

AN APOSTLE
OF THE
WESTERN CHURCH

MEMOIR OF THE RIGHT REVEREND
JACKSON KEMPER
DOCTOR OF DIVINITY, FIRST MISSIONARY BISHOP
OF THE AMERICAN CHURCH

WITH NOTICES OF SOME OF HIS CONTEMPORARIES

A CONTRIBUTION
TO THE RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF THE WESTERN STATES

BY THE REVEREND
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Papers about
Oneida (Duck Creek)

NEW YORK
THOMAS WHITTAKER
2 AND 3 BIBLE HOUSE
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gan, had been transferred to Wisconsin, where he was busily gathering congregations. That territory and Iowa were now formally placed under Kemper's jurisdiction, and in July, for the first time as bishop, he entered Wisconsin, with which his relations were destined to become the most intimate of all.

The imaginative charm of this wonderful career lies in the illimitable perspectives opened by it into space, time, and eternity.

Until within only four years of his visit traffic with the Indians had been the one interest of the territory, and the fur-trade had opened up and marked out the way for all its future development. Green Bay, Milwaukee, Fond-du-Lac, Oshkosh, Sheboygan, Madison and many other towns stand upon the sites of Indian villages and trading-posts, and many a highway was once an Indian trail. The water ways had early been well explored by French voyagers and Jesuit priests. The Black Hawk war first advertised the country, and in the summers immediately ensuing waves of immigration, of good quality, native American and protestant, broke upon its eastern coast. Methodist and Presbyterian ministers put in an appearance, schools were opened and newspapers started at Green Bay and Milwaukee, and mail was carried up the coast once a week. Kaleidoscopic changes marked the infancy of the territory; it participated in the speculative excitement of the year 1836, which reached its height in Milwaukee in a building mania; after the collapse, next year, a thousand dollar house-lot could be bought for a barrel of pork or flour, or a suit of clothes. For some time after, immigration was checked. At the date of the bishop's visit, the white population of the territory amounted to twelve thousand souls. He passed through Prairie du Chien, Cassville, Mineral Point, Madison, and Fort Win-

nebago, preaching and administering the holy communion, and early in August arrived at Green Bay, where he confirmed six persons and laid the corner stone of Christ Church. He also visited the Oneida settlement at Duck Creek, being escorted thither by a mounted guard of thirty Indians, and laid for them the corner stone of Hobart Church. He then retraced his steps, and heard news that agitated his manifold jurisdictions: that he had been elected to the bishopric of Maryland.

The following tribute, elicited at this juncture from the vestry of Christ Church, St. Louis, witnesses to the esteem in which he was held:

"Resolved, That Bishop Kemper seems particularly fitted for his present situation as Missionary Bishop at the West, not only in the great essentials to be expected of every Bishop, piety and devotedness, but in the lesser qualities which are all important to his efficiency and success in this region; viz, firm health and constitution, which have been tried by the climate; a cheerful temper and popular manners, enabling him to come in contact with our heterogeneous population, with favorable impressions on their side to the cause in which he is engaged; and great prudence and caution, peculiarly requisite amidst a population made up of almost all religions and nations, whose moral and religious character is yet unformed, and where different denominations of Christians are striving to make establishment.

"Resolved, That we bear testimony to the activity and perseverance of Bishop Kemper while he has been amongst us, and to the great services rendered by him.

"Resolved, That, in our opinion, his removal from us would be to undo much of what has been done and is in progress, favorable to the growth of the Protestant Episcopal Church amongst us; that it would require of his suc-

fore Kemper's visit, a Spaniard named Coronado was crossing its treeless plains, when of a sudden the sky was overcast and he and his troop were pelted with hailstones as big as oranges. Its only development up to Kemper's day was owing to its being threaded by the Santa Fé trail for traders between Missouri and Mexico. What he saw of the possibilities of mission work among the Indians there interested the bishop profoundly.

On his return to St. Louis, where he hoped to rest for some months, doing pastoral work, looking after his college, writing letters and reports, he found a letter awaiting him from Bishop Otey, entreating his company upon a tour in the southwest. The two bishops had been closely drawn to each other at the time of the Smith trial, and ever after were faithful friends. To Kemper the invitation came as a constraining call, and accordingly, in January, 1838, he dropped down the great river to Memphis, where news reached him that Otey was prostrated by an attack of fever, and begged him to make the visitation in his stead. "If possible, I shall gratify him," Kemper wrote home, "for I am much attached to him, and I belong entirely to the Church." So began a magnificent tour which, taken in connection with his other activities, affords the most impressive spectacle of the expansion of the church throughout the land at the opening of the second generation of the nineteenth century. His route lay through Natchez, New Orleans, Mobile, Pensacola, Tallahassee, Macon, Columbus (Georgia), Montgomery, Greensboro', Tuscaloosa, and Columbus (Mississippi), and terminated at Mobile and New Orleans, whither he returned in May. He could report that in about four months he had visited nearly all the parishes in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and Florida, confirming in nearly all; that he had consecrated eight

churches and advanced two deacons to the priesthood; and that he had become a living witness to the church at large of the wants, claims, and prospects of the southwest. He estimated that at least fifty missionaries were needed there immediately, and put the pointed question: "Is climate ever to be taken into consideration by those who have solemnly bound themselves at the Altar of God?"

This superb tour was the prelude to the consecration of Leonidas Polk.

Among the testimonies to the genial impression produced by Kemper's personality we select two from Mississippi, from the missionaries at Woodville and Columbus. "I cannot doubt that the labors of this amiable and excellent prelate will greatly advance the interests of the Church in this destitute region. His indefatigable zeal and amiable manners have secured him friends in all who have known him." "He was the first Bishop that had ever been in this region, and I am happy to say that he made a good and wholesome impression for the Church. Our people were very much pleased with him in the pulpit, and delighted with him in the private circle. We only regret that there is but little hope of our seeing him again."

No sooner had he returned north than he started upon a visitation of Indiana, and presided over its diocesan convention. At Vincennes he walked and talked with General William Henry Harrison, who owned property in the town, to such good effect that he obtained from him a gift of a fine lot of land for a church. He preached at New Harmony in a room that Owen had helped prepare for service.

In the growing town of Milwaukie (as it was then spelled) a parish had just been organized by the name of St. Paul. An experienced missionary named Richard Cadle, who had formerly been employed by the board of missions in Michi-

feel independent of God,—hence the scourge of the late financial disasters, for recovery from which the besotted people looked every way but the right one, putting their reliance upon industry, the richness of the soil, republican government,—and especially upon a man, William Henry Harrison, whose election was to cure every ill and restore confidence and credit. And now he is taken from their eyes.

A union of church and state, the preacher concluded, is to be deprecated, but no infidel state can stand. Without religion there can be no stability; government will degenerate into anarchy, as during the French Revolution. "Religion, practically recognized in our public affairs, and by our public men, is the great safeguard of our liberties."

Immediately after graduation from the seminary, Adams, Breck and Hobart were ordered deacons, and accepted by the board of missions for work in Wisconsin. Hobart left first, to survey the field; the others followed in September; they made Prairieville (now Waukesha) their centre of operations, organized a parish which they called St. John's in the Wilderness, and itinerated in every direction for a radius of fifty miles.

The missionary jurisdictions of Indiana and Missouri had by this time been organized as dioceses, Kemper presiding; and the former now eagerly elected him as its diocesan, but he declined. The time had not yet nearly come for him so to settle down, and he was deeply interested in his college and the Wisconsin mission. It was a moment of hope and energy in Indiana; Dr. Bryan Killikelly, missionary at Vincennes, was in England that summer, pleading for his work, and with the cordial assistance of the bishop of London obtained over two hundred pounds sterling to help him in building his church.

Dr. Andrew Wylie, an eminent Presbyterian dominie, and

president of the state university at Bloomington, alienated by the violent controversies within his communion, and concluding that "sectarianism is heresy," applied to Kemper for ordination. This famous conversion fluttered the doves of western Presbyterianism as a similar event, the conversion of a rector and several tutors of Yale College, had agitated the Congregational societies of New England more than a century before.

The bishop was the recipient this year of a legacy from some maiden ladies of Philadelphia. He accepted an invitation to preach the triennial sermon before the board of missions in St. Paul's Chapel, New York, and took as his text the admirably appropriate passage in the tenth chapter of St. Paul's epistle to the Romans, the thirteenth and following verses. At the close of a glowing incentive to missionary duty, he spoke, as his audience expected him to speak, of his own field, in prophetic strain: "With respect to the western portion of our own country, the mighty West, the seat of future empires,—from whence the arts and sciences and, if we are faithful to our trust, the elevating and holy doctrines of Christianity in all their vital influence are to extend far and wide, through Mexico and the almost boundless plains of South America to Cape Horn and the Isles of the Pacific,—even in the West, amidst the wildest speculations, the most intense excitement, and the all-absorbing desire to be rich,—even there the Church *has* been planted, and in many a village is to be found a band of faithful worshippers.

"To theological students, in whose welfare I am most truly interested, I can speak with plainness; for at the present day, if amid the prodigious efforts of Popery, the beautiful example set us by various denominations in this country, and the delightful, the noble stand which our highly

in the Gospel as well as in their codes of canons. They ought to have faith in the common sense and the deliberate judgments and the sincere hearts of Christian people; they should trust much to the laws of experience, the laws of the human mind and affections; they should have calm confidence in the gracious care of the Holy Spirit, the superintendence of the Head of the Church."

Such is the argument of Vail's remarkable treatise, the most remarkable, indeed, about the only publication in book form produced by the group around Bishop Kemper. It may reflect too fully the spirit of compromise of the age out of which it arose,—may be too pliable in some of its applications,—though he maintained that in practice extreme tendencies would be automatically adjusted,—but its spirit is in line with sound Anglican and truly catholic tradition,—is in truth identical with the spirit of Richard Hooker and, further back, of Bishop Pecocke; and those who cry out against it owe to it their foothold in the church. It offers a refreshing contrast to the violent party contests and ecclesiastical trials of its day; it indicated, long before, the lines along which the church was to progress; and, finally, in its clear-cut distinction between nature and sin it was far in advance of the times and still remains so in a measure.

Kemper's plan of visitation of all his dioceses and jurisdictions for the year 1842 reveals a general intention of spending a week at every parish or mission station visited. This may have been the common custom then; Bishop Cobbs followed it, and so had time to call upon every church family in every place, become personally acquainted with every individual, and so be in truth the chief pastor of his diocese. Kemper reported this year that there were thirty-one clergymen and that he had confirmed one hundred and ninety-one persons in his field. In a report from

Prairieville, Wisconsin, rendered by William Adams, as clerk of the associated mission, we find the following reference: "We have had an interesting visit from Bishop Kemper. We believe he is satisfied with our efforts. And though in his services he wore the robes appropriate to his office, a thing before unheard of in this region, still we have heard no complaints, and we know that the dignified and impressive way in which he performed the solemn duties of the Episcopate, as well the reverential suavity of his natural manner, have brought it close to the most careless, that the commission borne by an apostolic bishop is not of man, neither by man, but of the Holy Ghost."

In the same report a "Catholic feature" of the mission is noted,—classes of adult catechumens, conducted by the brethren; and an intention of having weekly communions, "according to primitive practice," is recorded. To this end the brothers had sought to secure the services of the good missionary priest, Richard Cadle, and to convert him into the Father Superior of their order,—but the worthy man shied at the novel honor. With funds that Hobart had obtained at the East a beautiful tract of land was bought about Naʒhotah (signifying "Twin Lakes"), and thither, in August, the mission was moved. The following October, Adams and Breck were advanced to the priesthood, and the latter was made head of the religious house. A few theological students answered to the lay brothers of Vallombrosa; they supported themselves by farm work, etc., according to the primitive method at Gambier. The community rose at five o'clock, had services (lauds or prime) at six and nine in the morning, on Wednesdays and Fridays the litany and on Thursdays Holy Communion at noontide, and services at three and half-past six o'clock in the evening, answering to nones and vespers. Now at length, as Breck wrote