

CHAPTER TWELVE

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12. Eighteenth-Century Stalwarts Buttress Conditionalist Positions

It should be borne in mind that the eighteenth-century men, here to be surveyed, were keen, capable, representative scholars, acquainted with the contemporary writings and discussions of the day in this field. They knew the issues and the writings under survey as we cannot know them today. They were, moreover, men of courage and forthrightness, when such public declarations inevitably meant attack, and sometimes ostracism. We here continue the survey by traversing the new century with the Old World (largely British) champions of Conditionalism.

1. Baptist Professor Whiston—Holds to Complete Destruction of the Wicked

In the succession of illustrious eighteenth-century men who championed the cause of Conditional Immortality, we now come to WILLIAM WHISTON (1667-1752), Baptist theologian and outstanding mathematician. In 1703 he became the successor to the renowned Sir Isaac Newton as professor of mathematics at Cambridge. He received an excellent training at Clare College, Cambridge. Also, as a lad he had been an amanuensis to his father, an Anglican rector, and this experience gave spiritual shape to William's entire life.

After his ordination in 1693 he became chaplain to the Bishop of Norwich, then was vicar of Lowestoft. At one time, because of his Arianizing tendency, he was accused of heresy before the Dean's Court, at St. Paul's. But after an extended trial he was acquitted. He remained for years in the Church of England, but in 1737, convinced of immersion, he joined the General (or Arminian) Baptists. Whiston was a tireless worker as a minister, conducting an early service daily in the chapel, preaching twice a day in his church, and giving catechetical lectures frequently. But when he was invited to succeed Newton as professor of mathematics at Cambridge he gave up his vicarage for the classroom for a time, and was one of the first to lecture with experiments. He was finally ejected from Cambridge because of his independent religious views.

Whiston was author of some fifty works, one of which confirmed the Genesis record of Creation on Newtonian grounds. He was also a master of Greek, and made a standard translation of the works of Josephus. Whiston, moreover, was a close student of prophecy, holding to the Historical School of interpretation and the year-day principle for the time prophecies—believing that the 1260 year-days of Daniel and the Apocalypse refer to the period of papal dominance throughout the Middle Ages, as predicted in Daniel 7 and Revelation 13. [1]

1 Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, vol. 2, pp. 671-674.

Furthermore, like various men of prominence of the time—such as London barrister Sir William Tempest, court physician Dr. Peter Chamberlain, and Commonwealth speaker _of the House of Commons Thomas Bamfield—Whiston became a Sabbatarian. [2]

In 1715 he started the still-operative "S.P.C.K.," or Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge. Later, in 1740, he published his view on *The Eternity of Hell-Torments*. In this treatise he vigorously opposed the dogma of Eternal Torment and presented the case for Conditionalism. For example, his comments on Luke 3:17; 2 Thessalonians 1:8, 9; and 1 Timothy 6:9, 19, set forth his position on the ultimate, utter destruction of the wicked. Here are his notes expounding these three texts:

1. CHAFF IS "BURNT UP" IN UTTER DESTRUCTION.—

"Luke 3. 17, The chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.

"N.B.—These words are very much of a piece with those already cited from Isaiah the Prophet and others. Only they compare the wicked to chaff, which is not laid up in garners. as wheat is for its preservation, but entirely burnt up for its destruction. Which is strong against those that suppose the wicked to have their lives preserved on purpose that they may be subject to never ending pains, and plainly implies that their punishment [in the sense of torment] shall end much sooner, by an utter destruction, or what we should call annihilation also." [3]

2. FLAMING FIRE TO "UTTERLY CONSUME" WICKED.—

"2 Thess. 1.8, 9. In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God; and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who shall have for punishment olethron aionion, a lasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of His power.

"N.B.—This text is so far from affirming, as is commonly supposed, that the wicked shall, at the last day, be preserved in being, in order to (the enduring everlasting torments that it rather implies the contrary; hat the flaming fire into which they are to be cast at that day, will in some time, utterly consume them."

3. ETERNAL LIFE FOR RIGHTEOUS ONLY.—

"1 Tim. 6. [9 and] 19. Hurtful lusts which drown men eis olethron kai apoleian, in destruction and perdition.—That the good may lay hold aionion zoes, of the lasting life.

2 Seventh Day Baptists in Europe and America, vol. 1, p. 69; also pp. 104, 72, 64, 66.

3 Quoted in Mills, Earlier Life-Truth Exponents, p. 41.

4 Ibid.

"N.B.—Since we still find the opposition between the final state of the wicked, and the righteous to be this. To the former utter destruction, and to the latter a lasting life: 'tis very hard that our paraphrases still suppose both to be equally a lasting life or duration." [5]

There can be no mistake as to Whiston's mature views on the fate of the wicked—their utter destruction—thus clearly expressed. So Conditionalism's permeations were deep in high circles as we come toward the middle of the eighteenth century, and both the predecessor and the successor of Sir Isaac Newton are listed as Conditionalists.

2. Nonconformist Hallett: If "No Resurrection, No Future State"

Archdeacon Blackburne likewise refers to "innumerable" tractates on the immortality issue, written back and forth over the first quarter of the eighteenth century. But many of these, he also states, were mere "repetitions of what had been said an hundred times before." [6] We therefore pass them by. But we now pause to note the "learned" JOSEPH HALLETT JR. (1691-1744), of Exeter, classmate of John Foxe, the martyrologist. Of "excellent reputation," a keen student and widely read, Hallett was ordained as a Nonconformist minister in 1715, serving the Independent congregation of Exeter.

In 1729 he published A Free and Impartial Study of the Holy Scripture recommended. . . . VII. Of the Soul . . . with the Impossibility of proving a Future State by the Light of Nature. In this treatise he insisted that the Scriptures never speak of the natural immortality of the soul. And he likewise taught the paralleling Conditionalist doctrine of the ultimate destruction of the impenitent wicked. [7] The treatise is described by Blackburne as sufficient to convince those not governed by blind prejudice. [8]

The gist of Hallett's teaching was simply this: If there is no resurrection, there will be no future life even for the soul. [9]

5 Ibid.

6 Blackburne, A Shore Historical View, pp. 80, 81.

7 Ibid., pp. 81-90; see also Joseph Priestley, Works, vol. 3, pp. 314, 315.

8 Blackburne, op. cit., p. 81.

9 Ibid., p. 82.

However, the anger of various antagonists was aroused, and there was much acrimony and frenzied probing for weak spots. Nevertheless, his was a recognized contribution. This was followed in 1731 by a Defence of his previous work, with An Answer to the Reverend Mr. Grove's Thoughts on the same Subject. Grove had charged a contradiction in Hallett's arguments, and had invoked the weight of "tradition" concerning the future state. [10] The essence of Hallett's reply is given here:

1. LOST IMMORTALITY RESTORED THROUGH CHRIST.—

"Christ came to repair the damage that had been done by the fall, and that as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive, i.e. that as all mankind have lost their immortality by the first sin of Adam so all mankind shall be raised from the dead by Christ: and being thus freed from the evil they suffered for Adam's sin, they shall be set upon their own legs, and plead their own righteousness if they have any to plead, in order to be restored to immortal happiness." [11]

2. RESURRECTION FOR ALL; IMMORTALITY ONLY FOR SAINTS.—

"If Mr. G[rove] would carry this matter farther he must produce his proofs. He says, indeed, p. 133, that this immortality which all men lost in Adam, was regained by Christ. But the Scriptures, as far as I can perceive, does not say, that Christ purchased immortality for all men, but only that he purchased [procured] a resurrection for them. And after all men are raised, they shall be judged, and afterward disposed of accordingly as they Were righteous or not. So that some may be condemned to eternal sleep, while others shall be made immortal. . . . The promise was made to all nations upon condition of their believing the gospel, and so is fulfilled only to them that believe." [12]

Thus the searching debate continued to swing back and forth between men of high training and deep conviction. But notable champions of Conditionalism were on the increase.

10 Grove's unpublished tract was titled "The Weight of Tradition Concerning a Future State."

11 Quoted in Mills, *Earlier Life-Truth Exponents*, p. 38.

12 Ibid.

3. "Anonymous"—Consciousness Utterly Ceases in Death

Apart from writings whose authorship is known by name, some anonymous works of merit appeared from time to time. One was issued from London in 1729, with the title, *The Mortality of the Soul of Man*, and its Sameness with the Body, asserted and proved from the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. Shewing, that, upon the death of the Body, all Sensation and Consciousness utterly cease, till the Resurrection of the Dead. [13] It was an able treatise, differing from others in that its argument is confined to Scripture evidence alone. First, general objections against Conditionalism are answered. Then some twenty "arguments" founded on Bible texts are examined.

The Preface states that the purpose of the work is to defend the Scripture truth on the nature of the soul and to rescue it "from oblivion and the inventions of Men." Dealing with the common assertion that "the Soul is a principle in Man, distinct from the body," the writer challenges the contention. Here is part of his answer, based on Genesis 2:7:

1. DEATH IS "UTTER EXTINCTION" OF CONSCIOUSNESS.—

"Adam, was altogether unactive, until God had breathed into him the breath or spirit of life. . . . Life only then is the cause of all our operations, under God, who is the fountain of life. And when life ceases, all the properties, powers, passions attributed to the mind and heart of man, cease together with it. For, according to the Holy Scriptures, death is an utter extinction of all consciousness reason wisdom, memory, affection etc." [14] He then cites such supporting texts as Ecclesiastes 9:5 and Psalm 6:5.

2. FLAME OF LIFE "REKINDLED" AT RESURRECTION.—

Continuing his argument, the writer says that in death—"the life, properties and powers of man continue extinct in death (the Holy Scriptures nowhere teaching the contrary), till the resurrection: when the noble flame of life shall be rekindled in him by the breath of God." [15]

13 Abbot, *The Literature of the Doctrine of a Future Life*, no. 2147.

14 (Quoted in Mills, *Earlier Life-Truth Exponents*, p. 39.

15 Ibid., p. 40.

Commenting on the thief and Paradise of Luke 23:43, and the common contention that "the soul survives the body in a state of sensibility," he declares:

1. JEWISH PARADISE UNSUPPORTED BY SCRIPTURE.—"The doctrine of the soul's surviving the body in a state of sensibility, etc., is confirmed and explained too by comparing it with the current doctrine of the Jews; which was this, That the souls of the righteous were carried, some immediately, into Paradise; but others waited a longer or shorter time, according as their lives had been here.' What a dream is here!

"I call it a dream, because it has no being in Scripture. And yet a very learned person, who, on another occasion, has thrown the utmost contempt and ridicule upon the Jews for their whims and inventions, embraces them for this, and thinks it gives a notable account and confirmation of his own beloved opinions. But such, indeed, is the practice and the levity of men of learning in general, who are teachers of Christianity: For when they cannot fairly ground a favourite opinion on the Scriptures, they support it with a notion of the Heathens, or the Jews; and though they reason against both, they are glad, on such an occasion, of a helping hand from either." [16] Known or unknown, the witness is similar—and valuable.

4. Physician Scott—Complete Destruction Awaits the Wicked

Periodically physicians entered the contest of pens and convictions. Another of these was JOSEPH NICOLL SCOTT, M.D. (1703-1769), dissenting minister and theological writer of Norwich, England, where he ministered to large audiences at St. Mary-the-Lees, also attracting many members of the Church of England. But because of changing theological views, he turned to the study of medicine at Edinburgh, graduating in 1744, and becoming a practicing physician back in Norwich. [17] However, he never lost his interest in theology and was ever a strenuous opponent of the predominant doctrine of eternal torment.

16 Ibid.

17 Alexander Gordon, "Joseph Nicoll Scott," *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 17, p. 997; Albert M. Hyamson, *A Dictionary of Universal Biography*, p. 585.

In 1743, while still in the ministry, he published a series of sermons under the title *Sermons, Preached in Defence of All Religions*. These affirm his undeviating conviction on the "ultimate annihilation of the wicked," thus anticipating by a few years

the position of Samuel Bourn, likewise of Norwich. In volume two, in sermons seventeen and eighteen, he maintains that eternal life is for the righteous only, with complete, ultimate destruction for the wicked. Number seventeen is titled "The Vulgar-Opinion concerning the duration of Future Misery Examined." [18] Here are typical extracts in the characteristically involved phrasing of the day:

1. DESTRUCTION, NOT "NEVER-CEASING MISERY," FOR WICKED.—

"Had the Scriptures ever directly denied, that the reprobate shall die, or be burnt, as it is affirmed in Scripture they shall; had it said in our modern style, that they shall be ever dying, and yet never die, or could one single passage be produced, in which the ideas of immortality, incorruptibility, indissolubility, were applied to them; or had it ever compared them to such substances (if there be any such) that will, without diminution, bear the force of an unquenchable fire, and not compared them to so much chaff, which must, without a continued miracle, be burnt up and destroyed by it, there might have been some colour of argument, and it might have been inferred, that, though a never-ceasing misery is not expressed in so many words, it is still, from the Scripture phraseology, necessarily implied." [19]

2. PERPETUAL TORMENT DOGMA CONFLICTS WITH SCRIPTURE.—

"But when the contrary of all this is true, when it is affirmed, that they shall die. they shall reap corruption. they shall be burnt up, and our God is declared, with reference to this very affair, to be not a perpetually-tormenting. but a consuming fire; and when the ideas of life, immortality, incorruptibility, indissolubility, are constantly restrained to the good and virtuous part of mankind, as their peculiar prerogative, will it not follow from hence, that to affirm the wicked to be continued for ever alive, though in a state of miserable sensation, is not only to affirm that which is not affirmed in Scripture, but which, in reality, contradicts it, and renders the Scripture-account of things inconsistent with itself?" [20]

18 Joseph N. Scott, *Sermons, Preached in Defence of All Religions, Whether Natural or Revealed*, vol. 2, pp. 329ff.

19 Quoted in Mills, *Earlier Life-Truth Exponents*, pp. 41, 42.

20 *ibid.*, p. 42.

So men in the professions likewise testified publicly to the growing convictions of many in public life. The witness to Conditionalism was constantly augmented.

5. Bishop Law—Entrance Upon Immortality Only Through Resurrection

Another important witness in this crucial hour was Anglican bishop EDMUND LAW, D.D. (1703-1787), noted scholar and educator, theological and philosophical writer, and Bishop of Carlisle. He received a thorough training at St. John's, Cambridge, and then was progressively rector of Greystoke, archdeacon of Carlisle, master of St. Peter's College (Peterhouse), Cambridge, librarian of Cambridge and professor of moral philosophy, archdeacon of Stafford, prebend of Lincoln, and finally bishop of Carlisle. He was highly respected and influential.

Law was the contemporary of a group of intellectual giants, with whom he participated in various important discussions—some involving the question of the nature of man. He was a devoted follower of philosopher John Locke, likewise a Conditionalist, editing one edition of Locke's works. Law was author of numerous treatises, one of which was his *Considerations on the State of the World with regard to the Theory of Religion . . . With an Appendix, concerning the Use of the Word Soul in Holy Scripture; and the State of the Dead as there described* (1745). Its popularity is attested by the fact that it ran through at least six editions. Significantly, it did not impair his relations with the church. But the issuance of such a treatise by such an illustrious religious leader shook the foundations of complacency in religious circles over the issue of a conscious intermediate state. And it continued to be widely quoted. There was now greater tolerance for Conditionalism.

The bishop stoutly held that Christian belief must go on to perfection, and misconceptions in doctrinal teaching that had been improperly introduced into the church in the period of apostasy should be corrected. And this included the widespread misconception as to the nature of man. He held that the soul, or spirit, is not separable from the man; that death is the complete negation of all life; that there is no intermediate, conscious state; that the human soul and life are the same; and that in the grave is silence, oblivion, and darkness, according to Scripture. [21]

21 Edmund Law, *Considerations on the Theory of Religion*, pp. 191-194, 196, 197.

Law maintained that the reign of death entered the world at the time of man's first transgression back in Eden. And the time of the deliverance therefrom will be dated from the resurrection, at the Second Advent. Death is "a return to dust," and its reversal is "the resuscitation from that dust." Paul, he said, puts the contrast between the first Adam and Second Adam in these words: "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection from the dead; and as in Adam all die; even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Law then asserts:

1. LIFE NOT INHERENT, BUT A GIFT THROUGH CHRIST.—

"Life is not an inherent property of our original nature, but a free gift to us, promised and procured by Christ; and accordingly termed the grace, or gift of God, and the gift by grace thro' Jesus Christ our Lord: who on that account is pleased to stile Himself the resurrection and the life; who is called our life; and said to have the keys of hades and of death: who opens for us the true and only way to immortality, through the gate of the resurrection; and without whom there is no admission to it; but the wrath of God abides on us." [22]

2. GIVES SEVEN EQUATIONS OF DEATH.—

In the "Appendix," Bishop Law equates death, or the state of the dead, with (1) "Sleep," (2) "A negation of all Life, Thought or Action," (3) "Rest," (4) "State of Silence," (5) "Oblivion," (6) "Darkness," and (7) "Corruption." That, of course, is the accepted platform of Conditionalism.

3. RESURRECTION THE CLIMAX OF HOPE OF IMMORTALITY.—

In a series of propositions, with proof texts, the bishop holds:

"Prop. I.—That we shall not awake, or be made alive, till the resurrection. Prop. II.—That the wicked shall not be severed from the righteous till the resurrection, the end of the world, the coming, or day of Christ, the day of the Lord, THE day, THAT day, etc. Prop. III.—that, We are upon trial, or in a state of probation, till the resurrection, or the day of Christ. Prop. IX.—that, They shall not have eternal life, or salvation; shall not put on immortality: be received unto Christ; enter into His joy; behold His glory, or be like Him; till the resurrection, etc." [23]

22 Quoted in Mills, *Earlier Life-Truth Exponents*, p. 42.

23 *Ibid.*, p. 43.

The final feature of the treatise is the examination of twenty-eight objections brought against the Conditionalist position, based on Scripture texts, Bishop Law giving scriptural evidence to show the unscriptural character of the so-called "orthodox" contentions. [24] Thus another compelling Anglican voice is heard from, and the Advent hope made central in the redemption of man. It was a voice commanding attention and respect, and influenced not a few.

4. Cambridge Master Peckard—Man Mortal; Immortality Solely Through Christ

DR. PETER PECKARD, or PECARD (1718-1797), Anglican clergyman, army chaplain, and Cambridge educator, was trained at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, receiving his M.A. in 1741. He held several responsible Church of England appointments, including the rectorship of Fletton until his death. In 1781 he became master of Magdalene College, Cambridge, was made vice-chancellor of Cambridge in 1784, and received his D.D. in 1785.

But his Conditionalism went back twenty-five years prior, to 1756, when he published his *Observations on the Doctrine of an Intermediate State between Death and the Resurrection*. [25] This was a critique of Peter Goddard's printed sermon, *The Intermediate State*, contending for the natural immortality of the soul, and based on Luke 23:43. [26] In his well-reasoned reply Peckard declares such a postulate to be unsupported by Scripture:

"It may be proper to observe here, once for all, that the denial of a natural principle of immortality doth not at all affect the Scriptural, the Christian doctrine of a future state: For the Scripture doth not anywhere assure us of the truth of this doctrine, from such natural principle, but from the redemption by Jesus Christ. andiron] that alone: Nay. the Scripture expressly asserts the mortality of man, and the restoration to life, from that mortality, by the same Jesus Christ." [27]

24 *Ibid.*

25 Abbot, *op. cit.*, no. 2558.

26 *Ibid.*, no. 2557.

27 Quoted in Mills, *Earlier Life-Truth Exponents*, p. 44.

1. IF IMMORTALITY INNATE, CHRIST NOT OUR "LIFE."—

This treatise was followed, in 1757, by *Further Observations on the Doctrine of an Intermediate State*, in answer to the Rev. Dr. Thomas Morton's *Queries*. [28] Declaring Jesus Christ to be both "the resurrection and the life," Peckard challenges the dogma of Innate Immortality:

"The great end of His [Christ's] coming into the world was to bring life and all that will enjoy this life must come to Him for it. But if there be a natural principle of immortality, then Christ is not the life." [29]

And these two works were in turn followed by *Observations on Mr. [Caleb] Fleming's Survey of the Search After Souls* (1759), [30] issued the year before, in which Fleming does not admit "of a sleeping of the soul."

28 Abbot, op. cit., no. 2565.

29 Quoted in Mills, Earlier Life-Truth Exponents, p. 44.

30 Abbot, op. cit., no. 174.

2. HOPE OF FUTURE EXISTENCE BASED SOLELY UPON CHRIST. —

In his first treatise Peckard pressed the point that Conditionalism rests upon the authority of Christ, not on the dictums of philosophy. Here is a key statement:

"The important doctrine of a future state then stands firm upon its own proper foundation, notwithstanding a natural principle of immortality be disallowed. He that builds his hopes of future existence upon this foundation, is like the foolish man who built his house upon the sand; but he who taketh the authority of Christ, and will abide by that, is like the wise man, who laid his foundation upon a rock." [31]

3. OBJECT OF CHRIST'S COMING TO BRING LIFE.—

In answering Dr. Morton, Peckard asserts that if man has natural immortality in and of himself, then "Christ is not the Life." He here brings the two concepts into irreconcilable contrast: "In short, there is no talking about a second life, with any rational satisfaction, but from the revelation of Jesus Christ. He positively declares Himself to be the resurrection and the life." [32]

When Peckard publicly espoused the view of Conditionalism, or Life Only in Christ, and produced his principal treatise on the subject, the record states that he was subjected to "harsh disciplinary measures." Nevertheless, he was allowed to continue his service to the Anglican Church, and was rector of Fletton at the time of his death. And his high positions at Cambridge were continued long after he became and remained a Conditionalist. Thus another highly trained schoolman declared his convictions and stood his ground.

7. Dissenter Bourn—Punishment of Wicked to Be "Total Extinction"

The controversy over the soul was now passing from what may be termed its philosophical aspect to what was recognized by thoughtful scholars as the Biblical phase of the issue—in reality the only determining factor. This tended to enlarge the interest and to popularize the question in ever-widening circles of discussion.

31 Quoted in Mills, Earlier Life-Truth Exponents. p. 44.

32 Ibid.

This brings us to SAMUEL BOURN (1714-1796), Dissenting minister, of Norwich. Trained at Glasgow University, he became a zealous champion of the original gospel and an opposer of all subsequent error and perversion, as he saw it. He was unwearied in his devotion to truth. Pursuing this principle, ere long he became a vigorous exponent of Eternal Life Only in Christ, and took a strong stand against extreme Calvinism. Between 1758 and 1760 he produced a four-volume set of sermons, A Series of Discourses on the Principles and Evidences of Natural Religion and the Christian Revelation, some of which relate to the future state and clearly set forth the "doctrine of the destruction of the wicked," as against their eternal torment [33] In fact, most discussions now revolved around the issue of eternal torment.

This was speedily attacked by Dr. Samuel Chandler, of Old Jewry, and resulted in a further clash with John Mason—the issue with the latter being over the resurrection. Bourn defended his position in the Appendix to his sermons on the parables. It should be added that Bourn continued to be held in high repute as a preacher, and was regarded as a "masterly writer"—albeit laborious and dry by today's standard. He answered Chandler in A Letter to the Rev. Samuel Chandler, D.D., concerning the Christian Doctrine of Future Punishment (1759). This centred on the scriptural inquiry "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?"

1. DOGMA OF ETERNAL TORMENT "DIABOLICAL." —

Bourn's strong personal convictions are expressed in this virile phrasing:

"Whether the afore-mentioned expressions are intended to convey to us the idea of everlasting torture, or of everlasting destruction, i.e., annihilation?—Perhaps some may be inclined to think, that they serve to convey ideas, both of torment, and of total destruction. With such persons (if there are any) I desire to have no controversy. Because on this supposition, the torments or misery cannot be infinite. And it is only that Mahometan, Pagan, and (as I must confess it appears to me at present) most absurd, cruel anti-Christian, and diabolical doctrine of infinite, or never-ending misery and torment, which I am opposing and endeavouring to eradicate." [34]

33 Abbot, op. cit., no. 3975.

34 Reprinted in R. Barron, Pillars of Priestcraft and Orthodoxy Shaken, vol. 3, pp. 241-261.

2. PUNISHMENT IS "PROPORTIONATE TO GUILT." —

Continuing his discussion of divine punishment, Bourn succinctly states—

"that there are passages in the New Testament which imply, that the sentence of eternal death shall be executed upon criminals with circumstances of ignominy, horrors, and pain, proportionate to their guilt, I readily allow and affirm: yet am not of opinion, that the figures of being cast into unquenchable fire, and the like, are intended to convey to us any idea of torment, but solely that of total destruction, or annihilation, or ceasing to exist. And the passage in the book of Revelations, where it is said, that death and hell (i.e., Hades) shall be cast into the lake of fire, seems to me decisive in this point, For certainly the meaning there is, not that death and Hades shall be tormented (which is ridiculous) but that they shall be abolished." [35]

3. ABSOLUTE AND "ETERNAL DESTRUCTION" FOR WICKED.—

In the earlier work, *A Series of Discourses on the Principles and Evidences of Natural Religion and the Christian Revelation*, in Discourse X, in volume one, under the title "The Gospel Discovery of a Future State," Bourn says:

"The Condemnation of the wicked to eternal destruction in another state, does not detract from the goodness of the Divine intention and operation in raising mankind to another life. For as the creating all mankind to this life is undoubtedly an effect of Divine beneficence, though some men make themselves wicked and miserable in it, and come to an untimely and tragical end; so much more is the restoration of all mankind to a life after death, an effect of infinite goodness, though some shall afterward perish for ever: and instead of enjoying that eternal life, which is a gift of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, shall undergo the misery and penalty of an absolute and eternal destruction." [36]

4. EVERLASTING LIFE RESTRICTED TO "RIGHTEOUS."—

Discussing the resurrection, in relation to the question, he continues:

"The redemption which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, considered as a deliverance from the power of death, or a resurrection to another life, is a benefit or privilege bestowed on mankind in general; in like manner as their production into this life: but the everlasting possession of that is peculiar to the righteous: not to any nation, party, or profession of men: but to the virtuous and good of all mankind. For they who have done good shall come forth to the resurrection of life; and they who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation." [37]

35 Quoted in Mills, *Earlier Life-Truth Exponents*, p. 46.

36 Ibid. pp. 46, 47.

37 Ibid. p. 47.

5. DEATH OF WICKED "TOTAL EXTINCTION OF LIFE."—

In Discourse XV, maintaining the doctrine of the ultimate destruction of the incorrigibly wicked, Bourn sums up his view in these comprehensive words:

"Death, when applied to the end of wicked men in a future state, properly denotes their ceasing to exist, or a total extinction of life and being." [38]

By the latter part of the eighteenth century the number of opponents to the natural immortality of the soul theory had so increased that one Immortal-Soul list, Grantham Killingworth, in a work against Conditionalism entitled *A Vindication of the Soul's Immortality* (1761), complained that the number of such "Cavils and Objections" in his day were "legion." Allowing for exaggeration, we find that the divergent voices had now obviously swelled to a considerable chorus.

38 Ibid.

8. Lesser Lights Support Testimony of Major Witnesses

And now, for the record, brief allusion should be made concerning certain typical, less prominent characters who likewise testified in behalf of Conditionalism, and against eternal torment. Although not so well known, here are nine, for example, scattered over the century:

(1) JOHN Pirrs, Anglican presbyter, wrote anonymously (but clearly identified), on the theme, *The Holy Spirit the Author of Immortality, or Immortality a Peculiar Grace of the Gospel, no Natural Ingredient of the Soul: proved from the Holy Scriptures, and Fathers against Mr. Clark's Bold Assertion of the Soul's Natural Immortality*. . . . By a Presbyter of the Church of England (1708). At the outset of the century he contends that man is "designed for immortality," but "only as the condition of his obedience, and the reward of it."

(2) JOHN JACKSON (fl. 1735-1747), Anglican rector of Roffington and master of Wigston's Hospital in Leicester, made his contribution with *A Dissertation on Matter and Spirit: with some Remarks on a Book (by A. Baxter) entitled, Enquiry into the Nature of the humane Soul* (1735); and *Belief of a Future State* (1745). He explicitly denies the soul can "exist and act" without the body.

(3) JOHN LELAND (1691-1766), learned Nonconformist minister and writer on eschatology, constructively discussed *A State of Future Rewards and Punishments* (1764); and *Discourses* (four volumes, 1769). Volume four is on *How Christ has abolished Death, and brought Life and Immortality to light*—both soundly Conditionalist.

(4) DR. BENJAMIN DAWSON (1729-1814), Scottish philologist and divine, was educated at Kendal and Glasgow. He was first a Presbyterian minister of London, then became an Anglican rector in Suffolk. He issued several works in defense of the noted Conditionalists Archdeacon Blackburne and Bishop Law, including pertinent *Remarks on . . . the State of the Soul after Death* (1765).

(5) JOHN ALEXANDER (fl. 1736-1765), Presbyterian minister and commentator, and reputedly one of the best Greek scholars of his day, published *A Paraphrase upon the Fifteenth Chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (1766), dealing with "Man's Mortality." Immortality is a "gift."

(6) GEORGE CLARKE (ft. 1789-1792) wrote *A Vindication of the Honor of God: in a Scriptural Refutation of the Doctrines of Eternal Misery, and Universal Salvation* (1792). Here he effectively maintains the destruction of the wicked by fire, not endless punishing. Immortality is, according to Scripture, only for the penitent and obedient.

(7) WILLIAM KENRICK, of Dublin, issued *The Grand Question Debated; or an Essay to prove that the Soul of Man is not, neither can it be, Immortal* (1751). It too was a clear Conditionalist voice heard in Ireland.

(8) JOHN MARSOM (fl. 1794) effectively answered two critics, the first with *The Universal Restoration of Mankind examined and proved to be a Doctrine Inconsistent with itself, . . . and Subversive of the Gospel of Jesus Christ* (1794), [39] and the second with *The Scripture Doctrine of Future Punishment Defended* (1795). He flatly rejects the doctrine of never-ending misery and torment, maintaining that every unrepentant sinner will be "destroyed," and that there will be no resurrection of such from the "second death."

39 The foregoing titles can all be verified from Abbot's incomparable *Literature of the Doctrine of a Future Life* (1864). The originals are scattered over the libraries of Britain, and have been examined.

(9) JOHN TOTTIE (fl. 1772), canon of Christ Church, Oxford, and archdeacon of Worcester, in his *Sermons*, preached before the University of Oxford (1772), strongly opposes the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul. He rejects the position of the philosophers and stresses the resurrection as the gateway to immortality. [40]

Allusion should also be made to Goadby's *Bible* (1759), in three volumes, published in London, for in the notes the editors advocate eternal life only in Christ and destruction for all the finally impenitent wicked. These are samples of a widespread rejection of Immortal-Soulism among the less-known clergy of various faiths. [41] So, notwithstanding the preponderant philosophical view of the immortality of the soul, the voice of Conditionalism was not only reverberating in Britain but echoing on the Continent. Even in North America an anonymous work appeared at the close of the century—*Observations . . . that the Soul is Inactive and Unconscious from Death to the Resurrection, derived from Scripture* (New York: 1795).

40 Hyamson, op. cit., p. 656.

41 James Burnley, "Robert Goadby," *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 8, p. 22.

9. "Fringe" Writers Complicate the Controversy

Several "fringe" writers, moreover, appeared during this century. Among the rationalists there was French-born PIERRE BAYLE (1647-1706), professor of philosophy at the Protestant University of Sedan, and after its suppression and his removal, similarly professor of philosophy at Rotterdam. In his celebrated six-volume *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (1695-1697)—which ran through eight editions in forty years, and was twice translated into English—in various places he opposes the doctrine of eternal torment, [42] but from a sceptical viewpoint. Its publication added fuel to the spreading flame.

Then there was the learned professor HENRY DODWELL (1641-1711), Irish-English classicist and theologian, educated at Trinity College, Dublin. He was made professor of ancient history at Oxford in 1688. His voluminous and "cumbrous" writings included *An Epistolary Discourse* (1706). This curious treatise sustained some of the principles of Conditionalism, but on a sacramentarian basis, supposing immortality to be a grace conferred by the effusion of the Holy Spirit, in baptism, and that none have the power of bestowing this immortalizing grace except the bishops. Its issuance created a storm of opposition and intensified the controversy, but it was defended by several writers. So the issues were complicated by certain of these "fringe" writers, not claimed by the Conditionalists. Such was the situation at the close of the eighteenth century.

42 Cf. Abbot, op. cit., no. 3799.

SUMMARY OF CONDITIONALISM DURING THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.—

There is no particular transition point discernible in passing from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century. But there is a growing seriousness and scholarly validity that marks the overall witness of the new century. The scene is again centered chiefly in England—with one noted advocate migrating to the United States about the time of the Revolution of 1776.

The religious spread is again seen to be between Anglican, Dissenter, Baptist, Non-Conformist, and Presbyterian spokesmen. "Fringe" writers, who both help and hamper, are found in France, Holland, and Ireland. The stature of the champions of Conditionalism is again clearly seen by the roster—archdeacons, historians, theologians, clergymen, hymnists, scientists, educators, physicians, commentators, schoolmasters, teachers, and two bishops—and an anonymous Anglican.

Again there is balanced stress of the mortality of the soul, unconsciousness in death, and the total ultimate extinction of the wicked. And for the first time a reliable scholarly history appears, by Francis Blackburne, of the conflict over Conditionalism—tracing it from the beginning of Protestantism up to 1772, a century and a half of the crucial years of the recovery of a hidden and well-nigh abandoned doctrine, so far as the Middle Ages are concerned.

So Conditionalism is now in a far stronger position, is accorded much greater respect by its foes, and is gradually but steadily on the increase in influence and adherents in the eighteenth century. It is approaching the acceleration point in the nineteenth century. Thus much for Conditionalism in the eighteenth century.

Number	Page	Name	Year	Location	Religion
1	205	Blackburne, Fran.	1765	England	Anglican
2	214	Priestley, Joseph	1777	Eng.-U.S.	Dissenter
3	218	Watts, Isaac	1740	England	Independent
4	221	Warburton, Wm.	1738	England	Anglican
5	224	Whiston, Wm.	1740	England	Baptist
6	227	Hallett, Jos. Jr.	1729	England	Non-Conformist
7	228	Anonymous	1729	England	
8	230	Scott, Joseph N.	1743	England	Dissenter
9	231	Law, Edmund	1745	England	Anglican
10	234	Peckard, Peter	1756	England	Anglican
11	236	Bourn, Samuel	1758	England	Dissenter
12	239	Pitts, John	1708	England	Anglican
13	239	Jackson, John	1735	England	Anglican
14	240	Leland, John	1691	England	Non-Conformist
15	240	Dawson, Benjamin	1765	England	Presbyterian/Anglican
16	240	Alexander, John	1766	England	Presbyterian
17	240	Clarke, George	1792	England	
18	240	Kenrick, Wm.	1751	Ireland	
19	240	Marsom, John	1794	England	
20	241	Tottie,-John	1772	England	Anglican
21	241	"Goodby's Bible"	1759	England	
22	241	Boyle, Pierre	1695	French-Holland	Protestant
23	242	Dodwell, Henry	1706	Ireland-England	High Church