

# Concordia Theological Monthly

---

Volume 3

Article 53

---

5-1-1932

## Miscellanea

P. E. Kretzmann

*Concordia Seminary, St. Louis*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm>



Part of the [Practical Theology Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Kretzmann, P. E. (1932) "Miscellanea," *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Vol. 3 , Article 53.

Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol3/iss1/53>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Print Publications at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Concordia Theological Monthly by an authorized editor of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact [seitzw@csl.edu](mailto:seitzw@csl.edu).

---

## Miscellanea.

---

### Hrotswitha of Gandersheim.

Among the anniversaries of the present year there is one which deserves at least a passing mention in these columns, namely, that of the nun Hrotswitha of Gandersheim, who was born, according to good authorities, in the year 932. She was a nun of unusual accomplishments, equally well versed in German and in Latin, since she received her training under the tutelage of Rikkardis, who was herself of more than usual ability. Her writings, which were first collected by the Humanist Conrad Celtes, show a remarkable versatility. She herself divided her books into three groups, or volumes. In the first group there are poetical narratives of a religious nature, a *Historia de Nativitate Mariae et de Infantia Salvatoris* on the basis of the apocryphal gospels of the infancy, then a *Carmen de Ascensione Domini*, also a number of legends. In the second group we find six Christian dramas, which were intended to offset six corresponding plays of Terence. It is upon these plays that her fame chiefly rests, largely because she made Terence her model and really succeeded, in a remarkable way, in producing plays which in both form and content equal the style of the Latin poet then so much admired. She herself wrote: *Unde ego, Glamor validus Ganderheimensis, non recusavi illum imitari dictando, quem alii colunt legendo.* "Only, she adds, instead of making heroines of fallen women, she will turn her plots to praise of purity. Her plays, she admits, are realistic. Certain situations of her own creation bring a blush to her cheek. She grants that the passion of illicit lovers or their sweet-sounding sinfulness is not wholly suited for chaste ears. But then, she argues, if through false modesty she omits such things, her purpose is defeated (*si haec erubescendo negligerem, nec proposito satisfacerem*). You can neither picture innocence, she pleads, in its true colors nor reveal the lofty triumphs of divine grace without some shadows in the background." (G. G. Walsh.) She may be said to have been very successful in her work. Her situations are often very frank, but never suggestive to the point of being prurient. Her object was really to render some service to Christian morals, and one must concede that she succeeded, especially in view of other material in the two centuries after her death. The third group of Hrotswitha's writings are two epical *carmina* concerning contemporary history, which, however, have not lost the imprint of her genius. She died approximately 1000 A. D. P. E. K.

### Loan Words and Semantic Borrowings in Ireland.

The science of semantics, which is just at present receiving an unusual share of attention in the field of linguistics, offers a most interesting opportunity also to the theologian, especially in the study of finer shades of meanings in the various versions of the Bible. The following examples are taken from Joyce, *A Social History of Ancient Ireland*. It is more than likely that many of these loan words were introduced as early as the days of St. Patrick; for they were in general use by the end of the fifth century. A priest is *sacart* or *sagart* (from *sacerdos*); a bishop

is *episcop* or *escop* (from *episcopus*); a church is either a *cill* or *cell* or *ceall* (from *cella*), or an *ecclas* or *eaglas* (from *eccllesia*); a fine church is a *tempull* (from *templum*); Sunday is called *domnach* (from [*Dies*] *dominica*); another word for church is *baileo* (from *basilica*); a clergyman or scholar is a *olerech* (from *olericus*); an abbot is an *ab* or *abb* (from *abbas*); a monk is a *monach* (from *monachus*); the Mass is known as *affrend*, *oiffrend*, or *aiffrionn* (from *offerenda*); Christmas is *Notlae* or *Notlaie* (from *Natalicia*); Easter is *Caise*, by a common change in consonants (from *Pascha*); a scholar, or learner, who was often a younger monk working on the farm of the monastery, was *scolog* (from *schola*), and the word was later used to designate a small farmer. P. E. K.

### Illustrationen in der Predigt.

Unter dem Titel „Zur Illustration der geistlichen Rede“ bringen die „Pastoralblätter“ (Herausgeber: D. Erich Stange) vom November 1931 einen beachtenswerten Artikel, aus dem wir hier die Hauptpunkte mitteilen. Der Verfasser ist Pfarrer und Lic. theol. Schwender in Polnisch-Oberschlesien. — Daß wir ein Recht haben, Illustrationen zu gebrauchen, sehen wir aus Jesu Predigtweise. Allerdings soll das Wort allein es tun; aber „der Trank und die Speise der Seele bedarf der Gefäße, in denen es gereicht wird“. Drei Arten illustrativer Redeweise gibt es: den einfachen Vergleich, die Parabel (Allegorie oder Fabel, den Vergleich in erzählender Form) und die Beispielerzählung (Erzählung wirklich geschehener Vorgänge). Aus der Geschichte sehen wir, daß die erfolgreichsten Prediger aller Zeiten dieses Mittel in großem Maße gebraucht haben. Unter andern war Luther ein „Meister lebendigster Anschaulichkeit“. Spurgeon ist in dieser Hinsicht „geradezu unerschöpflich“. „Die Illustrationsrede dient dem Zwecke, die Predigt zu beleben, die verkündigte Wahrheit durch laufende Lichtbilder darzustellen.“ Doch müssen alle Bilder „den Stempel der Wahrheit, bezw. der Wirklichkeit, tragen“. „Von eigenen Erfahrungen rede man mit Zurückhaltung.“ Bei den Gleichnissen muß ja das tertium comparationis recht herausgestrichen werden — und ja nicht zu viele Bilder! Spurgeon sagt: „Predigten sollen nicht Blumensträuße, sondern Weizengarben sein.“ Nicht biete man ein „Bilderbuch, sondern ein Buch mit Bildern“. Nicht dürfen dieselben Illustrationen immer wieder angewandt werden. Das lächerlich wirkende Vermengen von Vergleichen ist zu meiden, wie z. B. ein Hinweis auf den „Zahn der Zeit, der schon manche Träne trocknete und auch über diese Wunde Gras wachsen lassen wird“. Die beste Schule für Gleichnissprache ist die Bibel selbst. Sodann habe man ein offenes Auge für die uns umgebende Natur und Menschentwelt. In der Literatur, besonders in Biographien, wird man viel Brauchbares finden. Schließlich gibt es auch Sammlungen, zu denen der vielbeschäftigte Prediger greifen kann, z. B. Luthertexte, sodann Bildersammlungen aus Spurgeon, Paulsen, Caspari usw. H.

### The Johannine Authorship of John 8, 1—11.

The question is again raised by the following note in Dr. R. H. C. Lenaki's *Interpretation of St. John's Gospel*, p. 573: —

“7, 53—8, 11 is not an integral part of John's gospel, but part of the early oral tradition (antedating the year 70); very early put into written form and one of its two versions eventually inserted into John's gospel.

These findings of the text critics must be accepted as embracing the facts. Between 7, 52 and 8, 12 nothing intervenes. The spurious section is of a type foreign to John's gospel and is easily recognized as an interpolation in the place which it occupies. The language marks differ decidedly from those of John's own writing. Yet this spurious section reports quite correctly an actual occurrence in the life of Jesus. Every feature of it bears the stamp of probability, although we are unable to say at what point it should be inserted in the story of Jesus. Since John did not write this section, we omit its exposition."

To depress in such a cavalier manner the importance of these verses, whether genuine or not, must arrest attention, especially since the commentary is otherwise detailed enough, running to more than 1,400 pages. After all, the first eleven verses in John are in our German and English Bibles and cannot be eliminated offhand from our exegetical and homiletical literature. If the case were as clear as Dr. Lenski asserts, there would be some justification for disposing of this famous passage in half a page; but we are not sure that the case is as simple as Dr. Lenski assumes. At any rate, it is an exegetical problem worthy of the continued attention of interpreters.

The evidence of the codices, of course, is against the genuineness of the passage. The chief uncials do not contain these verses. However, the passage is found in Codex Bezae (D), also in KGHMU, and in most of the manuscripts of the Syriac version, the Coptic and the Vulgate. Jerome refers to the "many Greek and Latin manuscripts" which contain this pericope (*Adv. Pelag.*, II). Some of the older Church Fathers refer to it, others do not, the patristic evidence being about equally balanced.

A number of reasons may be given for the exclusion of John 8, 1—11 from the text of the gospel. It seems to break the connection between chap. 7 and 8, 12. However, this very argument may be turned against those who deny its authenticity: How should a copyist conceive of the notion of inserting the story just at this place? That some churchmen feared the abuse of this story and would have preferred to delete it from the text for this reason admits of no doubt. When the Church became powerful and morals decayed, the mildness of the treatment which the woman taken in adultery here received from our Lord would be urged in favor of a lax discipline. That such was actually the misuse of this passage may be stated upon unquestioned testimony of the early Church.

Ambrose has this to say about the passage: "Probably if some one with mischievous ears would receive this passage, they would incur an incentive for error." (*Apol. Davidis Posterior*, chap. I.) Augustine: "This passage has caused some offense to the unbelieving, to such extent that some of little faith, possibly enemies of the true faith, apparently fearing that license for sin is here given to their wives, removed the passage from their manuscripts. As if He had granted permission to sin who said, 'Sin no more!'" (*De Adulterinis Coniugiis*, II, 7.) Lange's *Commentary* aptly remarks: "The scruple was begotten, not of the interested unbelief of some individual husbands, but of the ascetic, weak faith of a legalistic age."

As for the internal difficulties, it is generally urged that a number of Greek terms not otherwise found in John occur in this passage. J. H. A. Ebrard, in his *Kritik der evangelischen Geschichte*, 1850, has already dis-

posed of this argument: "In many a chapter of St. John it would be a simple matter to find three words which occur only once in the gospel." A difficulty is seen in the request of the Jews that Jesus pass judgment in the case. It is assumed that Jesus was being led into a dilemma: Should He pronounce sentence of death according to the Mosaic Law, He would be accused of assuming a right which the Romans claimed for themselves. Should He refuse to declare the woman guilty of death, He would be setting aside the Law of Moses. But if this had been the motive of the Jews, Jesus might simply have declined to act as judge, as He did on another occasion. But was this really the situation? Shall we overlook the fact that at this time the Jewish authorities had become very lax in their discipline in cases of adultery? The question proposed to our Lord very likely had simply the purpose of obtaining from Him some expression whether judicial procedure should be inaugurated in the case of this woman. If He had answered yes, He would have lost popular favor. Refusal to act would of course imply opposition to the Mosaic Law.

It is true that the scribes are not elsewhere mentioned in John. However, in view of the fact that a question of the Law was raised, their appearance on the scene is quite in keeping. It has also been objected that there is no mention of the adulterer. But this signifies nothing at all. If anything, it illustrates the weak temporizing policy which had begun to prevail among the Pharisees. It is true that the legal punishment of adultery was by strangulation. Yet a comparison of the texts Ex. 31, 14; 35, 2 with Num. 15, 32—35 makes clear how the formula "put to death" generally came to mean stoned.

Against the undeniably strange features of the narrative we have a number that speak as strongly for its genuineness. Which inventor of embellishments to the gospel record would have dared to fabricate so peculiar a feature as the writing of Jesus on the ground? Entirely unique also is His challenge: "He that is without sin among you," etc., and the comforting closing words to the woman.

TH. GRAEBNER.

### The Last Will of George Washington.

Several readers have called our attention to the fact that the quotation from the last will and testament of George Washington in the last number of the CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY, April, 1932, p. 257, is not supported by documentary evidence. The information was taken from secondary sources, some of which may have had reference to an earlier will of Washington (Ford, *The Writings of George Washington*, II, 485), to which Washington refers in a letter to his wife, or to the last will of his mother, which is often quoted. But so far as the actual last will of the first President of the United States is concerned, there is no such passage either in the text or in the notes. We have compared Vol. XIV, pp. 271—298, in *The Writings of George Washington*, by Worthington Chauncey Ford, who offers an authenticated copy, also *Senate Documents*, Vol. 29, 62d Congress of 1911, where the will is printed exactly as found in the original. Fortunately the proof for the Christian character of Washington does not rest upon his last will and testament, since almost any fairly complete biography of our first President will afford enough proof for this fact.

P. E. K.