of the United States reflected itself in different ways upon the church. It is for this reason that Garfield's life needs to be told, and that a chapter on him needs

⁶John F. Rowe, "Universal Sympathy for Our Beloved President," *American Christian Review*, Vol. XXIV, No. 29 (May 19, 1881), p. 228.

to find a place in restoration history. The first reaction was one largely localized in the South.

During the Civil War, David Lipscomb became seriously impressed with the idea that the whole study of the relation of the Christian to civil government needed to be gone over completely. It became his conviction that the general conception held by most church members was wrong. Consequently, in reviving the *Gospel Advocate* in 1866 Lipscomb announced at the beginning that the subject of the Christian's relation to civil government would be thoroughly examined in succeeding issues. Point by point he proceeded to investigate the subject.

Lipscomb declared that there were currently three ideas of the relation of the church to world powers. The first was that the church should form alliances with world powers and use these powers to advance her own cause. This was the Roman Catholic idea. The second idea current was that the political governments are of divine origin and should be thus sustained for this reason. This is the Protestant idea. The third idea is that the two institutions—the church and civil governments—are two separate and distinct systems. Each was necessary in its own sphere. The church was perfect and needed no human help; that God allowed those who refused to submit to the divine governments—the church—to form governments of their own and in them to accomplish their own desired ends. While the Christian is to have no part in this government, he will quietly and meekly submit to it where its laws do not conflict with that of the church.⁷ Of course, further elaboration was demanded.

Tolbert Fanning left the imprint of his own character profoundly upon Lipscomb. There is, however, no indication that Lipscomb borrowed his conception of the Christian's relation to civil government from Fanning, but that he was influenced in the direction he went by Fanning hardly admits of any doubt. When, after the war, several brethren urged Fanning to run for a political office, he refused. Undoubtedly with his turn of mind he could have been an outstanding success in politics. But in refusing political offices, Fanning explained his reasons:

To be sure, we do not affirm that no Christian man or woman ever ascended a throne, but we are quite sure that no Christian

⁷David Lipscomb, "The Church of Christ and World Powers," *Gospel Advocate*, Vol. VIII, No. 2 (January 9, 1866), pp. 28-30.

ever ruled a nation by the principles of Christianity. The fact is, that the laws of Christ are not suited for the government of any of Satan's subjects. We, moreover, give it as our candid conviction, drawn from scores of examples, that no Christian man can engage in human legislation, or give, even a part of his time to the affairs of human government without being greatly injured spiritually. We do not pretend to give a reason for it; but we simply state the fact of corruption attached to all that busy themselves in politics, and the ordinary excitements incident to human governments. Ambition and false pride, have led many of our brethren into legislative halls, state and national, but in every instance, they are swallowed up and lost in vice, or greatly injured by their associations and labors.⁸

Beginning therefore in 1866 at a time when the South lay prostrate from the war, Lipscomb started setting forth the Christian's relation to civil government as he conceived it. The idea was somewhat novel to the brotherhood and that it took more hold in the South than in the North can be explained on two grounds. Lipscomb was a citizen of the South, and hence the prejudice then so current against Northerners was not an obstacle to the spread of the idea. Then, too, the South was psychologically prepared for such teaching. A deep sense of the futility of earthly things and of the instability of human governments filled the South, making a fertile field in which to plant the seeds of Lipscomb's theory. An analysis of this theory will prepare the mind of the reader to understand how the impact of Garfield's election was received in the South.

Civil government denoted to David Lipscomb governments founded by men in contrast to that founded by God, the divine. He writes,

We shall use the adjectives, civil and political, when connected with the institutions of earth, as indicating those of human origin, in contradistinction to those of divine origin. Civil government then, is a government founded by man for the well-being of the human family, in contradistinction from a government founded by God for man's well-being.⁹

Definitions now out of the way, Lipscomb goes on to inquire (1) as to the origin of each government. (2) the relation of each to the other at the beginning. (3) and the changes in each with

⁸Tolbert Fanning, "Shall the *Gospel Advocate* Take Any Part in State Matters?" *Gospel Advocate*, Vol. VIII, No. 3 (January 16, 1866), pp. 33, 34.

⁹David Lipscomb, "The Church of Christ and World Powers," *Gospel Advocate*, Vol. VIII, No. 4 (January 23, 1866), p. 56.

reference to the other through the years and how these changes were regarded by God.

Starting then, with the creation of the world, Lipscomb pointed out that God possessed all authority and assigned to each created object its functions and positions and powers. God empowered man to "subdue the earth," etc. (Gen. 1: 28) No man, it is suggested, can occupy any position, or possess any authority, apart from the appointment of God. Man is empowered with the right to subdue and control lower creation. But who governs man? Shall he govern himself? No! God reserves the sole right to govern and control the man. Man's assumption to rule himself is an interference of the divine prerogative. God has always made provision for exercising His right by keeping a government of his own before man. In the garden of Eden, He controlled man by direct commands. When Adam refused this government by yielding to the Satanic suggestion to control himself, he was driven from the garden. During the patriarchal dispensation, God governed man—those who would submit—through the fathers. When the family grew, God changed the government from a family to a nation. When the Jewish nation refused the government of God, that form of government was abrogated and the church was inaugurated. All the people of God who submitted to the government of God belonged to the church.

Turning from this brief history, Lipscomb now raised the question of the origin of human governments. His answer was that human governments owe their origin to that portion of the human family that refused to submit to the government of God, and who, in rebellion, set up their own government. The first reference to a human government, says Lipscomb, is in Gen. 10: 10. Here it is seen that this government originated in man's rebellion against the government of God. He writes, "In its beginning it was the embodiment of man's effort to throw off the rule of His maker."

Down through the history of the Old Testament what was the relation of the human government to the divine? Genesis, chapter fourteen, says Lipscomb, shows five kings, rulers in the earthly governments, at war with Abraham, a servant of God, one who submitted to the government of God. The history of the Jews shows that God forbade His people from forming alliances with human governments. (cf. Ex. 23: 31, 2; 34: 12, 16; 1 Kgs. 11: 2)

Every time an alliance was formed between the divine government, the Jewish nation, and the human government, the kingdoms of the world, the Jews became weak and disobedient. This nation is a type of the church. For members of the church to form alliances with human governments weakens them and makes them disobedient to God.

It was, therefore, a profound conviction of David Lipscomb's that for Christians to enter into politics was not only wrong in principle but sinful against God. He refused to vote and urged others to refuse. Likewise, of course, did he refuse to participate in carnal wars which were but strifes between political governments brought on by jealousy and greed. Human governments, owing their origin to man's rebellion against God, would be overthrown when men the world over would all submit themselves to the government of God.

With David Lipscomb no man believed anything who was not willing to suffer for what he believed. Suffer, Lipscomb surely did. On November 13, 1862 he induced the elders and evangelists of ten or fifteen congregations in Middle Tennessee to send letters to both the President of the Confederacy and the President of the United States at Washington D. C. declaring their intentions to have nothing to do with war on either side. At the beginning of the war, then, Lipscomb was accused by the South of being disloyal to the Confederacy. He was often threatened and one or two vowed to hang him, but he persisted in his belief. When the Federal troops took over Nashville, Lipscomb showed the same indifference as he had toward the South, and was accused by them of being a Southern sympathizer. The truth is, he would have nothing to do with either government; he would be a Christian and meekly submit no matter the government under which he lived.

Jacob Creath, Jr., who at the beginning of the war showed some bias in favor of Christians' participation, found himself gradually changing as the war progressed. Before long, he quite independently, had reached conclusions similar to those of David Lipscomb. After commending Lipscomb for his articles, Creath wrote:

In August, 1863 or 4, I was in the state of Illinois, preaching the Gospel, and one Saturday evening I was sitting in the shade reading the Bible, near a railroad, and a man walking on the

road turned in at the gate and came to me and addressed me thus: "What," said he, "are you reading the good book?" "Yes," said I, "it is a good book, provided people will obey it." He immediately introduced the subject of the war which was then raging, and justified the war from God's commanding Moses to kill the Canaanites and Saul the Amalekites. I asked him if God had given a command to men, under the Gospel, to kill each other as he did to Moses and Saul to kill? He said if I called killing men in war, murder, I did not understand the language. I told him when you took a man's life, you had killed him, whether privately or in war, and that I knew the distinction, when done, between homicide, manslaughter, and murder in self-defense, or a self-murdering defense, and returned him his compliment of ignorance, and closed by saying to him, "Now, Sir, you are a stranger to me, and I to you. I never saw you before, but I presume you are some sort of a religionist, or sectarian, full of war up to your chin. I will state a few facts to you for your future reflection. Our Saviour whom you profess to follow, never killed a man while on earth—he never commanded a man to be killed—he never shed a drop of human blood, and the only time when violence was used by one of his followers, he ordered him to put up his sword, and wrought a miracle to heal the maimed, and more than that he was murdered outright and downright by God's elect nation. Now, sir, compare your pleading for wholesale murder with the life of him whom you profess to follow, and slander by calling yourself one of his people." He was off quickly. I learned afterwards he was a Presbyterian priest.¹⁰

Lipscomb had to defend his doctrine. It was charged that his theory violated 1 Pet. 2: 13-14, and Romans 13: 1-5. Inspiration charges every soul to "be in subjection to the higher powers for there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God." To this Lipscomb pointed out that every person possesses some power but yet there is always a higher power. Every soul must be, according to Lipscomb, in subjection to that power which is over it. A servant must be in subjection to the "higher power" of the master; a child to that of its parent; a citizen to the "higher power" of the magistrate; and a magistrate to the higher power of God. "The powers that be"—all of them are subordinate in the present dispensation to Christ, he wrote.¹¹

¹⁰Jacob Creath, "War and Peace," *Gospel Advocate*, Vol. VIII, No. 41 (October 9, 1866), pp. 650, 651.

¹¹David Lipscomb, "Romans 13: 1," *Gospel Advocate*, Vol. VIII, No. 4 (January 23, 1866), pp. 59, 60.

Lipscomb pointed out that during the Civil War, both sides used Romans 13: 1-5 to justify killing in the war. The citizens of the Confederacy used it to prove that they had a right to slay the citizens of the North, and the citizens of the Union used it to justify their killing the citizens of the Confederacy. The Christian under the Confederacy thought Romans 13: 1-5 taught him to submit to the Confederacy, but at the same time, that verse was teaching him to rebel against another government, the Union. Was not the Union a "power that be" the same as the Confederacy? By submitting to either government the Christian was rebelling against another "power that be."¹² This dilemma led Lipscomb to believe that something was wrong with men's interpretation of this scripture. What was it?

In March, 1867 Lipscomb raised the question without answering it. Is it absolutely sure that Paul is speaking of the "powers that be" refers to civil governments? Possibly there was some doubt at this writing in Lipscomb's mind. Fanning had believed that "higher powers" referred to church authorities, those whom the Holy Spirit had made overseers of the flock. The overseers are to see that the law is obeyed. "They bear now the sword in vain" refers figuratively to the fact that he bears not the authority in vain, said Fanning, and the paying of tribute referred to paying contributions.

Lipscomb toyed with this idea a month or two and then rejected it. The "higher powers" did mean civil governments, but to understand Paul, chapters twelve and thirteen of Romans must be studied together. Chapter twelve closed by declaring that vengeance belonged to God. The next chapter shows that God takes this vengeance through His agents. Christians are not God's agents for this vengeance, but the civil government is. The wickedness of the world compels a work to be done which a good man cannot do. Christians are ministers of mercy; civil government, a minister of wrath. The civil government is ordained of God as a minister of God's wrath.¹³ Hell is ordained of God as a place of the punishment of the wicked, but this does not justify a Christian in helping Satan. Nor does it justify him in assisting

¹²David Lipscomb, "Defense of the Government," *Gospel Advocate*, Vol. IX, No. 11 (March 14, 1867), pp. 215, 216.

¹³David Lipscomb, "The Higher Powers," *Gospel Advocate*, Vol. IX, No. 27 (July 4, 1867), pp. 521-525.

civil governments in being ministers of God's wrath. So reasoned Lipscomb.

The statement of Lipscomb's theory presented problems to be answered one of which was that of withdrawal of fellowship. Lipscomb, teaching as he did, that it was wrong for Christians to vote, hold political office, etc., had the question brought before him: Should congregations withdraw fellowship from those who voted, held office, and fought in carnal warfare. R. C. Horn of McKinney, Texas wrote Lipscomb in 1875 inquiring what to do about such people—disfellowship them or not. Lipscomb answers by saying,

While saying this much, we are yet unwilling to say that we think a church ought as yet, to withdraw themselves from one for voting. (The brethren will excuse us for not using the word, exclude. It is not a scriptural word, nor does it convey a scriptural idea.) The reason for this is, the brethren have not been sufficiently taught upon the subject. The Scriptural means for correcting an evil has not been sufficiently used to resort to this extreme measure. We have spoken upon the subject, written upon the subject, talked publicly and privately upon the subject, having come as near making a hobby of the subject as any one, (expect to do it more in the future and have no dread of being called a hobbyist), yet we have never to a single individual taken the pains to present the subject in such fullness and with such earnestness, as to be ready to give him over to Satan for rejecting it.¹⁴

Lipscomb goes further and wrote:

Now if others have made such efforts to patiently instruct and persuade their brethren the truth on this subject, have exhausted all patience, forbearance and long suffering in teaching them the way of the Lord, publicly and from house to house, and they wickedly refuse to hear that law, then it may be right to withdraw yourselves from such. But no Christian, observant of the laws of the Lord, can properly withdraw from a brother, aiming to do right, but ignorant of the truth of God.

For fifteen years, then, Lipscomb's position on the Christian's relation to the civil government had been permeating the South, and had picked up many adherents. When, therefore, in June, 1880 Garfield was nominated for the presidency, Lipscomb wrote:

After days of wrangling and strife the better elements of the party seemed to triumph and they nominated Gen. James A. Garfield as the candidate for President. General Garfield is a

¹⁴David Lipscomb, "Queries on Civil Government," *Gospel Advocate*, Vol. XVII, No. 17 (April 22, 1875), p. 399.

member of the church of Christ, was once a preacher, or as he prefers to style it, a lecturer among the disciples of Christ, went into politics, was a member of the Ohio State Senate at the breaking out of the war, went into the army, was a general for a time, became General Rosecrans' chief of staff, and in this position at the time of Rosecrans' march through Middle Tennessee to Chattanooga. Since the war he has been a member of Congress. We presume he has maintained his personal and religious integrity as well as any man with his surroundings and his position could. There have been some ugly charges made against him, but we think, not sustained. . . .

But now, dear brethren of the South who wish and argue for good, pious, religious rulers, what are you going to do about Brother Garfield? Are you going to vote for him, or will you take up an ungodly Democrat, if they should nominate such a one? . . .¹⁵

In the predominately Democratic South, this was a bitter pill for members of the church to swallow. Whether to vote for a member of the church when his politics was Republican or vote for a Democrat who was not a member. Lipscomb wrote:

Many Christians justify themselves in voting and taking part in politics on the ground that Christian men are needed in politics and in official positions. If Christians are needed in politics, the purer the form of Christianity, the better. We have been sure that they were mistaken in this reason. I do not mean that they were conscious of insincerity, but that they deceived themselves. We intend to make this deception evident to all who are willing to be undeceived. Gen. Garfield is a member of the church of Christ. He is a man in good standing in that church. He is intimate with a great number of well-known and leading disciples of Christ. They all regard him as a man of honor and integrity. . . .

His neighbors esteem him. They have repeatedly elected him to represent them in the highest positions of trust and honor in Congress, with constantly increasing majorities. His party in the Legislature of his State unanimously elected him to the United States Senate. They knew him. In Congress he is personally esteemed by both political friends and opponents. No man in Congress, we have been assured by his most determined political opponents, is more highly esteemed personally than he. He is popular and respected personally by all in Congress. Under these circumstances, no Christian can believe or report or take up the public evil reports against Garfield, without violating all the obligations of Christian brotherhood.

¹⁵David Lipscomb, "Words of Caution," *Gospel Advocate*, Vol. XXII, No. 26 (June 24, 1880), p. 401.

We say this much about him while having no sympathy whatever with his course. We have watched his course for years; we knew his character and position before the war, as a man of culture and refinement, with strong religious sentiment. We watched him to see the effect of the soldier's profession and work on his character. We were to him an unknown but interested observer of his course while in military power here in our State. We have watched his course with interest from the day he took his seat in Congress till now, to see what effect politics and political associations would have upon his earnest religious nature and strong resolute will. We have been strengthened by this observation of his course, in our conviction that no Christian can go into politics and maintain a Christian character; at the same time that politics are not aided by the intrusion of religion into its domain. But we are satisfied that we know of no man who has gone into politics, who has become so thoroughly identified with the affairs of government, and yet so well retained his Christian character and religious interest as has General Garfield.

We hold that wherein Gen. Garfield has not failed in religious integrity in the political arena, ninety-nine out of every hundred Christians would fail. Moreover, I do not believe in a hundred years past, so much of earnest, intelligent religious character, in one person, has come so near the Presidency as does now in the person of General Garfield. The chances are, that so much will not again for a hundred years to come.¹⁵

Lipscomb declared that if he did not believe that Christians had no business in politics, he would vote for Garfield himself.

But Lipscomb was a Southerner, writing to Southern readers who bore no good will toward Republicans. To get his point across he was charitable in the extreme. His readers mistook this charitableness for weakness, thinking that now since a Christian was running for President, he was surrendering his former point of view. Lipscomb, however, was intending to show he bore no bias against Garfield while yet declaring that a Christian had no business in holding political offices. From Hallville, Texas an old brother, John H. Cain, wrote in anger: "Brother Lipscomb: I am very old and feeble and do not wish to be insulted with your black Republican politics. You will please discontinue my paper." The *Gospel Advocate* felt the reaction of Lipscomb's theory. Joseph Franklin, early in 1880, was announced as a new associate-editor. Joseph Franklin, son of Ben Franklin, was then going

¹⁵David Lipscomb, "Christians and Politics," *Gospel Advocate*, Vol. XXII, No. 29 (July 15, 1880), p. 449.

through a period of confusion and readjustment. Ten years earlier he had stood squarely behind his father, and steadfastly fought all human innovations. Upon his father's death and the assumption of the editorial chair by John F. Rowe, young Franklin changed. Turning from the *Review*, he went to the *Gospel Advocate*, but the election of Garfield and its repercussions in the *Advocate* caused him to suddenly announce his resignation. Meanwhile, Lipscomb found himself on the opposite side of the issue from John F. Rowe, so both men discussed the issue, which was carried in both the *American Christian Review* and the *Gospel Advocate* in the summer of 1880 while the candidates were lectoneering.

Garfield's election to the presidency turned the attention of the brotherhood—and the world—to the church in Washington, D. C. Garfield began regularly attending the church upon his first election to Congress in 1863. In the spring of 1869 the congregation purchased a small, frame building from the Methodists. Reporters sneeringly referred to this as the "Campbellite shanty." After Garfield's nomination, the church felt its own inadequacy, and cries went up for funds to build a new house of worship. V. M. Metcalfe visited this congregation late in 1880, and reported that the church had begun to use a small organ in its worship. He noted that Garfield seldom missed a single service, even to attending the social meetings.

Garfield Memorial Church was badly needed, thought many brethren. The task of raising funds was turned over to the Missionary Society. David Lipscomb was critical of the move—not that a meeting house was not needed but to build one because of Garfield, to refer to it as the "Garfield Memorial Church," was totally contrary to the principle of returning to the ancient order. G. W. Rice, publisher of the *Review*, however, thought such a building was not needed. He wrote:

A week ago I expressed my opinion about the proposed meeting-house in Washington City. I now repeat, such a house is not needed. The one now there is sufficiently large for all the purposes of the church at that place. It has been said as a good and sufficient reason for building a fifty thousand dollar house in Washington—we want and need a court church in Washington City, it being the seat of government of the United States—That

we need and must have a large and elegant house where the President and his family can attend and be seen. . .¹⁷

Both Lipscomb and Rice were objecting fundamentally on the same ground, although Rice couched his objections in strongly-worded terms. That Washington needed a new meeting house was evident. To build one in honor of President Garfield, to build one as a means of show, to parade the church before the government in Washington was a fundamentally carnal and worldly spirit. This is the seat of the objections.

Plans for the erection of the building went on even after Garfield died. By the spring of 1882 the congregation was ready to let out the contract. The cornerstone was laid July 2, 1882, the first anniversary of the shooting of the President. Five thousand people attended that simple service, among them President Arthur himself. B. A. Hinsdale delivered the major address. The new building, to be known as the Garfield Memorial Church was to be completed at a cost of \$33,700, a rather costly project considering the times.

This hero worship, and calling a church, the "Garfield Memorial Church" was too much for Lipscomb. He wrote of Garfield:

His course was one of dishonor to the church; with ability and assured success as a servant of that church, he surrendered it for service in the worldly kingdom. If Garfield's career was acceptable, why not all young men of popular talents turn from the ministry to law, war and politics? Did I believe his course was acceptable to God, I would yet turn from the service of the church to that of the world. Is it strange when the church counts him who turned from service in her offices and works, to the work of the world, worthy of so much more honor than those who serve faithfully in her sanctuaries. . .¹⁸

Garfield more than any other man had proved to be the exception to the rule. Politics corrupted him less than it did any other person. For strength of moral character and of devotion to God the presidency has never known Garfield's equal.

¹⁷G. W. Rice, "Washington City Mosque," *American Christian Review*, Vol. XXIV, No. 11 (March 15, 1881), p. 85.

¹⁸David Lipscomb, "Hero Worship," *Gospel Advocate*, Vol. XXIV, No. 30 (July 27, 1882), p. 467.