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## A Symposium on Religious Education.

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The religious education of children has, in the last few years, been given unusual attention by non-Lutheran Protestants. Books, pamphlets, and articles in church-papers have been written; schemes have been suggested and tried. We shall, first, quote some of the printed literature which is before us, and then, secondly, draw conclusions and offer some comment.

A folder, *Some Questions Frequently Asked upon Cooperation with the Public Schools for Week-day Religious Education*, gotten out by the Department of Religious Education of the Protestant Episcopal Church, says the following by way of introduction:—

It is generally conceded that the Sunday-school of the past has been a failure. Few will deny that it is totally unequal to the task of meeting the needs of the rising generation for religious training and instruction. But all must recognize with a shock that the statistics show the appalling number of public school children who have no relationship to any religious institution and are receiving no religious instruction.

There is a growing belief, expressed by earnest workers of all churches, who are vitally interested in child welfare, that some additional effort must be made to give the children of to-day, the citizens of to-morrow, an adequate life equipment. Religious education and training must be an integral and vital part of this equipment.

While welcoming all experiments and efforts of whatsoever kind that look forward to this end, we believe that if the ideals of Christian character are to be in any measure realized, more time must be secured for the child to live them, and the best time is school time.

From the same folder we quote the following questions and answers:—

What is meant by cooperation with the public schools for religious instruction? We mean that the public school authorities shall assign to the pupils, upon the definite request of the child's parents or guardian, a portion of his school time to be given up to religious instruction at such

# A Bit of Recent Swedish Church History.

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## 14. ATTEMPT TO STRENGTHEN STATE CHURCH INFLUENCE ON E. F. S.

The treatise on *Christianity and the Bible of the Primitive Christian Congregation* appeared shortly before the annual meeting of *Stiftelsen* in 1908 and could not have been read by many delegates to the conference. It is possible that the majority of them had not even an inkling of the matter. Notwithstanding this, men

were looking forward to this meeting with some mental tension. For there was another issue, launched likewise by Prof. A. Kolmodin, that produced unrest. After conferences with the Archbishop and with another member of the Mission Board of the Swedish state church, the professor had decided to suggest to the directors of *Stiftelsen* that the periodical *Sjoemannsvaennen* (*Seaman's Friend*) be made the joint organ of *Stiftelsen* and the Seamen's Mission of the Swedish state church. The motion roused opposition among the directors, but the professor succeeded in overcoming the opposition to the extent that after long deliberation the directors agreed to support the motion in its main point, and it was merely a matter of words that remained unsettled. The professor wanted to have it announced in the periodical that the latter was the organ of the mission of the *state church*, while his opponents desired to have it clearly stated that it represented an *Evangelical Lutheran* mission.

The matter had been known beforehand, and *Nya Vaektaren*, which treated the issue in a special article, took the position that the *entire* matter should be declined, because it was unquestionably the first step towards merging *Stiftelsen* completely in the state church. As later events showed, that was the way in which the conference disposed of the matter.

#### 15. TEACHER LOEFDAHL'S GRIEVANCE.

Since the controversy regarding reconciliation by Christ was closed, the conferences of *Stiftelsen* had been marked by unanimity and concord. At the jubilee conference in 1906 there had been strife regarding the question of pensioning the laborers of E. F. S. Also at the conference in 1907 there had been some dissatisfaction with the suggestion of the directors that negotiations be begun with the *Svenska Missionsfoerbundet* (Swedish Mission Society) regarding a joint hymn-book. But all this was nothing compared to what was to happen now. Already when the Auditing Committee made its report, Teacher K. Loefdahl asked for the floor. He was one of *Stiftelsen's* oldest and most reliable friends, who for nearly forty years had stood as a pillar among the E. F. S. people. He called the attention of the conference to the fact that during the past year the directors had taken the liberty of permitting a novel to be published by the publication house of the E. F. S. Assuredly the novel was written so as to have a Christian appearance, still, it was a novel. Besides, the subject which it treated was hardly suited to young people. The speaker regretted very much that he had been

placed under the necessity of dragging this matter into the conference, but he had no other choice after it had become manifest that the directors were turning a deaf ear to all admonitions addressed to them regarding the matter.

#### 16. PROFESSOR KOLMODIN DRAWN INTO THE DISCUSSION.

In the discussion which now followed Prof. J. O. Rosenberg was given the floor first. He asserted that it was well-nigh impossible that any improper literature could be issued by *Stiftelsen's* publishing house, so carefully did the committee of revisers revise all books submitted for publication. The speaker was himself the chairman of the committee, and it was not possible that both he and the other members should allow anything to slip through that was as improper as Teacher Loefeldahl would regard the book in question. It was maintained over against Professor Rosenberg's assertion that, although there was no intention to charge the committee with incompetency, it would not do to regard the committee as infallible, for, shortly before conference convened, there had been published "in commission" by the publishing house of E. F. S. a treatise which expressed views regarding the Bible that never had been and with God's help never would be the views of *Stiftelsen*. However, since this matter was an affair of the administration for the current year, it would not come up for settlement until at a later meeting.

Here, now, the first word was spoken on the burning question. It was immediately answered by Professor Kolmodin, who remarked that the last speaker had evidently referred to the book *Christianity and the Bible of the Primitive Christian Congregation*. He requested that this matter be disposed of immediately. Rightly the opposition declared that this was impossible because most of the delegates had now heard of the treatise for the first time. In the absence of any motion to do something the result of the discussion was that the directors were held responsible for their action.

#### 17. PASTOR WADSTROEM'S WARNING.

After this the question was taken up whether or not an institute should be erected for the training of "Bible women." A brisk skirmish ensued between the loyal friends of *Stiftelsen* and those who inclined exclusively towards the state church. During this debate Pastor B. Wadstroem remarked that ministers were not as they used to be. There was now hardly any distinction made between converted and unconverted ministers. A general ministers' union had been formed, and as long as some one was

a brother in office, it was occasionally regarded as being of less importance whether he was a brother in conscience. Also in *Stiftelsen* a change had taken place. The speaker said that he was an old man, and his conscience bade him speak the truth. Accordingly, he wished to tell conference that during the last year there had been noticeable among the directors of *Stiftelsen* an extreme timidity that was deplorable. Quite often remarks like these could be overheard: "What will state church people say to that?" "What will the minister think of it?" Moreover, when the speaker was a young man, the directors of *Stiftelsen* had been careful not to give any offense or rouse ill will; if they could only answer to God for their actions, they were content to let unbelieving ministers think what they pleased. "In fifty years," said the speaker, "has *Stiftelsen* had no enemy in our country besides the state church, all its really alive and believing ministers excepted. But the uncouth world has been friendlier to us and accorded us better recognition than the unconverted ministers." The speaker concluded his remarks with an admonition to *Stiftelsen* not to turn aside from its course either to the right or to the left.

However, the chief contest at this conference was concerning the question, whether *Sjoemannsvaennen* should become the joint organ of *Stiftelsen* and the Seamen's Mission of the Swedish state church. After a discussion lasting several hours the matter was postponed till the next annual meeting, when it was pushed into the background and entirely dismissed:

The meeting of 1908 had turned out fortunately for the friends of *Stiftelsen*, who held fast the old position of E. F. S. and to a great extent could be said to have found in *Nya Vaektaren* their organ. The men on the other side had been so secure that they had not deemed it necessary to mobilize their forces. But the victory which had been won in 1908 was already the next year to be turned into a defeat.

#### 18. THE CLASH BETWEEN KOLMODIN AND SVENSSON.

The next weeks after the conference in 1908 passed quietly, until Professor Kolmodin broke the silence by inserting in the mission periodical of *Stiftelsen* an article written by himself, in which the treatise on *Christianity and the Bible of the Primitive Christian Congregation* was praised and defended. In this article several cuts were dealt to the editor of *Nya Vaektaren*, Axel B. Svensson, for the remarks he had made about the professor's book. This caused the editor to demand that the professor publish a cor-

rection in the mission periodical. The professor first refused this, then promised it. He carried out his promise by inserting what Svensson had written in such a garbled form that it was meaningless. In the correspondence which now occurred between Kolmodin and Svensson the former related that for a number of years he had held the position which had been published in the controverted book, and had communicated his views to the students at Johannelund, and these had expressed to him "again and again" their gratitude for these views. He stated furthermore: "Quite recently I heard of one of our older representatives, who was not my student, that, after he had returned from conference, he took my book, withdrew, and read it through, carefully examining every quotation, with the result that he thanked God for the book."<sup>7</sup>) Besides, the professor in this correspondence made the greatest efforts to represent Svensson as double-faced, because at the election of directors he had not voted for the professor. Moreover, Svensson was accused of having started the trouble for Kolmodin in a spirit of revenge, and besides, the professor declared Svensson an almost entirely incompetent person.<sup>8</sup>) The accusations of vengefulness and duplicity were repelled with moderation and firmness by Editor Svensson, who stated that he had never had occasion to harbor enmity against the professor; for the latter had always treated him in a friendly manner and placed confidence in him.

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7) The party referred to by Kolmodin is O. A. Allard. Many circumstances render this assumption not only probable, but almost certain. While Supreme Court Justice Widstroem was living, Allard in his letter would occasionally "thank God" for the *Torch*, and in his lectures as traveling representative of E. F. S. would oppose Bible criticism in every form. At the conference in 1909 Mr. Allard stated that for more than twenty years he had held the same views regarding the Bible as Professor Kolmodin, and for this reason he voted in favor of giving the professor a vote of confidence in his doctrinal position. At the conference in 1911 Allard said very chestily that he desired to hear no more about his having given his approval to Kolmodin's position, for that was "a lie."

8) As a curiosity it may be interesting in this connection to note the opinion which Professor Kolmodin before the controversy expressed regarding Editor Svensson. It is stated in the following testimonial: "By these presents I testify that the public school teacher Axel Svensson is well known to me for some time, that he has made an impression upon me as a decided, proved Christian personality, and that he possesses a goodly stock of information acquired through private study, and a more than ordinary talent for expounding the Word unto edification with fidelity to the text and the Confessions.

"Stockholm, May 7, 1907.

AD. KOLMODIN, *Professor.*"

## 19. ANDERSSON'S THUNDER-PEAL.

After this controversy there was quiet for a while. But between the *Torch* and Kolmodin there was an exchange of polemics, in which the latter was so completely routed that his defeat could hardly have been worse. However, this part of the controversy was lost upon the great majority of *Stiftelsen's* friends, because, sad to say, they did not side with the *Torch*. Then there was quiet once more, but it was the quiet before the storm breaks. Throughout the country there was unrest among the mission-friends. Everybody was waiting for something to happen. Something did happen.

In the month of November the traveling representative of the society, Alfred Andersson, published a little treatise inscribed *Settlement of Accounts with Professor Kolmodin and His Book "Christianity and the Bible of the Primitive Christian Congregation."* (*Vidraekning med prof. Kolmodin och hans bok, etc.*) Like a flash of lightning the treatise released the electric tension and broke up the uncertainty that had prevailed till then. The first impression of *Vidraekning* on many was that they were completely dumbfounded. But it roused attention to the question at issue. It spoke out clearly and said that there was danger approaching. There was no cotton wound around the arrow-heads in this treatise, and although some were of the opinion that the author's choice of words and expressions could have been better, it was nevertheless admitted that *Vidraekning* was just such a thunder-peal as the situation called for. If there was anything exaggerated in the treatise, the author himself had to suffer the consequences, and no one has heard him raising a complaint or retracting anything. If any misunderstanding existed, it was the fault of Professor Kolmodin and the Board of Revisers, because through their ambiguous circumlocutions they had given occasion for misunderstandings.

## 20. ANDERSSON BEFORE "STIFTELSEN."

Any one that read *Vidraekning* could easily understand that the treatise must rouse an unheard-of excitement in *Stiftelsen*. Now that all is over, one does not know what to regard as most surprising, traveling representative Andersson's calmness in meeting the consequences of his treatise or the inconsistency with which *Stiftelsen's* directors, having lost their heads, now went into the fray. When Professor Kolmodin attacked and criticized Bible-statements of which the Apostle Peter says that they were spoken

by the Holy Ghost, the directors of *Stiftelsen* were prompt in passing a resolution to aid the professor in getting these strictures on the Word of God printed and spread among the mission-friends. But when traveling representative Andersson criticized the human being Kolmodin, the directors of *Stiftelsen* hurriedly issued a warning against Andersson's treatise, forbade its dissemination, and summoned its author for a hearing before *Stiftelsen*. At this hearing, which took place shortly before July, 1908, Andersson in his defense asked to be told whether the directors of *Stiftelsen* approved Kolmodin's book *Christianity and the Bible of the Primitive Christian Congregation*. This question was answered with a distinct *yes* by Professor Rosenberg with the silent consent of the other members of the directorate. However, nothing was accomplished at the hearing. The directors sought in every possible way to induce Andersson in some manner to join them in expressing regret either concerning *Vidrackning* as a whole or concerning some part of it. But Andersson would not consent to this. In refusing to make the admission which the directors desired, Andersson without question acted prudently, for an admission of this doubt would, of course, have been interpreted as a retraction. Those who are acquainted with Alfred Andersson are well aware that he would not claim infallibility in anything for himself. He was constrained by his conscience to speak when everybody else kept silent.

## 21. FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS.

It soon became apparent that the directors must come out plainly with an admission such as they had desired Andersson to make. For before the close of the year the publishing house of *Stiftelsen* issued a little brochure which was sent to all representatives and congregations. In this brochure the directors sought to shift the blame for the trouble that had arisen from themselves and Professor Kolmodin to Alfred Andersson, who was criticized in sharp terms, while Kolmodin was praised. At the same time, however, the directors tried to open up a way of retreat for themselves by saying that they could not endorse *all* statements of Kolmodin. Besides, the uncertain manner in which the directors expressed themselves on the confessional question involved in the issue was apt to raise doubts against them. For about this time the directors published a statement regarding the confessional question. It was so cunningly worded that the members of the directorate who were loyal to the Confessions believed that they had put forth a statement so correct that only men really believing in the Bible could



subscribe it. But there was a back door in it which the secretary had kept open for Bible critics, so that even these subscribed the statement. Nor did it take long before the leaders of the two factions again had each other by the hair.

## 22. ANOTHER ATTEMPT TO EXTEND STATE CHURCH INFLUENCE.

About this time a convention of the state church, upon motion of Bishop Loevgren in Vaesteraas, took steps to set up a so-called Deaconess Directorate. In the public press the leaders in this movement gave an explanation of the same of such a nature that a good many of the voluntary forces in the state church saw their uncircumscribed existence threatened. The result was that some of the leading men in the *Society for the Promotion of Pastoral Care by the Church* sought an approach to that part of *Stiftelsen* which was represented by *Nya Vaektaren*. Several conferences actually took place, in which wholesale merchant Joh. Eriksson, Pastor Efr. Rang, and Editor Axel B. Svensson participated as members of *Stiftelsen*. But when it became known that Pastor Rang at the same time was holding individual consultations partly with the editor of the *Svensk Kyrkalidning* (*Swedish Church Journal*), partly with the secretary of the *Svenska Missionsfoerbundet* (*Swedish Mission Society*), Eriksson and Svensson withdrew from these conferences. The result was, on the one hand, that the negotiations with the men of the *Society for Pastoral Care* came to a halt, and, on the other hand, that Pastor Rang lost his place in the editorial committee of *Nya Vaektaren*.

## 23. "HOLD THAT FAST WHICH THOU HAST."

On New Year's Eve 1908 there issued from the press a new publication in the Kolmodin controversy. It bore this title: *Hold That Fast which Thou Hast. . . . A Contribution to the Discussion of Prof. A. Kolmodin's Treatise: "Christianity and the Bible of the Primitive Christian Congregation,"* by Axel B. Svensson. The author of this publication applied to the directors of *Stiftelsen*, asking them to approve the selling of his treatise by the book concern of E. F. S. At first it seemed as if this treatise would not cause any change in the policy hitherto followed by the directors. Editor Svensson was summoned before General Rapp, who thanked him for the part which he was taking in the debate, expressed his full agreement with the believing position which he had taken in his treatise *Hold That Fast which Thou Hast*, and promised that the treatise should be sold by *Stiftelsen's* book concern. The direc-

tors passed a resolution to the same effect. For several weeks it looked as if the directors meant to take a definite stand against Bible criticism.

However, it became plain very soon that several parties among the members of the directorate passed another resolution to remain neutral, with a friendly leaning towards Kolmodin's side, even if they did not fully identify themselves with the professor. For on March 16, 1909, the publishing house of *Stiftelsen* sent to all its traveling representatives and preachers a circular letter in which the sale both of Kolmodin's controverted book and the brochures of Andersson and Svensson were forbidden. However, the directors continued the spreading both of Kolmodin's and Svensson's writings through *Stiftelsen's* book concern in Stockholm. Besides, the preachers were forbidden to express themselves on the issue either privately or publicly. Ephoral Provost J. G. Hellenius, who most strongly advocated these measures, had a few days before written to Editor Svensson, amongst other things, the following: "For some time I have been wanting to say a few words to Mr. Svensson, after I had read your treatise against Kolmodin. The book is a calm and matter-of-fact presentation of the issue; it contains matter for which we must be grateful, and quite certainly expresses what the Christian masses think." Nevertheless the book must now be prohibited. Here was the evidence that the directors were afraid to take a definite stand because they feared that the majority of the conference would be against them.

In order to ascertain the views of people throughout the country there was sent out, with the knowledge and consent of Assistant Secretary C. A. Hedlund, from Kristianstadt a petition requesting signatures in behalf of Kolmodin. When *Nya Vaektaren* took this matter up, the directors hastily declined all responsibility for the affair, but at the publishing house the names on the list were carefully added up, and when the conference met, this list was used by the Secretary, Pastor J. Montelius, as an argument for Kolmodin.

#### 24. THE JUDGMENT OF OUTSIDERS.

During the following months the directors were being helplessly tossed to and fro like a ball between the two factions whose representatives in the directorate sought support and counsel from its congenial friends without the directorate. Finally the majority of the directors became firmly inclined towards Kolmodin. But all their utterances on the matter at issue had been so vacillating that they could rightly be characterized by the following words of *Svensk*

*Kyrkatidning*: "The directors of *Fosterlands-Stiftelsen* in their utterances hitherto have been so cautious that actually one hardly knows what position they occupy."

It became apparent that even outside of the circle of *Stiftelsen's* friends the clashing of spirits in the society was attracting a great deal of attention. The public press took up the issue, and it is significant that its writers, men hostile to Christianity, decidedly sided with Kolmodin.

It was likewise significant that the issue was referred to at the pastoral conference at Goeteborg, when Pastor Valduus Bengtsson, speaking on the subject "Instruction in Christianity in Our Public Schools," dragged the issue into his address. In his opening remarks he dwelt chiefly on the essentially unlike views regarding the inspiration of Scripture which in our time are being defended. He introduced four types: 1. George Brandell in his book *Instruction in Christianity and the People's School*, in which the position is taken that the present instruction in Christianity ought to be absolutely abolished and supplanted by a naturalistic element or by a history of religion; 2. New Protestantism, or negative idealism; 3. Professor Kolmodin, who holds that in the Bible there is found God's living Word for our salvation, but also other matters, relating to geography, history, natural science, regarding which the theory of verbal inspiration is untenable; 4. traveling representative Alfred Andersson, preacher Axel B. Svensson, the periodical *Torch*, and others, which hold the old view of the Bible, viz., that Holy Scripture is the Word of God. The speaker, who personally was a zealous follower of the views held by Kolmodin, characterized the various positions quite correctly.

Conference<sup>9)</sup> was drawing near; the great clash was to occur, and each side was mobilizing all its forces.

## 25. PREPARATIONS FOR THE CONFERENCE OF 1909.

As might have been expected, the weeks immediately preceding the convention of 1909 developed a feverish activity, which aimed at insuring victory for Kolmodin's views. The majority of the directors was now definitely resolved to support the professor; however, through the carelessness of one of their members their purpose was accidentally revealed. For in one of the daily papers of Stockholm there appeared an interview of "one of the leading men in the directorate," in which the statement was made that the

9) The annual convention of *Stiftelsen*.

directors were going to the impending convention with confidence, because it was hoped that Professor Kolmodin would make a few "seeming concessions in minor details, and that as a result of this the opposition would split asunder." In this hope the directors were disappointed, chiefly perhaps because their purpose had become known; at the convention the opposition showed itself able to hold together.

With great foresight the directors had drawn up their plan of battle. For instance, on the day before the convention a preparatory meeting was held, which was attended by all representatives and delegates of congregations belonging to the society. At this meeting the issues on the convention's program were discussed for several hours. The directors had a list of various subjects for consideration, and for each and every one of them they had appointed three speakers to lead off in the discussion, all of them men who would likely support the directors. Moreover, these speakers were to be given ample time, but when later those dissatisfied with Bible criticism were to ask for the floor, they were to be limited to three minutes for each speaker. Under these circumstances it was wisest for the *Bibeltrogn*a (believers in the Bible) not to enter into any debate: they had to reserve their arguments till the next day, when the decisive battle would be fought. However, a few of them allowed themselves to be drawn out in reply to personal attacks, and thus the strife was in full blast.

(To be continued.)

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