excluſively to the latter, has been ſo ably confuted by a learned writer, who was never averſe from allowing to human reaſon all the diſcoveries which it can juſtly claim, that we ſhall ſubmit his arguments to our readers in preference to any thing which we can give ourſelves.

“ If reaſon doth, on the one hand, ſeem to revolt at *everlasting puniſhment,* we muſt confeſs that fancy, on the other, (even when full plumed by *vanity),* hath ſcarce force enough to rise to the idea of *infinite rewards.* How the heart of man came to conſider this as no more than an adequate retribution for his right conduct during the ſhort trial of his virtue here, would be hard to tell, did we not know what monſters pride begot of old upon *Pagan philoſophy ;* and how much greater it ill theſe latter ages have diſcloſed, *by the long* in­cubation of *ſchool divinity* upon *folly.* What hath been urged from natural reaſon, in ſupport of this extravagant preſumption, is ſo very ſlender, that it recoils as you enforce it. Firſt, you ſay, ‘ that the ſoul, the ſubject of theſe eter­nal rewards, being *immaterial,* and ſo therefore unaffected by the cauſes which bring material things to an end, is, by its nature, fitted for eternal rewards.—This is an argument *ad ignorantiam,* and holds no farther. — Becauſe an *immaterial* be­ing is not ſubject to that mode of diſſolution which affects *material* ſubſtances, you conclude it to be eternal. This is going too faſt. There may be, and probably are, many natural cauſes (unknown indeed to us), whereby immaterial beings come to an end. But if the nature of things cannot, yet God certainly can, put a final period to ſuch a being when it hath ſerved the purpoſe of its creation. Doth annihi­lation impeach that wiſdom and goodneſs which was diſplayed when God brought it *out of nothing ?* Other immate­rial beings there are, *viz.* the ſouls of brutes, which have the ſame natural ſecurity with man for their exiſtence, of whoſe *eternity* we never dream. But pride, as the poet obſerves, *calls God unjust.*

If man alone engroſs not heaven’s high care ;

Alone made perfect here, immortal there.

However, let us (for argument’s ſake) allow the human ſoul to be unperiſhable by nature, and ſecured in its ex­iſtence by the unchangeable will of God, and ſee what will follow from thence— An *infinite* reward for virtue, during one moment of its exiſtence, becauſe reaſon diſcovers that, by the law of nature, *ſome* reward is due ? By no means, When God hath amply repaid us for the performance of our duty, will he be at a loss how to diſpoſe of us for the long remainder of *eternity?* May he not find new and endleſs employment for reaſonable creatures, to which, when pro­perly diſcharged, new rewards and in endleſs ſucceſſion will be aſſigned ? Modell reaſon ſeems to dictate this to the fol­lowers of the *law of nature.* The flattering expedient of eternal rewards for virtue here was invented in the ſimplicity of early ſpeculation, after it had fairly brought men to conclude that the ſoul is immaterial.

“ Another argument urged for the eternity of the re­wards held out by natural religion to the practice of piety and virtue is partly phyſical and partly moral. The merit of ſervice (ſay the admirers of that religion) increaſes in proportion to the excellence of that Being to whom our ſer­vice is directed and becomes acceptable. An infinite being, therefore, can diſpenſe no rewards but what are infinite. And thus the virtuous man becomes intitled to immortality.

“ The misfortune is, that this reaſoning holds equally on the side of the unmerciful doctors, as they are called, who doom the wicked to everlasting punishment. Indeed were this the only diſcredit under which it labours, the mercileſs doctors would hold themſelves little concerned. But the truth is, that the argument from *infinity* proves juſt nothing. To make it of any force, both the parties ſhould be *infinite.* This inferior emanation of God’s *image,* man, ſhould either be ſupremely good or ſupremely bad, a kind of deity or a kind of devil. But theſe reaſoners, in their attention to the *divinity,* overlook the *humanity* which makes the decreaſe keep pace with the accumulation, till the rule of logic, that the *conclusion follows the weaker* part, comes in to end the dispute@@\*.

Theſe arguments ſeem to prove unanſwerably that im­mortality is not eſſential to any part of the compound being man, and that it cannot be claimed as a reward due to his virtue. It is not indeed eſſential to any created being, for what has not exiſtence of itſelf, cannot of itſelf have per­petuity of exiſtence (ſee Metaphysics, n⁰ 272, &c.) ; and as neither man nor angel can be profitable to God, they can­not claim from him any thing as a debt. Both, indeed, as moral agents have duties preſcribed them ; and while they faithfully perform theſe duties, they have all the ſecurity which can ariſe from the perfect benevolence of him who brought them into exiſtence, that they ſhall enjoy a sufficient portion of happineſs to make that exiſtence preferable to nonexiſtence; but reaſon and philoſophy furniſh no data from which it can be inferred that they ſhall exiſt for ever. Man is compoſed in part of periſhable materials. However perfect Adam maybe thought to have been when he came firſt from the hands of his Creator, his body, as formed of the dust of the ground, muſt have been naturally liable to decay and diſſolution. His ſoul, indeed, was of a more durable ſubſtance; but as it was formed to animate his body, and had no prior conſcious exiſtence, it is not eaſy to conceive what ſhould have led him, under an equal providence, where rewards and puniſhments were exactly diſtributed, to ſuppoſe that one part of him ſhould ſurvive the other. In his natural and original ſtate, before the covenant made with him in paradiſe, he was unqueſtionably a mortal creature. How long he continued in that ſtate, it ſeems not poſſible to form a plauſible conjecture. Biſhop Warburton suppoſes him to have lived ſeveral years under no other dispensation than that of natural religion; during which he was as liable to death as his fallen poſterity are at present.

“ We muſt needs conclude (ſays this learned writer@@\*), that God having tried Adam in *the state of nature,* and ap­proved of the good uſe he made of his free-will under the direction of that light, advanced him to a superipr ſtation in *Paradiſe.* How long, before this remove, man had continued ſubject to *natural religion* alone, we can only gueſs: but of this we may be aſſured, that it was ſome conſiderable time before the garden of Eden could naturally be made fit for his reception. Since Moſes, when he had concluded his hiſtory of the creation, and of God’s *rest on,* and *ſanctification of,* the seventh day proceeds to ſpeak of the condi­tion of this new world in the following terms : *“ And God made every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew ; for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth* @@\*.' Which ſeems plainly to intimate, that when the ſeeds of vegetables had been created on the third day, they were left to nature, in its ordinary operations, to mature by sun and ſhowers. So that when in courſe of time Paradiſe was become capable of accommodating its inhabitants, they were tranſplanted thither.”

This reaſoning is not without a portion of that ingenuity which was apparent in every thing that fell from the pen of Warburton ; but it was completely confuted almoſt as ſoon as it was given to the public, and ſhown to be deduced from premiſes which could be employed againſt the author’s ſyſtem. If only the *ſeeds* of vegetables were created on the third day, and then left to nature, in its ordinary operations,

@@@[m]\* Warburton's Divine Legation, book ix.

@@@[m]\* Divine Legation, book ix. chap i.

@@@[m]\* Gen. ii, 4, 5.