

Notes on Eternal Punishment

(Scripture Truth, Volume 14, 1922, page 256.)

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Words in italics may all be examined in Young's Analytical Concordance.

Eis tous aionas ton aionan (to the ages of the ages). Used exclusively of what is eternal, and absolutely so. Relating to the glory, praise, and dominion of God (Galatians, Philippians, Timothy, Hebrews, Peter, Revelation). To the life of God (Rev. 4: 9, 10; Rev. 10: 6; Rev. 15: 7), to the smoke of judgment on those who compose and actuate the apostate church (Rev. 19: 3), to the torment of the devil in the lake of fire (Rev. 20: 10). See Young's Analytical Concordance under EVER (and ever), Nos. 5, 6, & 7.

The simple word *aionos* (for ever, everlasting, age-lasting) depends of course on the character of the age in question. It is applied to consolation (2 Thess. 2: 16) which as far as we are concerned reaches us during the present age or our own lifetime: to the millennium (2 Peter 1: 11: *aion* — world to come Matthew, Mark, Luke, Ephesians, Hebrews 6: 5), and to the life which will be in vogue then, manifestly in vogue (Gospels, Epistles and Revelation), and to eternal life abstractly as in 1 John 5: 20, where it is applied to One who is eternally before God in resurrection, and certainly cannot mean age-lasting in any limited sense.

If therefore, the word *aionios* be used in relation to that which is in its own essence and nature time-lasting, it bears its limited application to the age or time under consideration. If it be applied to that which is in its own nature and essence absolutely abiding, its use extends to eternity, the eternal age. And in this context, the eternal life granted to the saint but subsisting in Christ and the eternal judgment of the lost, stand or fall together (life, — Gospels and Epistles. Fire, damnation, Punishment — Matthew and Mark. Salvation, judgment, redemption, Spirit, inheritance — Hebrews. Also 2 Cor. 4: 18 in contrast with things temporal, the things that are not seen are eternal. Such are instances of its use).

See what value attaches to the expression "to the ages of the ages," which every honest soul must admit refers to absolute eternity. Three things are spoken of under this absolute category. (1) The life of God (Rev. 4: 9, 10, etc.); (2) The smoke of Rev. 19: 3; (3) The torment of Rev 20: 10. So that the eternity of God, judgment administered in wrath, and judgment felt by the subject of it, are all referred to as absolutely eternal. Satan himself will absolutely and eternally reap the consequence of his sin. This is because his sin has affected God in a way we are not prepared nor competent to measure.

When once this is conceded (and it must be, or we lose God Himself) then solemn as the issue is the objection against the doom of the wicked breaks down. The sin which is punished cannot be measured by any measure we possess; God alone can estimate what sin against God involves. The garden of Gethsemane bears witness that no other outlet could be found for the sinner. Christ must die. And Rev. 21: 8 proves to every subject mind that those who reject Christ in favour of sin, undergo the same doom as the devil. Not necessarily the same measure of woe, but in the very nature and essence of things (when time is no more) eternal. Not only judgment administered but judgment felt, to the ages of ages. To be cast into it for such unutterable grief and immeasurable distance from God, is the second death.