

Readings for Thursday, May 23, 2024

Jackson Kemper Bishop and Missionary, 1870

Psalm 67

Deus misereatur

- 1 May God be merciful to us and bless us, *
show us the light of his countenance and come to us.
- 2 Let your ways be known upon earth, *
your saving health among all nations.
- 3 Let the peoples praise you, O God; *
let all the peoples praise you.
- 4 Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, *
for you judge the peoples with equity
and guide all the nations upon earth.
- 5 Let the peoples praise you, O God; *
let all the peoples praise you.
- 6 The earth has brought forth her increase; *
may God, our own God, give us his blessing.
- 7 May God give us his blessing, *
and may all the ends of the earth stand in awe of him.

1 Corinthians 3:8–11

The one who plants and the one who waters have a common purpose, and each will receive wages according to the labour of each. For we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building.

According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building on it. Each builder must choose with care how to build on it. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.

Matthew 28:16–20

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Collect:

O God, who sent your son Jesus Christ to preach peace to those who are far off and to those who are near: Grant that we, like your servant Jackson Kemper, may proclaim the Gospel in our own day, with courage, vision, and perseverance; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Jackson Kemper

Bishop and Missionary, 1870

When the General Convention of 1835 declared all the members of the Episcopal Church to be members also of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, it provided at the same time for missionary bishops to serve in the wilderness and in foreign countries. Jackson Kemper was the first such bishop. Although he was assigned to Missouri and Indiana, he also laid foundations in Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Kansas, and made extensive missionary tours in the South and Southwest.

Kemper was born in Pleasant Valley, New York, on December 24, 1789. He graduated from Columbia College in 1809 and was ordained as a deacon in 1811 and as a priest in 1814. He served Bishop White as his assistant at Christ Church, Philadelphia. At his urging, Bishop White made his first and only visitation in western Pennsylvania. In 1835, Kemper was ordained as a bishop, and immediately set out on his travels.

Because Episcopal clergy, mostly from well-to-do Eastern homes, found it hard to adjust to the harsh life of the frontier—scorching heat, drenching rains, and winter blizzards—Kemper established Kemper College in St. Louis, Missouri, the first of many similar attempts to train clergy and laity for specialized tasks in the church. The College failed in 1845 from the usual malady of such projects in the church—inadequate funding. Nashotah House, in Wisconsin, which he founded in 1842 with the help of James Lloyd Breck and his companions, was more successful. So was Racine College, founded in 1852. Both these institutions reflected Kemper's devotion to beauty in ritual and worship.

Kemper pleaded for more attention to the Native Americans and encouraged the translation of services into native languages. He described a service among the Oneida which was marked by “courtesy, reverence, worship—and obedience to that Great Spirit in whose hands are the issues of life.”

From 1859 until his death, Kemper was diocesan Bishop of Wisconsin, but he is more justly honored by his unofficial title, “The Bishop of the Whole Northwest.”