



# Bible Student's Notebook™

## The Herald of His Grace

Presenting *every man* perfect in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

Volume XIX  
Issue 453

## A Reply to R.A. Torrey's

### The Exact Truth Regarding an Eternal Hell

Part 3 of 4

by — A.E. Knoch (1874-1965)

#### CHRIST REIGNS INTO PERFECTION

The accompanying chart of the Eonian Times (p. 4027) is reprinted to give a graphic presentation of the five eons of which the Scriptures speak and to show the relation of the last two to the whole series. The first three are eons of sin and destruction: the last two are eons of bliss and restoration. In the former, God's enemies rule into a chaos of ruin. The latter, Christ, the Son of God, reigns into perfection. The first three represent the root; the last two garner the fruit of the eons. Hence the latter are called "the eons of the eons." Every occurrence of "eon" and "eonian" is shown in its place on the chart.

As the last eon is the result of Christ's work during the previous eon (in which the millennium occurs), it is "the eon of the eon" (singular). In another sense it is the fruit of all of the preceding eons; hence is called "the eon of the eons" (plural, see Ephesians 3:21).

Here, then, is an exact meaning for each of the phrases used in the Scriptures. The only real answer to this would be equally definite and satisfactory meanings for each separate phrase. We call on anyone to produce a distinct yet harmonious definition for each separate expression. Until this is done, what common ground is there on which to consider the rival significations? If "the ages of the ages" are "ages tumbling upon ages [for all eternity]" (as the author claims), is "the age of the ages" one age tumbling on other ages, and "the age of the age" one age tumbling on another age? Which ages are they? When do they tumble?

What are we asked to believe? That "the expression ac-



ording to its form means ages which are themselves composed of ages." No evidence or example is given for this remarkable assertion, doubtless for the reason that none can be found.

We will give a list of phrases of like form in the original (a noun followed by its genitive case):

*Servant of servants* (Genesis 9:25);  
*Holy of holies* (Exodus 26:33);  
*Chief of the chief* (Numbers 3:32);  
*Song of songs* (Song of Songs, 1:1);  
*King of kings* (Daniel 2:47);  
*God of gods* (Daniel 2:47);  
*Prince of princes* (Daniel 8:25);  
*Evil of evil* (Hosea 10:15)<sup>1</sup>;  
*Hebrew of Hebrews* (Philippians 3:5);  
*King of kings, Lord of lords* (I Timothy 6:15).

#### BELIEVERS RECEIVE EONIAN LIFE

In every case something is intended which is one (or more) of a number, and of highest rank in that number. Thus the holy of holies was one of the holy places in the tabernacle and temple, and was also the most holy (Exodus 26:33), as the *Authorized Version* renders it. So the last two eons are, as all will admit, the best of them all because Christ is at their head. If "the form of these expressions" is not the same, where is the difference? Like the phrases we are considering, they are all [the Figure of Speech] *Polyptotons* in which a noun is repeated in the genitive case.

1. *i.e.*, great wickedness

## **Bible Student's Notebook™**

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This free weekly electronic publication (52 times a year) is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation of God's purpose to save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the church, the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Romans 11:13);
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15);
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13);
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with:
  - total freedom from sins (Colossians 1:14);
  - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6);
  - adult sonship position (Galatians 4).

This publication is a joint effort of a few members of the body of Christ. It is a product of our individual lives and ministries together. We do not claim infallibility for its contents. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

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CHRONŌN AIŌNIŌN

*A Chart of the Eonian Times*

2 Tim.1:9; Titus 1:2; (Rom.16:25)

Before the Eons. 1 Cor.2:7; [Jd.25].

*God All*

**THE BEGINNING**

*cf* 2 Pet.3:6, "The world that then was" and Eph.2:2. Then:

**THE DISRUPTION**

*cf* 2 Pet.2:5, "The ancient world" and Eph.2:2. Leads to:

**THE DELUGE**

**The Present Eon.**

Gal.1:4.

**The Current Eon.**

1 Ti.6:17; 2 Ti.4:10;

Tit.2:12.

**This Eon.**

Mt.12:32; 13:22; Mk.4:19; Lu.16:8;

20:34; Rom.12:2; 1 Cor.1:20;

2:6,8; 3:18; 2 Cor.4:4; Eph.1:21;

2:2 (with world).

**For the Eon.**

Mt.21:19; Mk.11:14; Jn.12:34;

13:8; 1 Cor.8:13.

**From the Eon.**

Lu.1:70; Acts 3:21; 15:18.

**Out of the Eon.**

Jn.9:32.

**Conclusion of the Eon.**

Mt.13:39,40,49; 24:3.

**THE DAY OF INDIGNATION**

**The Coming Eon.**

Mk.10:30; Lu.18:30.

**The Future Eon.**

Hb.6:5.

**That Eon.**

Lu.20:35.

**For the Eon.**

Mk.3:29; Lu.1:55; Jn.4:14; 6:5,15,8;

8:35,51,52; 10:28; 11:26; 12:34;

14:16; 2 Cor.9:9; Hb.5:6; 6:20;

7:17,21,24,28; 1 Pt.1:25;

1 Jn.2:17; 2 Jn.2; Jd.13.

**For the Day of the Eon**

2 Pt.3:18 (*cf* Dt.32:7; Mic.5:2;

7:14; Mal.3:4).

**Conclusion of the Eon.**

Mt.28:20.

**THE JUDGMENT**

**THE CONSUMMATION** 1 Cor.15:24.

**The Consummations of the Eons.** 1 Cor.10:11.

**EONIAN**

**Times.**

Ro.16:25; 2 Ti.1:9; Tit.1:2.

**Life.**

Mt.19:16; Mk.10:17;

Lu.18:18;

Mt.19:29; Mk.10:30;

Lu.18:30;

Mt.25:46; Lu.10:25;

Jn.3:15,16,36; 4:14,36;

5:24,39; 6:27,40,47,54,68

10:28; 12:25,50; 17:2,3.

Acts 13:46,48.

Ro.2:7; 5:21; 6:22,23.

Ga.6:8.

1 Ti.1:16; 6:12;

Tit.1:2; 3:7;

1 Jn.1:2; 2:25; 3:15;

5:11,13,20.

Jude 21.

**Salvation.**

Hb.5:9.

**Redemption.**

Hb.9:12.

**Covenant.**

Hb.13:20.

**Allotment.**

Hb.9:15.

**Kingdom.**

2 Pt.1:1.

**Evangel.**

Rv.14:6.

**Consolation.**

2 Th.2:16.

**Glory.**

2 Cor.4:17; 2 Ti.2:10;

1 Pt.5:10.

**God.**

Ro.16:26.

**Fire, Punishment, etc.**

Mt.18:8; 25:41,46; Mk.3:29

2 Th.1:9; Hb.6:2; Jd.7.

**Other Occurrences.**

Lu.16:9; 2 Cor.4:18; 5:1;

1 Ti.6:16; Phn.15; Hb.9:14.

*God All in all*

2 Tim.4:18; Heb.13:21; 1 Pet.4:11; 5:11; Rev.1:6,18; 4:9,10; 5:13; 7:12; 10:6; 11:15; 14:11; 15:7; 19:3; 20:10; 22:5  
THE EONS of THE EONS Rom.16:27; Gal.1:5; Phil.4:20; 1 Tim.1:17

EON of THE EONS Eph.3:21

EON of THE EON Heb.1:8

CONCLUSION OF THE EONS Heb.9:26

THE ONCOMING EONS Eph.2:7

FOR THE EONS Luke 1:33; Rom.1:25; 9:5; 11:36; 2 Cor.11:31; Heb.13:8

THE EONS Eph.3:11; 1 Tim.1:17; Heb.1:2; 11:3; Jude 25

FROM THE EONS Eph.3:9; Col.1:26

THE CROSS

*God  
All  
in  
Christ*

**REPLY** (continued from front page)

Yet, what of “eternal life”? Surely the believer’s life is endless! If we had the heart of God we would be glad to shorten our bliss to grant sinners relief from unutterable torment – but no: in order that we may be happy forever, we have no hesitancy in consigning the rest to torture eternal! Yet there is no need for this dilemma at all: a little exactness will solve the whole problem.

According to the author, the words of our Lord concerning the judgment which ushers in the kingdom (Matthew 25:46) are supposed to settle the whole question. The inference from this *seems* to be unanswerable:

*And these shall go away into eternal punishment,  
but the righteous into eternal life.*

The same Greek adjective is used in connection with punishment and with life. ... Certainly this qualifying adjective must mean the same in the one half of the sentence that it means in the other half of the sentence

...

Very good indeed; but our Lord did not thus,

convey the impression that the punishment of the unsaved was of the same duration as the *life* of the saved.

He *did* say that it lasted as long as the *eonian* life of the saved.

The believer’s life is not limited to the eons. He receives eonian (“everlasting”) life while the unbeliever receives eonian judgment in death; but, at the consummation,

death is abolished and *all* receive life (I Corinthians 15:22,26). The unbeliever never receives *eonian* life, but after the eons he receives eternal life. The believer enjoys eonian life until the consummation and then receives eternal life. In both cases, eternal life comes as the result of the abolition of death. Eonian life is only for those who believe. God is the Savior of *all* mankind, *especially* of those who believe (I Timothy 4:10).

If we believe *God’s* explanation of “*as in Adam all die, even so, in Christ, shall all be made alive,*” that this is brought about by the abolition of the last enemy, death, at the consummation when the Son abdicates in favor of the Father (I Corinthians 15:28), then we will acknowledge that not only Christ, in the past, not only those who are His, in His presence, but the rest of mankind, included in the *all*, will be made alive as well, at the consummation. Why worry about life when there is to be no death? Eonian life is not brought to its end by God putting His saints in the tomb, but by the introduction of universal, eternal, post-eonian life, when God will be All in all.

### THE GOD OF THE EONS

The phrase “*eonian God*” (Romans 16:26) no more means that God is limited to the eons than the phrase “*Lord of the whole earth*” (Zechariah 4:14) implies that He is excluded from heaven. The one shows His relation to the earth, the other His connection with the eons. Nor is there any lack of contrast between the unseen things which are eonian and the things which are seen, which are only for a little while (II Corinthians 4:18).

The eons are tremendous periods of time. This eon has



## ***Without Form and Void: A Study of the Meaning of Genesis 1:2***

by — Arthur C. Custance

Considered a classic in Christian apologetics, this scholarly analysis of the biblical phrase “without form and void,” from the opening chapter of Genesis, observes the rules of linguistics, grammar and syntax, and also examines how words are used in the rest of Scripture. This book has been described as the best argument that has ever been written for the Gap Theory.

A well respected Canadian scientist, and listed in the 1971 American Men in Science, Dr. Custance contends that we should not allow science to determine what Scripture says. Neither should we allow Scripture to determine what the scientist observes in the laboratory. Yet observed fact in the one cannot, ultimately, conflict with revealed fact in the other. Any conflict, then, is in the interpretation of the facts – not in the facts themselves.

292 pp., PB

*See order form.*

already lasted about four thousand years. The next eon will last over a thousand years. The final eon may well be of a greater duration than either of these.

The whole appeal in this matter is to our lack of confidence in God Himself. God's object is to become so thoroughly *All in all* of His creatures that they will not need even His assurance for their faith. During the eons, faith rests on His word; after the eons, sight rests on God Himself as He has been revealed by the eons. The eons will have failed of their purpose if God still needs to assure His family of His protection and providence and love. He will have them trust Him as a little child which never needs to be assured that its father will provide for it, because he has always done so.

It is difficult to restrain oneself when passages which definitely define a certain class and their judgment – such, for instance, as those who worship the beast – are applied to all of the “finally impenitent.” We earnestly urge and implore those who write on these solemn themes not to wrest God's holy Word in this distressing fashion. True and righteous are His judgments, but false and faulty do they become when applied to others than to those whom He has specified.

What earthly judge would stand this for a moment? When he sentences a murderer to the gallows, he does not condemn to death another prisoner who has stolen bread to feed his starving family. Yet, again and again the doom of the devil, the beast, the false prophet and those receiving the mark of the beast, is read into the sentence of the “impenitent” in general.

### A FORCED BOWING?

Every knee of lost men and of the devil and his angels, too, will be forced some day to bow in the name of Jesus and every tongue forced to confess that He is Lord.

What sort of force is found in the passage? The name “Jesus” means Savior; to bow the knee is elsewhere proof positive of true worship (Romans 11:4; Ephesians 3:14), and it is for the glory of God as Father. There is no force in this passage except what is forced into it.

It is rightly contended that “*the restoration of all things whereof God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets*” (Acts 3:21) is limited to the coming eon or the millennium.

“*For as in Adam all die, so also, in Christ, shall all be made alive*” (I Corinthians 15:22). It is contended that “*made alive*” must be limited to the resurrection of the body

(which is an unscriptural phrase). Now, the word “resurrection” is used frequently in this chapter (though never limited to the body). If resurrection was intended in this passage, why was the word not used? Why was “*made alive*” substituted? The two thoughts are distinct. The Father both raises the dead and makes them alive (John 5:21). There is a resurrection of life, and a resurrection of judgment. Which is intended by “*make alive*”? O, that we would leave the Scriptures as they are!

### SALVATION IS OF GOD!

A false light is thrown on the universal reconciliation by the supposition that, if “the issues of eternity” are not settled by men in this life, then it can only be that they “have another chance” after death! We do not believe that salvation or reconciliation is of man at all: it is of God. Men do not have a “chance” to be saved either now or in the hereafter. God calls and justifies and glorifies those who believe, and God locks up all in stubbornness in order that He may be merciful to all (Romans 11:32) in His own good time.

Now comes the author's final and conclusive proof.

Let me call your attention to four passages, any one of which settles the question, and taken together they leave no possible room for doubt for any candid man who is willing to take the Bible as meaning what it says, any man who is really trying to find out what the Bible teaches and not merely trying to support a theory.

We trust that all who read this, as well as the present writer, have a hearty desire to be included among sincere Scripture students. Yet how can we, with a good conscience, countenance such arguments as the following?

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#1

II Corinthians 5:10

*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*

The first of the four passages to which he calls attention is not concerned with destiny at all, but the rewards of the believer at the tribunal of Christ.

We believe that the dead will be judged according to their works (Revelation 20:12). Yet while works may determine the measure of their judgment, their destiny is determined on an entirely different principle, for it is those not found written in the book of life who were cast into the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:15). When death is abolished, they will be made alive, for the Lake of Fire is the only death which will be in existence when this is done. Let us remember, salvation is not of him who wills or runs, but of God (Romans 9:16).

#2

Hebrews 9:27

*And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.*

The second passage to which he calls attention is even less in line with the subject. The ninth chapter of Hebrews is a strange place to find a lone text on the destiny of mankind! The writer is speaking of the tabernacle and the mediator and the priests. He refers to the type of the city of refuge into which a murderer must run, and in which he must abide *“unto the death of the high priest which was anointed with the holy oil.”* Then the slayer could *“return to the land of his possession. So these things shall be for a statute of judgment ...”* (Numbers 35:16-29). The death of the priest was the signet for *“judgment”* – not in the sense of condemnation, but as it appears when we read that *“the Lord judges the widow and fatherless.”*

An adverse judgment – condemnation – is required only when the Greek word used here is prefixed by a preposition which means “down” or “against.” This our versions have consistently and correctly rendered “condemn.” To judge does not mean to condemn.

To judge simply means to decide, with a view toward setting things right. The *“judgment”* (i.e., decided enactment) at the death of the high priest allowed the man to return to his patrimony. Who would not rejoice in such

judgment? This type is fulfilled in Christ.

*And in as much as it is reserved to the [i.e., those] men to be dying once, yet after this a judging, thus Christ also, being offered once for the bearing of the sins of many, will be seen a second time, by those awaiting Him, apart from sin, for salvation, through faith* (Hebrews 9:27,28).

The parallel is clear. It may be set forth as follows:

- a. The death of the high priest.
- b. Judgment (restoration to possession).
- a. The death of Christ.
- b. Salvation.

We must insist that this is a parallel – thus – not a contrast.

The *b* must agree with the b. The judgment cannot be condemnation and “eternal hell.”

(To be continued.)



***Pagan Christianity: Exploring the Roots of Our Church Practices***

by — Frank Viola & George Barna  
293 pp, PB  
(See order form.)

Have you ever wondered why Christians do what they do for “church” every Sunday morning? Have you ever asked yourself any of the following questions: Why do folks “dress up” for “church”? Why does the “pastor” preach a sermon every Sunday? Why are there pulpits and pews? Why “church” buildings, steeples, choirs and seminaries? Where did all of these things come from?

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