LIFE AND WORKS OF HAMLINE
By Daniel D. Whedon*

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[*I have attributed this article to Daniel D. Whedon, because he was Editor of the Methodist Quarterly Review at the time the article appeared therein, and because it was not attributed to another writer. The sketch of Bishop L. L. Hamline presented in this article is perhaps the finest that you will find anywhere. -- DVM]

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INTRODUCTION

The Christian Church is growing richer in biography from age to age. It is a principle of the divine economy that "the righteous shall be held in everlasting remembrance." While this is primarily true of the remembrance which God cherishes of his own, however little they may be

thought of by an unsympathetic world, yet it also has its application to the Church, which delights to preserve the memory of her holy men and women.

The Methodist Episcopal Church has always manifested a commendable interest in properly written memoirs of her deceased Bishops. But, unfortunately, in several instances there has been either a lack of data attainable for the production of such memoirs, or a lack of interest or industry on the part of surviving friends in preparing them.

Bishop Asbury, following the example of Mr. Wesley, kept journals of his travels and his ministerial work. Those journals have required but small additions on the part of his biographers and historians to enable the press to perpetuate his life. Bishop Coke's life, based also upon his journals and letters, was well written by his friend Samuel Drew. Bishops Whatcoat, McKendree and George left such meager materials behind them that attempting biographers have only been able to produce sketches of their lives a little more detailed than are allotted to all deceased ministers in the Minutes of their Conferences.

The life of Bishop Roberts was well written by his friend Dr. Elliott. That of Bishop Emory was published in connection with his works by his son Dr. Robert Emory. Ample justice was done to the life of Bishop Hedding by Dr. D. W. Clark, to whom, in turn, a similar service was rendered by Dr. Daniel Curry. Bishop Hamline has had two excellent biographers, while of eight other of our deceased Bishops no adequate memoirs have as yet been published.

The life of Bishop Hamline, when surveyed as a whole, is found to have extended into its sixty-eighth year. It comprised five distinct periods.* The first was that of youth and secular employment, extending to the thirty-first year of his age. The second was that of his preparatory and itinerant ministry, covering eight years. The third was that of his official editorship, covering eight years. The fourth was that of his episcopacy, also covering eight years. The fifth was that of his retirement from public life and of his protracted suffering as an invalid during thirteen years. It seems proper now to group together the principal facts of his life in the order named, coupled with an estimate of his character and influence as they will descend to future generations.

[*Whedon did not follow this outline closely in his sketch of Bishop Hamline. He actually divided the sketch into 10 parts instead of 5, and designated the parts differently. Immediately below I have inserted my own Table of Contents for the sketch. -- DVM]

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CONTENTS

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01 -- HIS YOUTH

Leonidas Lent Hamline was born in Burlington, Connecticut, in 1799. His parents, who were of Huguenot ancestry, were Congregationalists. His father, although a farmer, was a practical school teacher. The education of the son, both religious and secular, was strict and thorough. In the former he was trained to rigid Puritanic habits and the straitest views of Hopkinsian Calvinism. In the latter, by common school instruction and a course at Phillips Academy, Andover, Mass., he was so grounded in the elements of learning that he began his own career as a school teacher at the early age of seventeen. His youth was characterized by precocity in study and a deep religious reverence, both of which encouraged his father to educate him for the ministry. Of his early religious life he [L. L. Hamline] himself wrote to his son in 1847:

"I was at seventeen under deep religious impressions, but my Calvinistic parents could not tell me how to be saved. I became stupid, and then they thought me converted; and for three or four years I thought so too, and studied Greek and Latin, expecting to be a minister in the Congregational Church, and prayed and talked in meetings; and some were convicted and converted under my little talks. But I gradually became convinced that I was not converted, and finally gave it all up, and went to studying law."

In the above extract we have his own estimate of his early religious experience. Yet from what has been recorded by others of the fruits of his influence at that period we might incline to a more favorable judgment. Dr. Hibbard I says:

"When about seventeen he engaged in teaching portions of the year to enable him to pursue his education. At that time he introduced religious services in his school. The awakening that followed was so strong that at times the school exercises were suspended. Many were hopefully converted. A Christian lady, living in East Barrington, Massachusetts, informed Mrs. Hamline that there were elders in the Church in that village, then living, who had been converted through Mr. Hamline's labors, when he was a young man of seventeen or eighteen, teaching classical school, with anticipations of the ministry."

Not long after these events he was overtaken by a serious calamity in the deterioration of his health, which, from hard study and a continued strain upon his nervous system, sympathetically affected his brain. As concerning the period of his life which followed, certain unfounded rumors have been circulated and unjust inferences drawn, it is well to consult Dr. Hibbard's careful and authentic statement of it:

"Mr. Hamline's convalescence was slow. He continued his studies as he was able. But in the lapse of time he became dissatisfied with the evidences of his conversion, and changed his

plan of life. He says of himself, 'I gradually became convinced that I was not converted, and finally gave it all up and went to studying law.'

"On his return from the South, or soon after, he went West, and in 1824 we find him at Zanesville, Ohio. Here he became acquainted with Miss Eliza Price, an amiable, well-reported, and carefully educated young lady, an only child and an heiress. To Miss Eliza Mr. Hamline was married. They lived together in much affection and harmony, in the elegant paternal mansion, with an easy competence, but now without God. In 1827 he took license as a lawyer, at Lancaster, Ohio, and returned to his profession. Four children were given them, two sons and two daughters, of whom three died in infancy."

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02 -- HIS SECULAR LIFE AND CONVERSION

During the years devoted by Mr. Hamline to the professional study and practice of law he lived a life of religious indifference, and at the same time of irreligious unrest. His love of metaphysics made him an easy disciple and admirer of Edwards, while his educational prejudice against, not to say his contempt for, the Methodists left him no doctrinal antidote to his pernicious speculations. But he was a child of Providence, and wonderful were the steps by which he was brought to Christ, in the personal assurance of his complete salvation.

In the fall or early winter of 1827 Mr. and Mrs. Hamline came to Perrysburgh, Cattaraugus County, New York. It appears that Mr. Hamline was called there on legal business which detained him for a length of time.

While in that vicinity he became the subject of a new and deep religious awakening. A full account of that awakening, and of the steps and processes by which he was gradually led through great spiritual darkness into glorious light, was prepared by his own hand and published in the "Ladies' Repository" of 1843, under the title of "The Metaphysician." The narrative was introduced as written by the editor, but without any suggestion as to who the subject might be, further than might have been indicated by the initial L. Both biographers have published the narrative in full, substituting the name Hamline, or the initial H., where the L. was originally used.

Rarely has there ever been written a more graphic account of the struggles of a strong and intelligent mind while passing through the great change between a condition of sinful alienation and a state of gracious acceptance with God. It deserves, in several respects, to be compared with the Confessions of Augustine. Concerning the latter, it has been said that "they are the delineation of an extraordinary intellect, and the issue of a remarkable experience." An intelligent writer has enumerated four distinguishing characteristics of Augustine's Confessions:

1. The singular mingling of metaphysical and devotional elements.

2. The union of the most minute and exhaustive detail of sin with the most intense and spiritual abhorrence of it.

3. They palpitate with a positive love of God and goodness.

4. The insight which they afford into the origin and progress of Christian experience.

All these characteristics may be predicated of Hamline's confessions, with the added statement that they are written in a more direct style and with a much clearer appreciation of evangelical truth.

The parallel between the two men, however, may be continued in the following facts. They were both converted at about the same period in life; Hamline in his thirty-first year, Augustine in his thirty-second. Both became Bishops. Both were diligent writers. Both cherished throughout life intense views of the malignity of sin, antagonized by overwhelming views of the power of divine grace to save the believing soul. It would not be difficult to extend this comparison much further with equal credit to both the North African and the North American Bishop, who, doubtless, ere this have happily fraternized in the presence of Him to whom their souls aspired with an absorbing affection.

When saving faith sprang up in the heart of L. L. Hamline his whole life was changed. Immediately he counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. Nor did he hesitate to lay upon the altar of God the pride of social position, home, wealth, worldly honor, and ambition.

At first he did not seem to think of becoming a minister of the Gospel, but out of the fullness of his heart his mouth began to speak, testifying of the grace of God wrought out in his own deliverance from the powers of sin and unbelief. Fruits followed. "People were convicted and converted." Although a layman, and a probationer in the Church, he was not idle as a Christian. He engaged earnestly in work for God as he found opportunity, whether in the ordinary means of grace or at camp-meetings and protracted meetings. He still, however, continued the practice of his profession as a lawyer until

"One day, while conducting a suit before a single justice, an overwhelming conviction fell upon him that he must quit the law and preach the Gospel. This he endeavored to overcome or dismiss for the time, but it returned again and again, and so embarrassed him that he was forced to shorten his argument and close his speech. Here ended his legal pleading, thenceforward to turn to the sublimer calling of 'beseeching men to be reconciled to God.' He received license to exhort about six months after his conversion, and license to preach at the expiration of his first year of membership, November, 1829. The balance of that year, till September, 1830, he spent in varied labor as a licentiate, wherever a providential door was opened."

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03 -- HIS EARLY MINISTRY

L. L. Hamline's first and second appointments as a preacher were made by presiding elders, who engaged him to supply vacancies on circuits in Eastern Ohio. These engagements took him far away from his pleasant home to portions of the country recently settled. In passing from

place to place he was called to sleep often in cabins, where, in the bleak winter night, he had only to draw aside the hanging blanket in order to thrust his hand between the logs into the storm without. His meager income, after meeting his necessary traveling expenses, he gave to his poorer brethren. His easy pleasure rides he exchanged for long, tedious, and often perilous traveling, fording streams, threading forests which sometimes were not even blazed.

But of these things he took little account so long as the work of the Lord prospered. He was as yet unfamiliar with Methodistic government and usage, but his wonderful experience in coming to Christ, his powerful conviction and conversion, his naturally incisive mind, now baptized with the Holy Spirit, made all his former studies and knowledge of men available to the pulpit, while in social life he was everywhere at ease.

At one of the appointments on his first circuit, while preaching with great power, his audience suddenly burst into tears, rising simultaneously to their feet. A scene of power and mercy ensued. Among the converts of the day was one who became a preacher of the Gospel.

His preaching at a camp-meeting held on the district was attended with extraordinary power. Following the meeting one hundred and thirty-eight probationers were added to the Church.

In September, 1832, he joined the Ohio Conference, and was appointed as the third or second-junior preacher on the Granville Circuit. At the Conference of 1833 he was appointed to the Athens Circuit, with the Rev. Jacob Young for his senior colleague. At the Conference of 1834 he was ordained, and appointed to Wesley Chapel, Cincinnati, as a junior preacher. Not long after his removal to that appointment he was called to mourn the loss of his wife, who had for some time been a suffering invalid. His appointment to Cincinnati was renewed in August, 1835. But in June following he was transferred to Columbus to fill an important pulpit that had unexpectedly become vacant. He then, for the first time, became a preacher in charge, or a pastor in the fullest sense; but that office he only held for three months.

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04 -- HIS EDITORIAL LIFE

By a singular train of providences Methodism has been led from its earliest organization to an active use of the press as an auxiliary of Church work. Mr. Wesley not only published books and tracts in great numbers, but a monthly magazine. His example was followed in America. But here the magazine rose in due time to become a Quarterly Review, while weekly papers became the more popular medium for diffusing religious truth and intelligence.

The Methodist Episcopal Church has not left this great interest to irresponsible parties, but from its beginning has assumed and maintained control of such publications, whether in book or periodical form, as it deemed essential to its work. Hence from time to time it has appointed leading ministers to the control of its official press.

The publication of the "Western Christian Advocate" was commenced at Cincinnati in 1834, under the editorship of Rev. Thomas A. Morris. When, in 1836, Mr. Morris was elected

Bishop, Rev. Charles Elliott became his successor, with Rev. William Phillips as assistant editor. Mr. Phillips having died soon after, it devolved on the Ohio Conference to appoint his successor. Rev. L. L. Hamline was designated for the office, and returned to Cincinnati as an editor in the autumn of 1836.

The withdrawal of such a man from the pastoral work at a time when he had become so peculiarly qualified for it was not only a great trial to the Church he was serving at Columbus, but would have been quite unjustifiable had there not been very broad and important interests to subserve by the change. Mr. Hamline seems to have been passive in the hands of the Church authorities, and not to have felt at liberty to decline the appointment, as he doubtless would have done had it required him to desist from preaching the Gospel. In point of fact, his sphere as a preacher was actually enlarged by the change, although his duties in that line could only be performed by greater effort.

In order to estimate rightly the character and extent of the work that was now put upon the subject of our notice, it is necessary to consider what religious journalism in this country was in its first stage. The "Christian Advocate" of New York was only ten years old. The "Western Christian Advocate" was in its third year, and, being pioneer in the West, was without a corps of trained contributors. Nevertheless, it was launched during a period of exciting controversy respecting slavery and abolition, while the varied interests of aggressive evangelism, of Christian education, of temperance, and of kindred causes, were to be promoted through its agency. Such circumstances demanded great wisdom as well as labor at the hands of its editors. But Elliott and Hamline proved themselves to be eminently qualified for the position and its responsibilities. They both united unusual capacity with untiring industry, and co-operated with each other in the most perfect harmony. Both regarded the paper as an agency in diffusing the Gospel and edifying the Church; but as their editorial writing and supervision were limited to week-days, they devoted their Sabbaths to pulpit services in the city and the region round. Indeed, the ministerial services of Mr. Hamline were in such demand and so willingly rendered that he was often absent for considerable periods, preaching daily at camp-meetings, in revival meetings in the churches, and in missionary efforts in destitute places. Dr. Hibbard's biography gives most interesting accounts of the extraordinary spiritual power attending his ministrations during this period, showing that with his editorial life was associated a career of wide, varied, and wonderful evangelism. After stating that Mr. Hamline never lost sight of the great object of that ministry to which he held every other call in subservience, Dr. Hibbard adds:

"It was computed that nearly one hundred persons dated their awakening from the sermons of Mr. Hamline on a single Sabbath in Lebanon, Ohio. Indeed, his labors were everywhere attended with visible results. His sermons were marked for their system, their force of argument, pathetic appeals and vivid description, and, above all, by the power of the Holy Spirit. His manner was earnest, often impassioned, always dignified and serious, his imagination lively and chaste, combining beauty and strength with a voice of richness and melody, and his appeals often seemed irresistible. The moment he opened his lips the people intuitively felt they were in the presence of a great mind and a man of God. From every quarter came calls for help in revival labors and for extra occasions, to which he gave a joyful response to the utmost limit of his time and strength. Everywhere his labors were owned of God."

A single instance, selected from several, is subjoined:

"At a camp-meeting, one evening, during a heavy rain, Mr. Hamline repaired to the church, on the edge of the ground, where he found a company of eight or ten men, who had retreated there to escape the rain, and were lying on the benches. He immediately began to exhort them with affectionate earnestness and power. The Spirit of God fell on the auditors, who yielded and sought the Lord. Before morning they were all happily converted to God."

At the period under review his mind was greatly drawn toward foreign mission work, particularly in France, the land of his ancestors. The subject of a mission from our Church to that country was then under official consideration, and, had it been decided on, there is little doubt that Mr. Hamline would have been appointed to it. But, although not called to enter a foreign field, his zeal in behalf of missions developed itself in a most practical and influential form in connection with the establishment of a German religious press in Cincinnati, and in the encouragement of evangelical effort in behalf of Germans, both in America and Europe. On this point Dr. Nast, the apostle of German Methodism, has spoken emphatically:

"In private and in public I have often tried, to express my gratitude for what, under God, we Germans owe to that great man of God. Bishop Hamline, in the darkest days of my penitential struggle, when I was on the point to give it up, presented the Gospel to me with the power of a new charm and inspired me again with hope. During the first two years of my ministry, when I labored as a missionary in Cincinnati, I had the privilege of being every day in his company, and from him I learned, more than from any other source, how to attack successfully the skepticism of my countrymen. He was my pattern in preaching and in writing.

"As to the mission of our Church among the Germans, which God has crowned with such glorious results, I am confident it would never have been taken hold of in earnest had it not been for the soul-stirring and convincing appeals of Bishop Hamline to the Church. It was his eloquent advocacy to which the "Apologist" chiefly owes its existence; but he not only induced others to give, but, with his well-known liberality, he contributed out of his own ample means for the support of the German Mission work, and the building of a number of German churches.

"No part of the Church was more deeply afflicted than the German ministry when Bishop Hamline felt compelled, on account of his physical debility and suffering, to resign his episcopal office. The Germans felt as though they had lost a father indeed. O, how deeply engraven are his episcopal addresses on the hearts of the older German preachers!"

Mr. Hamline soon entered upon a new and more congenial sphere of editorial life. By the General Conference of 1840 he was again appointed assistant editor of the "Western Christian Advocate," and prospective editor of the "Ladies' Repository." Consequently, on him devolved the task of founding a monthly magazine under that title, which, notwithstanding the embarrassments incident to a new literary enterprise in the West, soon rose to an important position in the literature of the Church. Dr. Hibbard very properly speaks of the "Repository" as giving a wider scope to Mr. Hamline's literary and classical taste, as well as to the outreaching of his spiritual life. Of his style and skill as an editor of such a magazine, the following statement is justly made:

"He possessed the true enthusiasm which warmed and animated whatever theme he took. In his hands common events assumed a new interest, not only by the illusive dress of fiction, but by the discovery of new and higher relations, while the crowning charm of his writings proceeds from the high moral end for which he wrote, and the inbreathed and living desire to save souls. Preaching or writing, he had this one object in view and uppermost. This was no detriment to literary taste or merit, but gave to both a more exalted standard and refinement. Nor was his skill in engaging others to work inferior to his own ability to execute."

It was during his editorship of the "Repository" that Mr. Hamline entered upon that higher phase of religious experience known among Methodists as the blessing of perfect love or entire sanctification. A chapter is given to the subject by each of his biographers, inclusive of many quotations from his own pen. The details are full of interest and instruction to devout minds. The results are briefly set forth in the following quotations:

"A new life now dawned upon him. Not one without clouds, temptations, and sore wrestlings, but one in which over all these he was to have victory. He could now say, as never before

'"Now I have found the ground wherein
Sure my soul's anchor may remain.'

"With a body afflicted little less than that of Paul with his 'thorn in the flesh,' with a nervous structure which even in health would be subject to great alternations, and with a life of intense labor, and the antagonisms of this 'evil world,' a perpetually 'quiet sea' was not to be expected. His exquisite sensitiveness often occasioned him sorrow and temptation where a common mind would experience no embarrassment.

"The great baptism amazingly quickened his love for souls and his ardent zeal to save them. In his diary for November 26, 1842, he says: 'I feel as though I had come to the verge of heaven. I have had sad dreams, but am happy now, filled with weeping and praise. I feel like one who has been wrecked at sea and has got into the long-boat. Persons are sinking all around, and he clutches them by the hair. So I see souls are sinking. I feel in a hurry to save them. And it matters not what I eat or what I wear, or who are my companions, for when I have rowed a few miles I shall get home and shall find all my friends there.'

"He says, somewhat later: 'Within less than three months I have enjoyed the privileges of attending some eight or ten protracted meetings, at each of which there was a glorious display of God's saving power.' Does the reader ask how he could, under such circumstances, not only give satisfaction, but win reputation, as the editor of the 'Ladies' Repository?' He answers the question in part: 'My labors are heavy. I take my papers often into the country, and write between preachings.' He was a ready and rapid writer. When his mind was roused and concentrated, and that was as often as duty demanded and health permitted, after the first dictation little was left for critical review.

"In the midst of labors beyond his strength, and which he afterward admits laid the foundation of his premature infirmities and his retirement from public life, with a popularity which

exposed him to envious criticism, and with the two mightiest social forces in his hands -- the pulpit and the press -- one might well fear for his humility. But to him selfish ambition was unknown. For himself he sought nothing, desired nothing; for Christ, everything. His deadness to the world and his self-abnegation were almost startling, even to his friends. His views of natural depravity and the malignity of sin in the light of the divine law left him in utter amazement at that divine love which had borne with his life of unbelief so long, and had multiplied such boundless 'grace upon grace' in his redemption."

As a pendant to the foregoing remarks from Dr. Hibbard, we quote a few sentences from a letter written by Dr. Elliott after Bishop Hamline's death, in 1865. This extract will show that the peculiar experience of Mr. Hamline in 1842 was not temporary, but lasting, continuing to the very end of his life:

"My pen is wholly incompetent to draw out in its full extent an adequate portrait of his high and holy character, whether it regards his natural talents or his extensive attainments, but especially the sanctity and purity of his religious life in theory, experience, and practical utility. He enjoyed, to the full extent, entire sanctification in all its experience and practical exemplifications. He was thoroughly scriptural and Wesleyan in all respects on this fundamental point. So clearly did he expound it to others in conversation, preaching, and writing, that many were led to experience it through his teaching and prayers.

"While he was thoroughly Wesleyan and scriptural in this way of holiness, he was instrumental in teaching its great truths to ministers of other Churches. Many of them, Presbyterians, Baptists, and Episcopalians, were brought to the full enjoyment of this privilege of the sons of God through his instructions and prayers."

During the year 1843, and the early months of 1844, Mr. Hamline continued both his editorial and evangelical labors with quickened zeal, though with declining health. Several times he was laid aside by severe illness, but no sooner did partial recovery allow than he was again at his post.

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05 -- HIS ELECTION TO THE EPISCOPAL OFFICE

The election of L. L. Hamline to the office of a Bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church was a spontaneous tribute to superior ability and obvious adaptation to the exigencies of the Church in a critical period of its history. It had not been prearranged by his friends, nor anticipated by himself. It was not the result of wire-pulling, canvassing, or bargaining. It was, in fact, a result born of an occasion and produced in the only manner that could have been in harmony with his sense of honor and of right.

Up to the last moment his physical ability to attend the General Conference of 1844 had been questioned by his physicians. He ventured to leave home in hope that his health would be improved by the journey to New York. The result in that respect justified his hopes. He was,

therefore, enabled to take his seat in the body to which he had been elected as a delegate in September preceding.

Although deeply interested in the proceedings, he for a considerable time modestly shrank from any prominent participation in them, purposing to do his duty by his votes. But after having witnessed for days the struggle between the opponents of slavery and their antagonists, and having seen the growing mystification in which the special issue in the case of the slave-holding Bishop Andrew was becoming involved, he decided to take a part in the discussion.

Dr. (now Bishop) J. T. Peck has described the scene:

"In the midst of the great debate he rose and addressed the chair. He was promptly recognized, and from the first sentence it was evident that the question, so involved and far-reaching, was in the hands of a master. His positions were logically perfect, without a word to spare, and yet, in rhetoric and oratory, as fine as if intended for popular entertainment. The tones of his voice were new to many of us, and they were actually enchanting. All noise in the vast assemblage ceased; and he seemed as if alone with God, uttering thoughts and arguments of inspiration. 'True, true, every word of it true,' we would say, without speaking, (no one would have dared to speak or move;) 'conclusive, splendid, demonstrative, irresistible!' The last sentence was finished; the speaker quietly resumed his seat; a thousand people drew a long breath; and the great issue was logically settled."

While no abstract can give any just idea of such a speech as a whole, yet it seems proper to say that its strength lay in convincing demonstrations of the following propositions:

Executive authority in the Methodist Episcopal Church has power to remove or depose any officer on the ground of improper conduct.

Bishops and officers of the Church are subject to the executive authority of the General Conference by which they are appointed and to which they are amenable:

Therefore,

1. The General Conference has power to depose a Bishop who has by any act rendered himself unacceptable to the Church in the character of a general superintendent.

2. Its obligation to depose an offending Bishop is increased by the eminence and responsibility of his office.

The conclusion of the address was designed to clinch the conclusion of the syllogism. It here follows in part:

"A Bishop's influence is not like a preacher's or class-leader's. It is diffused, like the atmosphere, everywhere. So high a Church officer should be willing to endure not slight sacrifices for this vast connection. What could tempt you, sir, to trouble and wound the Church all through, from center to circumference? The preacher and the class-leader, whose influence is guarded

against so strongly, can do little harm -- a Bishop infinite. Their improper acts are motes in the air; yours are a pestilence abroad in the earth. Is it more important to guard against those than against these? Heaven forbid! Like the concealed attractions of the heavens, we expect a Bishop's influence to be all-abiding everywhere; in the heights and in the depths, in the center and on the verge, of this great system ecclesiastical. If instead of concentric and harmonizing movements, such as are wholesome and conservative and beautifying, we observe in him irregularities which, however harmless in others, will be disastrous or fatal in him, the energy of this body, constitutionally supreme, must instantly reduce him to order; or, if that may not be, plant him in another and a distant sphere. When the Church is about to suffer a detriment which we by constitutional power can avert, it is as much treason in us not to exercise the power we have, as to usurp in other circumstances that which we have not."

From and after the delivery of that speech, as was well said by Dr. J. T. Peck, "all could see that the clearness of his intellect, the meekness and humility of his bearing, and the grace of his movements, fitted him for high official rank, and promised extraordinary executive ability."

Scarcely less in the light of those facts, than as an indorsement of his clear and strong views of the office and responsibility of Bishops in the Methodist Episcopal Church, was the spontaneous movement made which resulted a few days latter in his own election to that very office. Such a result both startled and humbled him. Dr. Hibbard says:

"As a human call he would have at once declined the honor, but the circumstances of the case were so extraordinary, and the exercises of his mind so strongly corroborative of the hand of God in all, that he bowed in humble submission. The office had sought him, not he the office."

At a subsequent period he himself wrote:

"At the General Conference in 1844, most unexpectedly to myself, (and to nearly all, I believe,) I was elected to the superintendency. A translation in the chariot of Elijah would not have overtaken me much more unexpectedly. My struggles were peculiar, and yet I found evidence that I was called to this ministry."

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06 -- HIS EPISCOPAL ADMINISTRATION

To him the will of God was supreme law and supreme delight. He contemplated the episcopacy from the spiritual standpoint, and entered upon it with the single aim to the salvation of souls and the sanctification of the Church. His past life had been a preparatory discipline, and his great baptism in 1842 the qualification of power for this strange and unexpected work. Not the least of his evidences and his consolations was the common and hearty approval of the Church at large.

He entered upon the presidency of successive Conferences without delay, and, although subject to violent attacks of illness, he was, nevertheless, enabled to fulfill his entire round of official obligations during a series of years. In Dr. Palmer's Life [of Bishop Hamline] those years

are made the subjects of successive chapters, in which his travels from Conference to Conference and his engagements in the line of evangelical work are presented in detail, free use being made of his own diary and letters. Dr. Hibbard separates the topics of his episcopal administration and evangelical labors, and judiciously condenses his diary and correspondence.

From both volumes, as well as from what is remembered by many living persons, it is evident that Bishop Hamline took no narrow view of the brief and technical items in which our Discipline states the duties of Bishops. He did not conceive that merely traveling across the country in railroad cars, and presiding at Conferences, by any means fulfilled the spirit of those requirements. He understood the word "travel" as the equivalent of itinerate in the character of a minister of the Gospel, whose duty the Discipline elsewhere enjoins in phrases like these: "You have nothing to do but to save souls; therefore spend and be spent in this work." "Observe, it is not your business only to preach so many times, and to take care of this or that Society, but to save as many as you can, to bring as many sinners as you can to repentance, and with all your power to build them up in that holiness without which they cannot see the Lord." Hence, he devoted the intervals of Conference sessions to visits among the Churches and people, stirring them up, both publicly and socially, to zeal and activity in the divine life. No one that knew or even met him failed to be impressed with the fact that he endeavored to wield the full amount, both of his personal and official influence, as an agency for honoring God and promoting the salvation of men. As said by his last biographer:

"His one absorbing object was to awaken the ministry and the Churches to the higher claims of their holy calling, and to reach out a hand of rescue to the perishing. His summer months were spent in attending Annual Conferences, and his winters in visiting the Churches."

Bishop Hamline's bearing in Annual Conferences was distinguished for a wonderful combination of dignity and humility. He had the great art of securing promptness and order in the dispatch of business, without any bustle or show of authority. He also had the greater talent of diffusing over a deliberative body that calm thoughtfulness and spirit of prayer, without which the standing direction of our Discipline concerning deportment at the Conferences is never fulfilled: "It is desired that all things be considered on these occasions as in the immediate presence of God."

Dr. Hibbard says:

"His eye was ever watchful of the devotional and charitable spirit of the Conference. Often at the appearance of uncharitableness or levity, he would arrest business, and, in his own inimitable way, address the brethren briefly, calling them lovingly to watchfulness and prayer, and then propose a brief season of prayer, calling on the brother aggrieved, or perhaps the one offending, to pray."

Such influences could only be exerted by a man of great spiritual power. That Bishop Hamline was enabled to exert them was one of the happy fruits of his deep religious experience and of his habitual life of devotion. The results proved that such a life in no way diminished, but rather increased, his administrative ability in the difficult circumstances through which he was often called to guide his Conferences. The earlier period of his episcopal service was one of

intense excitement, caused by the agitation of the times, especially along the borders of the newly organized Southern Church. Perhaps no more exciting scene ever took place in an Annual Conference than that in which he relieved Bishop Soule from the chair, in the Ohio Conference of 1845. The circumstances are fully stated by Dr. Hibbard, but we have only space for Dr. Cyrus Brooks' description of the scene:

"A large portion of the Conference had risen to their feet, and some members, I think, had left the house. The critical moment had arrived, and it seemed that the next instant must bring hopeless confusion. Just at that instant Bishop Hamline stepped upon the platform. I can never forget his appearance. Twenty years have not dimmed the recollection of it in the least. It was full of animation, yet calm, commanding, majestic. No human movement ever so impressed me with the idea of irresistible power. It was power, too, wielded with consummate skill, and for a most beneficent end. I have seen him in some of his happiest moments, in some of the loftiest flights of his sublime eloquence, but I never saw him appear to so good advantage as then. He seemed to me almost more than man.

"As he came forward he said that there were times when it became necessary to waive all considerations of mere courtesy, and exercise the authority with which one was intrusted. Such a time had come, and it was clearly his duty now to interpose. As he said this he waved his hand to the temporary chairman [Joshua Soule] at his left, who instantly obeyed the signal and gave place. Bishop Hamline took his seat, order was immediately restored, and business resumed its usual course. A few minutes afterward a stranger entering the house would not have suspected that any thing unusual had occurred in the Conference. So sudden and so complete was the restoration of order and confidence, that one could hardly help thinking of the time when the Master said to the tumultuous waves of Gennesaret, 'Peace, be still,' and there was a great calm.

"It was not long until the lofty form of Bishop Soule was seen moving toward the door, with his portfolio under his arm and his hat in his hand. He disappeared, and was seen among us no more.

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07 -- BISHOP HAMLINE AS A PREACHER

The brief notices already given of his early ministry have shown that from the first an extraordinary influence attended his declarations of gospel truth. That kind of influence continued throughout the period of his episcopate. Wherever he went and whenever he preached, he was heard with profound and solemn interest. He did not limit his pulpit efforts to great occasions, but was as ready to preach to few as to many; nevertheless, his capacity to bring vast assemblies under the spell of the sublimest eloquence has been rarely equaled. His appearance when before an audience was that of perfect calmness and self-possession. He used few gestures, and no vociferation, but as he proceeded to present the great themes of the gospel in an easy but lucid style, clinching his positions with invulnerable logic, he impressed his hearers not only as a man having intimate communion with God, but as having in himself vast resources of intellectual and spiritual power. His emotions were not of the coruscating type. [coruscate v. intr. 1 give off

flashing light; sparkle. 2 be showy or brilliant. -- Oxford Dict.] They did not blaze along the sky, like meteors. They rather heaved and swelled, like a suppressed but moving earthquake.

His habits as a preacher were formed during the six years of his itinerant ministry. It was never his custom to read or recite sermons to a congregation. In his preparations for pulpit address he wrote diligently, and thus acquired a style of peculiar transparency, precision, and force. Yet his writing was for self-discipline in the development and memorization of thought. In preparing for argumentative discussions, he carefully elaborated his definitions and propositions. In a few instances, and for special objects, he wrote out sermons at length, and thus became prepared to deliver them with more confidence and completeness. All his preparations were thus made auxiliary to effective extemporaneous preaching.

Dr. Hibbard says:

"His imagination was not gorgeous, not copious; his taste, no less than his 'godly sincerity,' would have excluded all excess and dazzle. He was not a poet, but an orator, and his imagination described and illustrated rather than invented, and diffused an exquisite tinge of beauty over all his utterances.

"'His elocution,' says Dr. Lowrey, 'was perfect. His voice -- how could the Creator have improved it? like the key-note of well-composed music, just right. Soft, mellow, full, rich in its grave accents, clear and insinuating in its higher inflections, tenderly impassioned and melting in its minor and sympathetic tones, it possessed the power of self-adjustment to every word, syllable, and sound of his sentences. I heard him speak twenty years ago, and today many of his words, and his mode of uttering them, live in my mind with all the vividness that belongs to the memories of yesterday. This I attribute largely to the enchanting effect of his elocution.'"

In his introduction to Bishop Hamline's works, Dr. Hibbard also gives this additional sketch, which is the more valuable from its historic comparisons:

"It is not easy to do justice to his character without exaggeration on the one hand, or disparagement on the other. His individuality is so marked that, after all comparisons, he must stand alone. He possessed the enthusiasm, but not the frenzy, of Whitefield and Chalmers. He was more terse and pointed than Robert Hall, with less polish, and with an imagination and an order of intellect of superior adaptations to the ends of oratory ... The flow of his utterances was like the swell of the river current, more deep than rapid, yet moving on without interruption or commotion, always majestic, often quickened, like hurrying waters impatient of restraint, but never like the wild rush of the cataract. In this he contrasted with Olin. Hamline was impassioned, never boisterous -- Olin was vehement; Hamline was earnest -- Olin impetuous; Hamline was like the even, though often rapid, flow of a beautiful stream, bearing its buoyant burden safely and gracefully onward -- Olin was like the torrent, or the whirlwind, hurrying all before it. With him the hurricane was inevitable, but he rode upon it in majesty, and, like the spirit of the storm, directed all its forces. Hamline never suffered the storm to arise, but checked it midway, and if the sweep and force of his eloquence were less, the auditors were left more self-controlled, and the practical ends not less salutary. With the rising inspiration of his theme, his dark, clear eye

gathered new luster and emitted the fire of his thought, his countenance became suffused with the internal glow of his soul, and his whole person was animate with the genius of his subject."

It is a matter of no small interest, especially to students and young ministers, that a public speaker of such extraordinary power as Bishop Hamline has left on record in one of his published addresses, his own well-developed theory of eloquence. That address was delivered in 1836, but was not made accessible to general readers until the publication of the second volume of Hamline's works in 1871. That address, well studied, can hardly fail to be of great value to many a young man desirous of qualifying himself to become eloquent in the advocacy of Christian truth and duty. It should, however, be taken in connection with the author's well-known theory that no eloquence can avail for the highest ends of the Christian ministry that is not vitalized by the deep pathos born of intense conviction, and nourished by intimate communion with the source of spiritual power. This, our subject possessed in a high degree, and to it must be attributed a great measure of the success he had in winning souls to Christ, and to the higher Christian life.

A remarkable illustration of this occurred after his health had been completely shattered. It was at a grove-meeting which he had arranged for the benefit of his neighbors while residing near Schenectady. "At the closing service," wrote Dr. Carhart, "the Bishop arose, and, though scarcely able to stand without assistance, made an application of the sermon, and an appeal to the people, such as I have never heard equaled. The Holy Ghost fell on us. Weeping was heard in every direction in the vast assembly; sobs and cries for mercy followed; and, as the speaker continued, and even before the invitation was given, penitents crowded around the rude altar, and the whole assembly, rising to their feet, seemed drawn toward the speaker, and to melt like wax before the fire. When the invitation was given to those seeking Christ to come forward, it seemed to me that the whole audience moved simultaneously, while some actually ran and threw themselves prostrate upon the ground, and cried, 'God be merciful to me a sinner!' The memory of that scene can never be effaced from my mind."

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08 -- BISHOP HAMLINE AS A WRITER

Many an eloquent preacher has ceased to be a power in the Church and in the world when his voice has been silenced by disease or death. Others, who have enlisted the press as an auxiliary to their work, have been able to speak on to successive generations. Of this number Bishop Hamline was an eminent example, the more conspicuous from the fact that so few of his contemporaries in the heroic age of Methodism did likewise. It is proper, however, to say that he never neglected or left his primary work to become an author. When officially appointed by the Church to an editorial chair he improved his opportunity as a means of increasing his Christian and ministerial influence, as well as of serving the Church whose call he obeyed. With this high end in view, many of his articles became from the first permanently valuable. Not a few of them have been preserved by appreciative readers in the volumes of the "Ladies' Repository," and handed down as heir-looms to their households. It is no less in the line of good taste than of a good providence that the more important of those articles have now been taken out of their serial form and placed side by side in the beautiful volumes already named.

Those of Hamline's works that are presented in this permanent form, although of limited extent, deserve to be ranked in the highest grade of American theological literature. The first volume, being filled with sermons, will be most read by ministers. Special attention may be called to a series of three on the "Depravity of the Heart," also to those on "The Seen and the Unseen," "Delight in the House of God," "The Incarnation and the Immutability of Christ." In reading the sermons named, we have marked many passages as of superior excellence. But lack of space forbids their insertion. The second volume of Hamline's works contains forty-eight sketches and plans of sermons, five public addresses, and seventeen theological essays. These various articles, having been selected on the ground of intrinsic excellence, are all worthy of perusal, if not of study. The sermon sketches cover an ample variety of subjects and style of address, and may serve as suggestive examples of a class of productions of which every preacher must prepare many.

Of the public addresses of the author, that on "Eloquence," and that delivered in the General Conference of 1844 on "The Case of Bishop Andrew," deserve to be read and re-read. Another, on "The Church of God," delivered during the Centenary of Wesleyan Methodism, in 1839, is long and able. That on "The Grave," delivered at the opening of a cemetery, is a model for such a rare occasion.

Of the theological essays, those on Holiness, Faith, The New Birth, Arminianism, and The Holy Ghost, are the most important.

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09 -- HIS RESIGNATION OF THE EPISCOPAL OFFICE

The facts relating to this decisive step are fully related and described in the twenty-second chapter of Dr. Hibbard's biography, which opens with the following statement:

"The year 1852 marks an epoch, not only in the life of Bishop Hamline but in the history of the episcopacy of the Methodist Episcopal Church as well. In that year, at the General Conference held in Boston, Mass., Bishop Hamline tendered his resignation as Bishop, and retired to the rank of a superannuated elder of the Ohio Conference. The doctrine of the Church as to the nature of our episcopacy had always been that it was an office, and not a distinct clerical order, but no act or precedent had ever occurred to give it practical and administrative sanction. Aside from ecclesiastical considerations, the spiritual loss to the Church by the retirement of such a man from the episcopacy was accepted with universal regret as a common affliction. The simple and only ground of his retirement was want of health."

The significance of the Bishop's resignation was heightened by the discussions which took place respecting it on the floor of the General Conference. From the whole tenor of those discussions, it was obvious that a request to be retired as a superannuated Bishop would have better accorded with the feelings of the Conference. But such a course did not comport with Bishop Hamline's stern views of propriety in his own case. Hence his resignation was unequivocal. When that fact became apparent, a reluctant consent was accorded and he was honorably released from the responsibilities of the office conferred upon him by the action of a previous General Conference.

So far, this is the only case of resignation of the episcopal office that has occurred in the history of the Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1836 Dr. Wilbur Fisk was elected to that office, but as he declined episcopal ordination he was never considered a Bishop. Bishop Hamline had received the ordination and exercised the office during eight consecutive years. He then, under a sense of duty, surrendered his certificate of ordination and retired to the ecclesiastical position he had occupied before his episcopal election. The formal approval of that act by the General Conference made the precedent complete.

In the eminent example that has now passed under review there is not only instruction for Bishops, present and future, but for ministers and Christians in every grade and circumstance of human duty and trial. In Bishop Hamline's life it is seen that the greatness of the man and the nobleness and purity of his Christian character were not dependent upon his office. The office was an accident, taken up and laid down as occasion required. The man, the Christian, and the minister preceded and followed it. The office, indeed, secured great and peculiar opportunities of usefulness, but it required the highest style of a man and a Christian to improve them to the maximum.

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10 -- HIS LAST DAYS

After all that Bishop Hamline was able to accomplish by diligent and self-denying action in the days of his strength, it may be questioned whether the greatest triumph of his life was not accomplished by his patient endurance of affliction, when it fell to his lot to be withdrawn into the privacy and solitudes of suffering. That he found in such scenes the abiding and cheering presence of the sympathizing Saviour and the sanctifying Spirit to be equal to his extremest need, is a fact adapted to encourage every afflicted child of God. Few in any sphere of life have ever been called to endure greater or more protracted physical distresses. Although a man of robust frame, he became in middle life the subject of an alarming disease of the heart. Notwithstanding repeated admonitions of danger from physicians, he sternly nerved himself up to meet every call of duty so long as he might be able. During his whole period of episcopal service he was subject to attacks of illness so violent and protracted that they would have paralyzed the efforts of ordinary men; but he went steadily forward, meeting his Conferences and preaching among the Churches to the full limit of his strength. When released from official responsibilities, it was not to rest, but to retire and suffer, without the faintest hope of recovery. While death would have been a happy release at any moment, yet he was willing to wait all the days of his appointed time, though each added day brought its allotment of pain and trial.

It pleased God to prolong his life during thirteen years, not only of invalidity, but of ever-increasing physical distress. As he could no longer do the will of God in active service, he saw it to be alike his privilege and his duty to suffer that will in the furnace of affliction. That he did do so with the meekness of a disciple and the faith of a martyr is obvious from the records of his life during that period. In all Christian biography there are few if any more edifying examples of joy in sorrow and triumph in tribulation.

In 1856 he removed to Mount Pleasant, Iowa, where, in the neighborhood of his cherished friends, Dr. Elliott, Z. H. Coston, and others, he spent the remainder of his days.

His last words were, "This is wonderful suffering, but it is nothing to what my Saviour endured on the cross for me." Thus in the thought of the cross of Christ he triumphed over the last enemy.

Bishop Hamline's Christian life is open to imitation from all. In other spheres but few can follow him. But in the great matters of complete consecration, of earnest attention to the means of grace, and of simple trusting faith in the atoning Saviour, the humblest child of God may do likewise, in the confidence of obtaining similar divine favor, in life, in death, and in eternity.

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THE END