

# Concordia Theological Monthly

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Volume 4

Article 85

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8-1-1933

## Miscellanea

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### Recommended Citation

Kretzmann, P. E. (1933) "Miscellanea," *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Vol. 4 , Article 85.

Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol4/iss1/85>

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## Miscellanea.

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### Another "Abnormal" Sect.

Among the most recent peculiar sects which have come to our notice is one which calls itself the *Megiddo Mission*, located at Rochester, New York. It is evidently a sect with strong Unitarian and Universalist tendencies, as the following description given by the Rev. W. L. Dowler and printed in the *Lutheran Standard* for April 1 shows:—

"The organization was founded by the Rev. L. T. Nichols, who started his original interpretations of the Bible in Minnesota, then with about forty followers lived on a boat, going up and down the Mississippi for a number of years, stopping at towns and cities preaching. They finally came east and settled here. The present minister of the church is Mrs. Maud Hembree. She is eighty years of age, quite a fine lady, knows her Bible very well, but gives rather queer interpretations. The minister gets no salary, although she evidently gets her living expenses. People are supposed to tithe, at least above their living expenses. This is the only church, although they have small groups in a few other cities. They are just getting ready to celebrate Christmas on March 26, the true [?] date for this festival. The present membership is about 200.

"I could not class them as evangelical, although they place great emphasis on the Bible and are great Bible students. Their leaders have not been well educated, rather self-educated. They deny all thought of the Trinity as an entirely pagan doctrine. Emphasis is placed on non-worldly living, working out one's own salvation by withdrawing from worldly pleasures, and living for the Mission. Emphasize Mal. 4, 5, the coming of Elijah to prepare for Christ's return, when all who have merited it will be awakened from their sleep in death to receive the wonderful salvation which Christ has brought. They contend there is no justice in God's placing our sins on an innocent man, as on Christ, who Himself had to learn to become sinless and left us an example that we should follow in His steps. They deny salvation by faith.

"Naturally we would not class them as evangelical, as they would not think of Lutherans as Bible Christians. Mrs. Hembree mentioned Luther, spoke of him as one seeking the light, yet he was not a Bible Christian; for Luther believed in eternal punishment for the wicked and unbelievers, which, she said, we could never reconcile to the thought of a loving and just God. The wicked simply go to sleep in death as an animal and are never awakened."

P. E. K.

### Bellarmino: Saint and Doctor.

The name of this great Roman Catholic controversialist is well known to all who have ever studied the Lutheran dogmaticians of the late sixteenth and the early seventeenth century; for his life extended from 1542 to 1621, and his activity in the field of Roman theology may be said to have begun in 1572. For two decades he was professor at Louvain and at the *Collegium Romanum*. In 1599 he was made a cardinal and several years later archbishop of Padua. His fame rests chiefly upon his *Disputations*, which have been accorded a position in Roman theology next

to the *Summa Theologica* of Thomas Aquinas and the Roman catechism of Peter Canisius. His *Disputationes de Controversiis Fidei adversus Huius Temporis Haereticos* was published between 1586 and 1592 and is a defense of the decrees of the Council of Trent, chiefly against the "Lutheran rebellion."

The process of making Bellarmine a doctor and saint was inaugurated by the Jesuits almost immediately after his death, the first formal step being authorized in 1627. But difficulties were encountered time and again, since some *advocatus diaboli* was sure to raise an objection which called for postponement. Certain statements in his writings had not received the full approval of the Roman *curia*, and it seemed difficult to find miracles which could rightly be ascribed to him. But the last obstacle was finally removed, so that on June 29, 1930, Bellarmine was declared to be a saint and on September 17, 1931, a *doctor ecclesiae*. The decree of canonization issued by Pius XI places Bellarmine among "the most illustrious by doctrine and sanctity whom God has given to the Church."

Protestants, and particularly Lutherans, may well say: *Habeat sibi*; for as Prof. David Schaff shows (*Church History*, II, 41 ff.), a study of Bellarmine's works shows errors in sufficient numbers to warrant the sharp attacks made upon him by Chemnitz, Gerhard, and other Lutheran dogmaticians. He taught, for example, that the Vulgate is to be preferred to the original texts, as in its incorrect rendering of Gen. 3, 15; that the dogma of Mary's perpetual virginity must be believed, although there is nothing in the Scriptures about it; that the monastic vows are so sacred as to make the breaking of them by a religious a greater sin than fornication; that the exemption of ecclesiastics and church property from the civil tribunal is based on divine as well as human law, etc. The situation is well summed up by Dr. Schaff in his concluding remarks: "However, neither the one book (*Disputations*) nor the other (*Autobiography*) gives indications that the author belongs to the company of the 'celestial saints' to whom altars of prayer may be reared. As for being a doctor of the Church, a section of the Roman communion refused to pronounce him for three hundred years as deserving of the title. He is not a Doctor of the Church Universal. At best, he is the most honored champion of the Roman Catholic system and theology." P. E. K.

### "Our God and Savior." 2 Pet. 1, 1.

An inquiry has come in with regard to this passage, since the Authorized Version has "through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ" and the American Standard Version "our God and the Savior Jesus Christ." In the former case the misleading translation is undoubtedly an inadvertent happening. One cannot be quite so charitable with regard to the Revised Version, especially since the revisers prided themselves upon their close adherence to the Greek text and yet had the temerity to insert the definite article before the word "Savior," whereas the article is certainly not in the Greek text. There can be no doubt concerning the reading τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ σωτήρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ; for this is now unanimously accepted, not only by the German editors (Tischendorf, Nestle), but also by the British (Westcott and Hort, Souter). The exact translation is "our God and Savior Jesus Christ." The syntax is as simple as one can

find anywhere. There can be no dispute about it—the author describes one and the same person in this expression. If we translate unhesitatingly in chap. 1, 11 “our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,” in chap. 2, 20 “the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,” in chap. 3, 2 “the Lord and Savior,” and in chap. 3, 18 “our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,” why should we not just as frankly and freely translate here, chap. 1, 1, “our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”? The cases are clearly on the same level. Moreover, if we examine the many passages in which the same expression is used of the Father (“the God and Father”), as in Rom. 15, 6; 1 Cor. 15, 24; 2 Cor. 1, 3; 11, 31; Gal. 1, 4; Phil. 4, 20, etc., why not accept the statement of Scripture also in this case? There can be no doubt that the deity of Christ is here emphatically asserted, and we ought to accept this fact against all deniers of the deity of the Second Person of the Godhead, Jesus Christ. We agree with Bishop Middleton: “This passage is plainly and unequivocally to be understood as an assumption that Jesus Christ is our *God* and Savior.” (Cp. Robertson, *The Minister and His Greek New Testament*, chap. V, “The Greek Article and the Deity of Christ.”) P. E. K.

### “Sacramental — Sacrificial.”

Requests are still being received with regard to the meaning of the terms “sacramental” and “sacrificial” when applied to liturgical acts in public worship. Although the explanation has been offered several times in our own publications as well as in the *Memoirs* of the Lutheran Liturgical Association, it may be well to repeat the information in a statement taken from the *Apology of the Augsburg Confession*. We read in Article XXIV (XII), *Of the Mass*: “Theologians are rightly accustomed to distinguish between a Sacrament and a sacrifice. Therefore let the genus comprehending both of these be either a ceremony or a sacred work. A Sacrament is a ceremony or work in which God presents to us that which the promise annexed to the ceremony offers; as, Baptism is a work, not which we offer to God, but in which God baptizes us, *i. e.*, a minister in the place of God; and God here offers and presents the remission of sins, etc., according to His promise, Mark 16, 16: ‘He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.’ A sacrifice, on the contrary, is a ceremony or work which we render God in order to afford Him honor.” (*Conc. Trigl.*, 388 f.) Our Confession is speaking, of course, of the liturgical side of public worship. It follows, then, that sacramental acts of public worship are all those parts in which God deals with us in the Word and in the Sacraments, as in the sermon, in the reading of the lessons, in the actual administration of the Sacraments. In all such parts of public worship, according to an ancient liturgical rule, the pastor faces the congregation, as the representative of the Lord. The sacrificial parts of public worship are those in which the worshipers bring the sacrifices of their lips and hands to the Lord in confession, hymn, and prayer. Naturally these acts are all performed by the congregation while facing the altar; and if the pastor acts as spokesman for the congregation in any spoken or chanted prayer, including the confession of the Creed and the saying of the Lord’s Prayer, he will, with the congregation, face the altar. In this way the distinction between sacrificial and sacramental acts is observed. It takes but a little thought and preparation on the part of the liturgist to make public worship very effective. P. E. K.