

# THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY.

VOL. II.

DECEMBER, 1922.

No. 12.

## The True Criterion of Orthodoxy.

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Among the numerous questions that have come to the front in connection with the controversy between Fundamentalists and Liberalists, the one pertaining to the true criterion of orthodoxy is no doubt foremost in importance. In the general confusion which has followed in the wake of the discussion, men have repeatedly asked: What determines orthodoxy? Is orthodoxy a creedal shibboleth or merely a spiritual principle? That so simple a query has been raised in sober earnest, indeed, that it has been made a *status controversiae* in a controversy that engages the minds of learned theologians, is certainly a *testimonium paupertatis* to the present-day Christian Church. It shows the extent of the decay which rationalism has caused in the Church, and proves that the canker of infidelity, having already blighted the whole body of Christian doctrine, is about to destroy the very core of the Christian faith. No truly Christian theologian would seriously put that question and make it the subject of dubious inquiry. To every believing theologian the issue is clear from the start. He knows what orthodoxy means and entertains no doubts in regard to its criterion. To him there is only one test of orthodoxy — the Word of God. Only that is orthodox which is Biblical. *Quod non est Biblicum non est theologicum*. It is only since Modernism has discarded the fundamentals of Christian belief and annulled every article of the faith which was formerly regarded as an impregnable fortress that men must again ask what orthodoxy is and by what standard it should be gauged.

Of course, the reply of Modernists is negative. According to the liberalistic views of modern theologians, orthodoxy has nothing to do with dogma, tenet, or creed. Orthodoxy is therefore no creedal shibboleth. It is not determined by any confession or

## A Bit of Recent Swedish Church History.

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### 26. THE RESOLUTION OF CONFIDENCE.

If the representatives who were believers in the Bible had thus drawn the shorter straw at the preparatory meeting in point of prudent tactics, they made good their disadvantage in this respect at the convention which began the day after. According to the list of subjects to be laid before the convention, the Kolmodin issue was not to be taken up until a resolution had been passed for the discharge of the present officers and until the election of directors and revisers had taken place. The professor had placed his membership in the directorate at the disposal of the convention in such a manner that he made his remaining in office dependent upon a vote of confidence which the convention was to pass endorsing his "*grundstaandpunkt*" (fundamental position) on the Bible. If they were unwilling to do this, he intended to resign. The majority of the directors on their part were in favor of such a vote of confidence. "Naturally one does not like to raise the question whether the directors of *Fosterlands-Stiftelsen* were acting in ignorance. However, if they were conscious of what was embraced in a vote of confidence for Professor Kolmodin's standpoint on the issue of the Bible, then, assuredly, the verdict which Protestant church history will render on these directors will always be severe. Kolmodin set up science as judge over the teachings of the Bible, while the foremost and basic principle of the Reformation emphasized the truth that the Bible alone is judge over all doctrines. In reality, then, the directors favored the idea that the convention surrender the first of the basic principles of the Reformation."

As we shall see, the majority at the convention, in blind confidence, followed the human counsel of the directors; but thanks

to the watchfulness of the believers in the Bible and the Confessions, matters took an entirely different course, and a decidedly greater difficulty was encountered than the majority in the directorate had expected. Above all, two things were clear: 1. It was in the majority's plan to use the highly meritorious service which Professor Kolmodin had otherwise rendered the society for sugar-coating his teaching, which for many persons was less delectable. 2. The time allowed to speakers on the question of the vote of confidence was, of course, to be so greatly limited that none of his opponents would have a chance fully to state his reasons against the motion. A way had, therefore, to be found how to overcome these two difficulties. It was easily found and followed.

### 27. AN EXCITING SESSION.

Several times as many delegates as during the last preceding years had gathered for the convention. There were present 114 representatives of provinces, or districts, and 136 delegates from congregations affiliated with *Stiftelsen*. General Friherr A. E. Rappe was chosen chairman. With a few words he bade the convention welcome, whereupon some time was devoted to joint prayer. Then the Report of the Committee of Revisers was read. Now, it was an old custom that there was no long debate preceding the resolution to discharge the old officers, but this time the custom was changed. For now the opposition took a hand in the running of affairs and thereby secured at least for its first speakers the right to speak without a time-limit.

The debate which now began upset the calculations of many, for now the main battle was fought, and the opposition had secured the tactical advantage which belongs to the party taking the offensive. The conflict was long drawn out, and for four hours the waves rose high. Outside the day was a day of high temperature, and it was hot, too, in Bethlehem Church, where the discussion took place; sometimes it seemed as if the convention were losing its head completely. If one overlooks the fact that this was a meeting of Christian confessors, one can readily enough understand on psychological grounds the stamping, hissing, cries, threats, and other things which occurred. Professor Kolmodin's followers had been certain of victory at the preparatory meeting, and now they saw all of a sudden that there was quite a possibility of the old believers winning in the voting.

At the preliminary meeting fierce contrasts had developed on either side, but now it was different. Those who disapproved Kol-

modin's Bible criticism were exceedingly moderate in their remarks. Their desire was that the directors should receive a full and grateful discharge; however, regret should be expressed that Professor Kolmodin's book, *Christianity and the Bible of the Primitive Christian Congregation*, had been disseminated by *Stiftelsen's* publishing house. Naturally it was quite difficult for the professor's followers to find a reason strong enough to justify their declining the above wish, all the more because it could be foreseen that such declination would bring with it a split in *Stiftelsen*. Accordingly, they offered no reason whatever. Those who tried to do so only did harm to the professor's cause, for the only reason they could give was that Professor Kolmodin would feel hurt and be compelled to withdraw from *Stiftelsen*. Of those sharing Kolmodin's view the greatest success of the day was without doubt scored by Pastor Valdu Bengtsson, who would have swept quite a number of delegates with him when in a pathetic manner he appealed to the members of the convention in behalf of Professor Kolmodin, who for nearly a man's age, he said, had sacrificed his time and strength in the service of *Stiftelsen*. "True, this was merely a variation of the sentimental reason aforementioned, but the dish was served in an attractive manner."

If a vote had been taken immediately after Pastor Bengtsson's argument, it is likely that he and those sharing his views would have triumphed by polling quite a large majority; but the older and more considerate elements in Kolmodin's phalanx did not dare to steam-roller their opponents completely. Accordingly, a compromise motion was offered from their side by Rector J. Kerfstedt, which seemed to attract quite a number of supporters. This motion did not make any express mention of Professor Kolmodin's book, but confined itself to expressions of regret about the unrest that had arisen, and the causes that had led to it.

Here was plainly a point at which a union of sentiments could take place, and the convention was awaiting with intense interest what the representatives of the two factions would say. The first reply to the motion came from Professor Kolmodin, who informed the convention through Pastor J. Lundgren that, if Rector Kerfstedt's motion included any regret over the publication of the professor's book, he, Kolmodin, could not accept the motion, but must regard it as an invitation to him to resign. Immediately after this communication Editor Svensson, in order that he and those siding with him might preserve unity and peace as far as possible, endorsed Kerfstedt's motion, and when the mover upon

Professor Kolmodin's request had withdrawn it, offered it as his own motion.

During the debate Professor Kolmodin's sanctified personality, great humility, and extraordinary ability had been offered again and again as a reason why the convention should confidently endorse his standpoint. This talk about the professor's humility and godliness, which was repeated again and again, was not opposed from any quarter. On the contrary, one of the delegates who was a believer in the Bible, the preacher J. Wittander, stated that he and those siding with him were confident that, after beholding the effects of his book and seeing that the mission-friends, who formerly had been one, were by his action split into two parts, Professor Kolmodin would now regret that he had published the book which had caused so many sorrows and tears. An answer to this admonition was made, after the vote had been taken, by Professor Kolmodin himself, who explained why he had not supported Rector Kerfstedt's motion, and stated that, if he had done so, this might have been interpreted as an expression of regret over the publication of his book, and "that," said the professor in a sharp voice, "I do *not* regret; I do *not* take a *single* word back."

The result of the vote was that those siding with the professor scored a victory. 133 votes had been cast for, and 113 against, discharging the directors unconditionally from blame. When the result of the voting was announced, there followed for a while an indescribable tumult. Pastor B. Wadstroem stated that he now withdrew from the directorate of E. F. S. "It is over with *Fosterlands-Stiftelsen*," he said. Professor Kolmodin spoke and was given an ovation by the victorious majority, while the defeated minority stood silent. But when the older men tried to get the floor to speak, the majority began to hiss and stamp and crowded threateningly in front of the chairman's desk. Some one now started singing "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." After the singing was finished, a great number of the minority men left the hall, where the election of directors now took place.

## 28. THE PROTEST OF THE MINORITY.

During the interval which now followed some of the leading men of the minority gathered around a member of the directorate of E. F. S., the wholesale merchant John Eriksson, and there was now drawn up by Pastor D. A. Aernstroem a protest ("reservation") against the resolution of the convention. Since this protest is directed against a resolution which the directors, in spite of

repeated suggestions, would not rescind, but stubbornly maintained, it may here be recorded in full. It reads as follows:—

“The undersigned, delegates at the convention of E. F. S. at Bethlehem Church, herewith submit their written protest against the resolution for exonerating the directors. Both parties had for more than four hours engaged in mutual deliberation, with the desirable end in view of preventing a threatening split by finding a resolution so worded as to unite the great majority of the members. When such unity had been achieved by Rector J. Kerfstedt’s motion, the entire matter was shifted from an objective to a personal view-point by the declaration of Professor Kolmodin that he could not support the resolution. Inasmuch as the resolution which was finally passed by a small majority seems to us to involve the abandonment by E. F. S. of its ancient and good stand-point on the infallible basis of the Bible and its departure upon the shifting sand of adventurous and uncertain Bible criticism, we herewith submit our earnest protest,” etc.

#### 29. THE VOTE OF CONFIDENCE.

In the afternoon of the same day the convention returned to its business. The point to be decided now was to what extent the conference would pass a formal vote of confidence in Professor Kolmodin’s fundamental position on the Bible. After the vote during the forenoon, which, in the last analysis, was concerning the same matter, the outcome was not difficult to foresee. The minority did not engage in any debate whatsoever. Teacher K. Loefeldahl was really the only one who now took up the question for an objective discussion. He showed that Professor Kolmodin’s fundamental standpoint on the Bible was different from that of Luther and Rosenius. Now, inasmuch as Professor Kolmodin, notwithstanding this difference, would express no regret and take nothing back, the speaker stated for his part that the desired vote of confidence should be denied. When a young pastor, one of Professor Kolmodin’s pupils, tried to explain the professor’s fundamental position, he was silenced by his own party. There was an evident fear, which was also expressed, to allow the common people a correct insight into the scope of the mooted question. Wholesale merchant Lambert Jepsson predicted that hereafter many would lose interest in *Stiftelsen*. It had pained him most to find Pastor J. Lindgren holding entirely the same position as Professor Kolmodin. Moreover, many of the missionaries present had warmly expressed themselves as favoring the professor’s views. This

speaker's statement received very great strengthening by Pastor J. Montelius, who informed conference that most of the missionaries had in a letter declared themselves in favor of Professor Kolmodin's remaining at his post. Pastor Montelius, who during the debate in the forenoon had observed a cautious silence, now assumed for a while the leadership of the majority and desired that a vote be taken, in order to ascertain the number of those in favor of the vote of confidence. Since many of the members of the minority had already left the city, it naturally was in the interest of the minority that a vote be prevented which might yield a greatly misleading result. Once more Pastor Montelius wanted to force a vote, but he did not succeed. So much, however, was made clear, that the majority favored the professor's position.

After this Professor Kolmodin spoke. He expressed his joy over the fact that *Stiftelsen* had not written a page in its history similar to that which was written in 1869, when Professor Rudin was forced to resign. He said nothing — and perhaps there was nothing that he could say — about E. F. S.'s having written a very ominous page in its annals. They had done what no society before them had dared to do: by a formal resolution they had aimed to retain a man, and in order to satisfy a man's wish, had surrendered the first of the fundamental principles of the Reformation, the authority of the Bible to pass judgment on all doctrines. This had happened in Bethlehem Church. This fatal resolution *Stiftelsen* had been unwilling to rescind. The directors and conferences of *Stiftelsen* had again and again been admonished to rescind the aforesaid resolution, but no! it was not to be. But instead men had sought to persuade themselves and others that all was good and well. They had succeeded in inducing such confidence in many, but impartial historical research would not permit itself to be misled: it would render its judgment not only on words that were spoken, but principally on the actions that were taken.

### 30. THE MEETING OF THE MINORITY AT KUNGSHOLMEN.

On the day after the conference the minority gathered for a meeting in the mission-chapel at Kungsholmen to deliberate on their further course of action. Those who took part in this meeting will long remember the lovely peace and brotherly concord which characterized the transactions of this meeting. Pastor D. A. Aernstroem was chosen chairman, and Pastor Vitalis Svensson secretary. The latter had been a champion of the delegates believing in the Bible at the conference. The deliberations were concerning meas-

ures that ought now to be taken. Voices were raised that insisted on immediate separation from *Stiftelsen*, but they did not find acceptance. The meeting agreed to adopt a suggestion in writing to the directors of *Stiftelsen*, which had been drawn up by Editor Axel B. Svensson. In this document the following requests were presented: "1. The directors are to see to it that no writings favoring Bible criticism are issued by the publication concern of E. F. S. 2. The instruction imparted at the institute at Johannelund is to be carefully supervised. 3. The directors are to induce Pastor B. Wadstroem to retract his withdrawal and, besides, an additional member is to be called into the directorate, who is to be a person in whom the minority places full confidence." As candidates for this position Pastor Vitalis Svensson, wholesale merchant Lambert Jepsson, and Director G. L. Lagergrehn were named. In the expectation that the directors would meet these wishes, the meeting declared that it would not take any further steps immediately, but resolved for a year to maintain an attitude of expectancy. However, a committee was appointed, which, amongst other things, was instructed to arrange the preliminaries for a meeting to be held in connection with the conference of *Stiftelsen* in 1910.

Just as surely as there had been some in favor of taking too headstrong a course by having the minority separate from *Stiftelsen*, so surely were the measures that were passed insufficient. It should have been the concern of the leading men to *gather* the minority. "At the meeting in the mission-chapel at Kungsholmen there should have been formed a union within *Stiftelsen*. If this had been done, the situation would perhaps have become different. Now the minority was almost like a flock without a shepherd, and there was danger that each one would start out upon his own path, and imagine that to be the best and safest.

### 31. DISSATISFACTION IN THE RURAL DISTRICTS.

Not since the organization of E. F. S. had a conference been like the one described in the preceding chapters. It was natural that this conference, for which delegates had gathered from the entire country, should leave a mark.

In the outlying rural districts unrest had prevailed before the conference. When the delegates returned to their homes and made their reports about the meeting in Stockholm, the state of unrest, of course, was not improved. For more than a lifetime men had been accustomed to look up to *Stiftelsen* as to an authority well-nigh infallible. Now reports were being heard that this same



*Stiftelsen* had completely surrendered its faith in the Bible as being altogether the infallible Word of God. Men could not and would not believe any such thing. Moreover, many a sincere mission-friend held that, if the conference had expressed its confidence in Professor Kolmodin's basic position, that position must be correct, for people reasoned thus: "Old *Stiftelsen* cannot go astray." With this reflection many put their minds at rest and neglected to make a personal investigation of the state of affairs; they shunned the trouble of investigating, and they were afraid of the results of their investigation.

In the outlying rural districts many who were eating *Stiftelsen's* bread were traveling about and telling the people that all was good and well. They dropped hints that the fault of the division in *Stiftelsen* lay with the minority, and warned especially against *Nya Vaektaren*, while *Budbaeraren* (*The Messenger*) was recommended. In this paper the directors of *Stiftelsen* were represented as godly and humble men, while it was insinuated that the minority men were ambitious and carnal persons, who would quarrel for their own interest. In certain parts of the country this sowing bore rich fruit.

But not everywhere were these agents of peace successful in quelling the rising storm. Especially at Skaane and Vaermland people had from the beginning of the controversy followed the arguments of the contesting parties and heard both sides. In many other places people had had their confidence seriously shaken. This became apparent, for instance, when the contributions for the mission-work of E. F. S. no longer were flowing as formerly. The fact that the only surviving charter member of *Stiftelsen*, Pastor B. Wadstroem, had quit *Stiftelsen* with the words: "It is over with *Fosterlands-Stiftelsen*," had without doubt contributed to this state of affairs. Moreover, he now published a book in which he not only laid bare the intrigues and duplicity which had preceded the publication of the Kolmodin book, but also urged the continuation of an energetic fight against the "Kolmodin leaven."

### 32. PROFESSOR ROSENBERG'S EXPLANATION.

There was another matter that rendered it difficult for the directors to make it appear as if nothing remarkable had happened: the followers of Bible criticism felt themselves called upon to blow the trumpets over their victory. But for all who had followed events it was clear that *Nya Vaektaren*, *Facklan*, Alfred Andersson,

and others had defended the authority of the Bible. Now, if the majority at the conference had defeated the defenders of the Bible, the majority was plainly on the side of Bible criticism; consequently, those must be right who claimed that *Stiftelsen* had abandoned its old position.

Among those who at a later time confirmed this fact publicly was Professor Kolmodin himself, who showed in an article in *Stockholms Dagblad* that the conference of *Stiftelsen* had expressed its confidence in, and accorded the right of existence within E. F. S. to, another doctrine concerning the inspiration of the Bible than the one which had previously been cherished by the majority of its members.

To some of the members of the directorate it was now evident that something must be done. Accordingly, Prof. J. O. Rosenberg, the chairman of the Board of Revisers, prepared an explanation which aimed at straightening out the trouble. In this explanation, which is found in B. Wadstroem's book *Some Leaves from the History of E. F. S.*, Professor Rosenberg, in the first place, lays down with many and strong proofs the fact that *Stiftelsen* of old had taught that the entire Bible, from beginning to end, is the infallible Word of God. Next he seeks to show that the conference expressed its confidence only in the person of Professor Kolmodin as a member of the directorate and as its Director of Missions, and not for his fundamental position. However, by this statement Professor Rosenberg made himself guilty of a significant attempt to disregard facts: Professor Kolmodin had never asked for a vote of confidence in himself personally, but for his fundamental position on the Bible. And conference voted the resolution of confidence which Professor Kolmodin had desired.

Professor Rosenberg laid the explanation which he had prepared on the directors' table, expecting, of course, that the directors must make a statement of the same import as his own explanation. But now he had the majority of the directors against himself. The only thing that was accomplished by Professor Rosenberg's explanation was that it furnished the Kolmodin phalanx in the directorate the opportunity for scoring another victory, and that the fact was confirmed still more that *Stiftelsen* endorsed Professor Kolmodin's fundamental position on the Bible.

(To be continued.)

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