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## What Time Is It in Heaven?

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The question might be brushed aside by saying: There is no time in heaven. In our mind the concept of heaven instantaneously combines with the concepts of God and eternity. God is eternal: that means, not only that He is without beginning and without end, "from everlasting to everlasting," Ps. 90, 2, but also that He is timeless. The notion of time embodies, besides the elements of a starting-point and a goal, such elements as progress, sequence, succession, and change. Yesterday is time, to-day is time, to-morrow is time; but while the concept of time is essentially the same in each instance, it is exhibited in varying phases. While an hour is time the same as every other hour, still there are not two hours exactly alike. Variableness is a constant concomitant of time. In His sovereign existence, which is absolute, even, ever-continuing duration, the eternal God is elevated above time and all measurements of time. He is "the King of the cons," 1 Tim. 1, 17. Past, present, and future are merged into one before the Great I Am, ever living in the eternal Now, Rev. 1, 4. 8; 11, 17; 16, 5; compare with Ex. 3, 14; Ps. 2, 7. A day and a millennium are to Him interchangeable terms, Ps. 90, 4; 2 Pet. 3, 8. This means "that there are no intervals of time with God, in whose sight the times of all the ages are, as it were, one undivided moment." <sup>1)</sup> Or, as Bengel explains it: "No delay happens which is long to God. As to a very rich man a thousand guineas are as a single penny, so to the eternal God a thousand years are as one day; wherefore in the next verse [2 Pet. 3, 9] 'but is long-

1) "Quod nulla sint apud Deum intervalla temporum, coram quo omnium saeculorum tempora velut unum quoddam *ἀδιαίρετον νῦν* se habent." (Egidius Hunnius, Opp., T. I, fol. 85. Cited by Baier, *Theol. Pos.*, ed. Walther, P. I, p. 23.)

## THE THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER.

A Lutheran confederacy is being planned in Europe to check the aggressive propaganda of Rome. The missionary leader in Sweden, Rev. Sandegren, has published in *Stockholms Dagblad* an appeal for such a confederacy which is to embrace Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Norway, and Sweden. The loss of the Lutheran St. Jacobi Church at Riga to the Roman Catholics furnishes a powerful incentive for such a confederacy. The church was handed over to the Romanists by the Latvian parliament spite of the stipulation in the concordat with the Roman Church "that churches shall be neither confiscated nor transferred to any other confession for usage against the will of the religious authorities." A speaker for the minority charged the majority: "You are putting a church in the balance if you find this move necessary to close a political bargain." A representative of the Romanists replied that "the law of protection for churches was not acceptable because it would make impossible in the future Catholic Church *expansion at the expense of the Lutheran Church.*" This unblushingly frank and impudent statement must not appall Lutherans only. Let every non-Catholic religious society bear in mind that their case with Rome is identical with that of the colored man in the South in ante-bellum days, when it was said that "a nigger has no right that a white man is bound to respect." Let no Protestants expect justice from Rome, which views the extirpation of Protestantism as a glorious *auto da fé* (act of faith).

DAU.

"Intimations have been made in the press that a large Lutheran body in America would in true sectarian fashion go into Lutheran state churches in Europe to gather together disgruntled elements to unite them into a truly Lutheran Church." (*Lutheran Companion*, Augustana Synod, Nov. 17.) This means, there is little doubt, the Missouri Synod, whose doctrinal position and church polity, especially the principle of congregational sovereignty, are receiving considerable attention in various European countries, where the old state church systems are going to pieces and persons are casting about for a new arrangement in their spiritual affairs. The Missouri Synod has not brought this catastrophe about, nor does it consider it part of its mission to break down state churches. But it is in duty bound to attack perversions of Lutheran teaching and practise in Lutheran state churches or outside of them, and strengthen and unite with those who for conscience' sake have repudiated their connection with a state church or any other church. If this is sectarianism, the *Lutheran Companion* is at liberty to make the most of it. Meanwhile earnest men everywhere will continue to study and apply the divine law of separation as expounded in the New Testament by the Lord and His apostles.—By the way, it would be interesting to learn just what dear people are doing the "intimating" in this business. Sometimes it looks as if there is some clever work in church politics done by "hands across the sea," and as if the word is being

passed, "Down Missouri, whatever you do!" Well, such things have happened before, and that, just to Lutherans. Meanwhile, Missouri can wait till the proverbial birds of some estimable folk come home to roost.

DAU.

### A Kingdom for Some Lutheran Laymen in Milwaukee!—

"A man in a position to know said not long ago that the Lutherans in Milwaukee had lost 600 good members to the Catholic churches there because they were tired of the squabble about who was to be considered a true Lutheran and who was not. How long will the laymen of the Church put up good-naturedly with this kind of procedure at a time when the Church needs to unite and marshal all her forces?" (*Lutheran Companion*, Augustana Synod, Nov. 17.) The Synodical Conference has a large representation in Milwaukee. The above appeal should reach these churches in particular, and the charge should be examined, even though it is so far supported only by what "a man said." Out upon squabbles! to be sure. But, pray, what is a "squabble" in this particular connection? Let the Lutheran laymen of Milwaukee by all means assert themselves and stop this exodus to Rome, which is almost as bad as the historical exodus from the Swedish Lutheran churches to the Episcopalians. In the mean time, since we are all agreed that the grasping for world dominion on the part of the Church of Rome must be resisted, we would meekly suggest that the anti-Roman combatants from the Augustana Synod examine their archiepiscopal visitor from Upsala as to the soundness of his belief concerning the difference between Romanism and Protestantism. In his *Christian Fellowship, or the United Life and Work of Christendom*, just issued by the Fleming H. Revell Company, there occur these startling sentiments of Archbishop Soederblom: "We need not observe that Luther's opinion about the Vatican would have been very different if he had known the papacy of our times. Like some of the Franciscan Spiritualists and other zealots in the Middle Ages he got the frightful idea that Antichrist was seated in Rome." (p. 45.) "Erasmus best deserves the name of reformer. . . . Luther and Loyola were impelled by a deeper pathos, an all-consuming desire for peace of soul. They found it in different ways, and each in his way forms an original religious type. *It may be disputed which is the straighter way, that which continues through Luther, or that which continues through Ignatius Loyola and Tridentinum.*" (p. 46.) "That the two chief currents of medieval religion, the more spontaneous evangelic and the methodically mystical, should form two communities, with Luther and Loyola as regenerators, was clearly the intention, not of the Reformers, but of Providence." (p. 48.) "Friedrich Heiler, now professor at Marburg, . . . reveals an equally great familiarity with Luther's writings as with the rich piety in the author's [Heiler's] own mother church of Rome." (p. 49.) "The greatest and highest expression of this noble religious type and of its reforming tendencies is to be found in Erasmus, the man who forged some of the weapons which the Reformation used, and who at first sympathized with Luther, but later

steered away from the consuming zeal that he could not understand. [Erasmus understood it only too well when he remarked that Luther's unpardonable offense was that he had touched the Pope's crown and the monks' bellies.] He was repelled by the elementary vehemence of the movement. [He, too, had a "belly" and a "crown" to lose.] The Erasmian type of religion has existed, and still exists, in all religious societies which have attained to a higher standard of literary culture." (p. 52.) "The evangelic mystic and the ecclesiastical mystic, Martin Luther and Ignatius Loyola, contemporaries of Erasmus in the sixteenth century, have influenced the life of the Church more deeply than he, because they knew what Erasmus had never experienced; they knew heaven and hell. Both became emphatically men of religion, being led by different paths to entire devotion to the question of the soul's salvation." (p. 56 f.) "Just as little as we acknowledge Gothic or Roman or Norman or any other style of architecture as the only-saving one, can we bind the Church to one theological system." (p. 131 f.) "The work of the Spirit goes on continually in the Church, and that work of the Spirit acknowledges no confessional boundaries." (p. 133.) "Is it necessary to go into the question of our different creeds, views, and customs when the great thing in common really exists in our hearts; namely, obedience to the voice of our Lord?" (p. 157.) There are much worse things in Soederblom's book. We have mentioned the above because they have a bearing on the plea of the *Lutheran Companion* that all Lutherans present a solid front against Romanism. We are convinced that the Swedish Lutheran archbishop pities the Swedish Lutheran editorial writer at Rock Island, except for what he has said about the intolerance of Lutherans to Lutherans. And this man — and others like him — dare nowadays pose as saviors of Lutheranism. Shades of Gustavus Adolphus! *Quae mutatio rerum!*

DAU.

**Why Do the Baptists Not Assert Themselves?** — A writer in the *Watchman-Examiner* says: "The normal Baptist has convictions, and he holds to them tenaciously. He will not tolerate any interference with them. One of our preachers said that he did not know whether Peter was a Baptist or not, but he was sure that Paul was, because he resisted Peter to the face. The suggestion is a true one. Baptists have been good resisters in every age. They will not change their religious convictions at the behest of any authority, ecclesiastical or political. They are non-conformists in the very fiber of their constitution. A single Baptist will resist the State in order to hold true to his religious faith. He has the spirit of Athanasius. That great theologian, whose name is familiar to us from the Athanasian Creed, was only about four feet tall. But when some one said to him, 'Athanasius, the world is against you,' this intrepid little fellow drew himself up to his full height and said, 'Well, then Athanasius is against the world.' A Baptist can suffer for his principles. He is willing to die for them. But change them or smother them at the behest of anybody, that he will not do!"

All of this has a good ring so far as conviction is concerned, but we fail to find that the Baptists of to-day are showing much of this spirit over against those among them who have rejected not only Baptist teachings, but the very fundamentals of Christianity. The Fundamentalists are making much noise, but the liberals are still with them and they with the liberals. The Lord says: "Come out from among them." 2 Cor. 6, 17.

J. H. C. F.

**Baptists in Norway.**—Norway is a thinly populated country, with only 2,500,000 people all told. Among these the Baptists have forty-two churches, with fifty-five church-buildings and nearly 5,000 members. They have several missionary evangelists. The Sunday-school work is well organized, and the 49 schools have an enrolment of nearly 4,000 pupils. They have a Baptist paper with a weekly circulation of 4,000 and with a regular subscription list of more than 2,000. In other words, practically every Baptist family takes the Baptist paper, and many take extra copies every week for circulation among their friends and neighbors.—*Watchman-Examiner*.

**Ernest Thompson Seton's** *The Ten Commandments in the Animal World* puts the present generation a considerable step farther towards the discovery of its primeval ancestor. The richly illustrated book shows in one scene Jehovah seated on a rock-throne and displaying the two tables of the Decalog to the animal world. He is flanked by the elephant on His right and a lioness on His left. Before Him all the animals, from the mouse upward, with the monkey near the center of the group, are seen in the attitude of reverent attention. The publishers (Doubleday, Page & Co.), in an advertisement in *The National Geographic Magazine*, put Darwin, Haeckel, and the entire devolutionary brotherhood to confusion by raising "these fascinating questions": "Where did Moses get the Ten Commandments? Did the finger of a personal God really write them on 'tables of stone,' or did the great Hebrew lawgiver write them after long, profound observation of the lives of beasts as well as men? Was Moses really a deep student of Nature's fundamental laws as well as a great leader of crowds?" This opens up a new prospect for the searchers after the origin of the "religious instinct" in man. No doubt, we shall be gradually persuaded that our religious models are roving in forest and fen. The new pantheon of the Matter and Force Cult will be adorned by St. Rhinoceros, the Blessed Chipmunk, and Santa Peacock; and the great Prayer will have to start: Our Father, who art up in a tree. Boston already has a "sacred codfish" in its State House. But this would hardly be progress; for ancient paganism did thousands of years before us worship beasts, and this caused Paul to write some trenchant remarks, in Rom. 1, 21—25, about vain imaginations which had darkened the foolish heart of some who had changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things.—We should not be in the least surprised if this book were suggested as Sunday-school literature for the rising generation. Science, with its lofty, ennobling aims, is heading us unmistakably *ad infera* and



this power and 'is thus master of himself,' Mr. Foulke observes, 'is the only one who can be trusted to meet successfully the issues of life.' 'The tendency of modern education is to encourage flabbiness of intellect as well as of will power.'

"3. The decline of religious faith. 'In our Puritan times the fear of God was general. Churchgoing and daily family devotions were almost universal.' 'The absence of religious sanction,' says Mr. Foulke, sooner or later 'becomes apparent in the conduct of life and the loosening of social ties.'

"4. Deterioration of our racial stock. 'The rich and the most intelligent are apt to have small families; the poor and the less intelligent are apt to have large families.' 'Our present civilization is cultivating a race of incapables. The ratio of defectives per hundred thousand increased from 118 in 1890 to 220 in 1920.'

"5. The drift of population from the country to the city. In America the structure of civilization has become top-heavy by reason of the preponderance of population in the cities.

"6. The accumulation of vast wealth in the hands of a few. 'This,' says Mr. Foulke, 'was probably the most important single cause which led to the ruin of the Roman Republic.' As a sequel to this, 'revolutionary ideas have arisen, involving the overthrow of all law and of the right to acquire and hold property.'

"7. The spread of lawlessness. 'Crime waves' in this country were for a time attributed to the World War; 'but,' says this writer, 'a great proportion of these acts of violence have been committed by very young men, too young to have learned from war the lesson of lawlessness.' This is encouraged by 'the impunity which is given to criminals by the technicalities of our criminal procedure' and by the 'softness and gentleness' with which the criminal is treated even after conviction.

"8. The revival of intolerance. Under this head Mr. Foulke notes 'the attacks made upon the foreign-born and the negro and upon the followers of certain religious beliefs, as Jews and Catholics, by such organizations as the Ku Klux Klan, which has spread with amazing rapidity.' To this he might well have added the activities of great religious organizations in this country, led by the Lord's Day Alliance, with the aim of forcing their ideas of Sabbath-keeping upon the people.

"9. 'The apathy which prevails in regard to public measures.' In many of the States only a fraction of the voting population takes the trouble to vote when important issues affecting the public welfare are to be settled at the polls. If the people become unmindful of the kind of government to which they are subject, says Mr. Foulke, 'the ruin of free institutions is inevitable.'

"10. 'The vastly increasing burden of taxation imposed upon the people.' 'The exactions of taxation so demoralized the Roman people that great masses abandoned their homes, and vast regions became depopulated.' In our own country, he notes, even before the World War, there were 'parts of New England which lost portions of their

population by excessive taxation'; and there were towns in many sections of the country 'where the levies made for unnecessary public improvements led to bankruptcy.'

"Better laws and their enforcement will remedy some of these evils, Mr. Foulke believes; but the most serious ones 'are quite beyond legislative control and can be corrected only by a radical change in men's opinions and beliefs, which, to be effective, must penetrate every stratum of society.'

"It is the decay of morality which has brought about 'the decline of modern civilization,' just as the like cause has operated to bring other civilizations to an end. This has brought world crises in the past, when it became necessary for God to checkmate the forces of evil by some direct intervention of His providence. In Noah's day He met the crisis by a flood which swept mankind, except Noah's family, from the earth. In Abraham's day morality had again so far declined that God separated Abraham and his descendants from all other people to be the guardians of His truth. Another great world crisis was met by the advent of the Messiah. When the Dark Ages had brought the world to moral stagnation, God met the crisis by the Reformation. The crisis of our own day is the greatest of all, because apostasy from God at this time has been in the face of more light than has been given from God to any previous generation of mankind; and God will meet it by the greatness of His providences against sin, even by the second advent of Christ, as King of kings and Lord of lords."

J. T. M.

**A Dangerous Book.**—Hendrik William Van Loon, the author of *The Story of Mankind*, has written a book entitled *The Story of the Bible*, of which the *Watchman-Examiner* says editorially: "This book should not be allowed in any Christian home. If it comes as a present, put it in the fire." We quote the entire editorial:—

"Hendrik William Van Loon, the author of *The Story of Mankind*, has written a book entitled *The Story of the Bible*. Before it appeared, it was much heralded, and since its appearance it has received the unstinted praise of many of our contemporaries. To us this book is a menace. It has nothing to commend it. The author is distinctly out of his sphere. He is not a Bible scholar. He does not even pretend to be a Bible scholar. He has simply entered a popular field and made a book that he hoped would rival *The Story of Mankind* as 'a best seller.' And reviewers have jumped to the conclusion that it is a great book, and, evidently without reading it, have given it their unqualified endorsement.

"The author, having young people in mind, tells the Bible-story from beginning to end in the every-day language of our time. But his every-day language is different from the every-day language of cultured people. For instance, note how he describes Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Let parents judge as to whether they want their children to read the Bible-story in such language as this: 'When finally the cause of all this commotion was said to be in Jerusalem, every one wanted to see Him; and when Jesus entered the city gate on his little donkey, the crowd lustily shouted hooray



and threw flowers and generally made a great noise, as it will do whenever it finds an excuse for a celebration.'

"Mr. Van Loon speaks the last word on all critical questions, or, to speak more accurately, he accepts without question the conclusions of the rationalistic school and sets forth these conclusions as if they were universally accepted. Do not the following sentences from his book make fine reading for immature boys and girls? 'The stories of the creation, however, which we find in the Old Testament, were written more than a thousand years after the death of Moses.' 'The gospel of Mark, like all the others, has certain literary characteristics which place it definitely in the second century and make it the work of one of the grandchildren of the original Mark and Matthew and John.' Speaking of the Apostle John, who was a fisherman, he says: 'Far different was John. He must have been a learned, if somewhat dull, professor.' We could quote many foolish blunders such as the author's statement that Jesus carried His cross up to Calvary, and that Joseph was Jacob's youngest son; but such ignorance is harmless.

"He disposes of Christ's healing miracles as follows: Of the healing of the impotent man he says: 'Jesus looked at him. Then He told him that there was nothing the matter with his legs and ordered him to pick up his mattress and go home. The delighted patient did as he had been told.'

"Here is the story of the raising of Lazarus: 'They were willing to believe anything that was told about Jesus, provided it had a touch of the extraordinary. Mere cures were not enough to satisfy their primitive need of excitement. The patient was very sick when Jesus happened to come to his village? Nay! The patient had been on the verge of death! Until at last the poor patient had actually been dead and buried and had been taken out of the grave and restored to life by the man of miracles. This last story, the famous case of Lazarus, had made an enormous impression upon the credulous peasants of Judea. Repeated from farm to farm, it soon acquired a wealth of lurid detail, which made it a very popular subject for medieval legends and pictures.'

"The story of Christ's resurrection, which is the very heart of the New Testament, is left out entirely.

"This book should not be allowed in any Christian home. If it comes as a present, put it in the fire. Better that our children should be ignorant of the Bible than that they should read a book which purports to be a true story of the Bible, but which cuts the very heart out of the Bible. Fortunately there are books of Bible-stories that are both reverent and trustworthy. Mr. Van Loon's is neither. That such a book should be published for our children is almost a crime; but the publishers, Boni and Liveright, evidently have little expert knowledge of religious books." J. H. C. F.

The Executive Secretary of the School Board reports that at the eighth-grade county examinations in Colfax and Platte Counties, Nebr., of 36 pupils of Lutheran congregational schools 34, or 94% per cent., passed. At the same examination of 256 public school chil-

dren of Colfax County 137, or 53 $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., passed. The pupils from the Lutheran schools had taken a course in Bible History and Catechism, entailing a good deal of memory work, besides taking all the studies on the schedule of the public schools. At a similar examination in Martinsville, N. Y., of 110 pupils of public schools 51, or 46 $\frac{4}{11}$  per cent., passed, while of 40 pupils from Lutheran schools 30, or 75 per cent., were successful. — G. M. Sims, School Superintendent of Port Arthur, Tex., has issued the following testimonial: "*To Whom It May Concern:* This is to certify that the public schools of Port Arthur accept the classification given students by the Lutheran Christian day-school of this city. The work done in this school is very thorough and is in accordance with the standardized public school curriculum of this State. The Lutheran Christian day-school runs through the eighth grade. Such students as have completed the eighth-grade work are received by us for work in our ninth grade. We find that their work stands up well under the advanced classification. At no time have we found it necessary to cause the students coming to us from this school to repeat the work done prior to their classification with us."

DAU.