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,* max, 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) ; 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 to them ; and while they faithfully perform those 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 non-existence ; but reason and philosophy furnish no data from which it can be inferred that they shall exist for ever. Man is partly composed of perishable materials. However perfect Adam may be 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.

Sect. III.—*condition of Man in Paradise.*

Bishop Warburton has advanced the notion that Adam, after his creation, lived for some time under the dispensation of simple natural religion before he was admitted into Paradise, where he was placed under a new dispensation. (Div. Leg. book ix. chap. 1.) To this opinion we are disposed to assent, though not altogether in the form nor for the reasons which the author has adduced. It appears clear from the sacred narrative that though Adam and his wife were created on the sixth day, they were not *on that day* introduced into Paradise. After telling us that on the sixth day God finish­ed all his works, which he saw to be very good, and rested on the seventh day, Moses briefly recapitulates the history of the generations of the heavens and of the earth, gives us a more particular account of the formation of the first man, informing us that the “ Lord God formed him out of the dust of tne ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, when man became a living soul ;” and then proceeds to say, (Gen. ii. 7, 8, and 15,) that the “ Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, where he put the man whom he had *formed.”* From this short history of the first pair it appeals evident beyond dispute, that neither the man nor the woman was formed tn the garden ; and that from their creation some time elapsed before the garden was prepared for their reception, is likewise evident from a comparison of

Gen. i. 29, with Gen. ii. 16, 17. In the first of these pas­sages God gives to man, immediately after his creation, “ every herb bearing seed which was upon the face of all the earth, and *every tree,* without exception, in which was the fruit of a tree bearing seed : to him he said it should be for meat.” In the second, “ he commanded the man, say­ing, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat ; but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shaft not eat of it ; for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shaft surely die.” When the first grant of food was given, Adam and his wife must have been where no tree of knowledge grew, and they must have been intended to live at least so long in that state as that they should have occasion for food, other­wise the formal grant of it would have been not only super­fluous, but apt to mislead them with respect to the subse­quent restriction.

In Paradise Adam was placed under a new law, and by the grace of God assured of a supernatural and eternal re­ward in case of perfect obedience. “ And the Lord God,” says Moses, “ planted a garden eastward in Eden, and took the man and put him in the garden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God,” continues he, “commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat ; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it ; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shaft surely die,” (Gen. ii. 8, 15, 16, 17.) Here is no men­tion made of the laws of piety and moral virtue resulting from the relations in which the various individuals of the human race stand to each other, and in which all his crea­tures stand to God, their Almighty and beneficent Creator. With these laws Adam was already well acquainted ; and be must have been sensible, that as they were founded in his nature, no subsequent law could dispense with their obliga­tion. They have been equally binding on all men in every state and under every dispensation ; and they will continue to be so as long as the general practice of justice, mercy, and piety, shall contribute to the sum of human happiness. The new law peculiar to his paradisaical state was the com­mand not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This was a positive precept, not founded in the nature of man, but very proper to be the test of his obedience to the will of his Creator. The laws of piety and virtue are sanctioned by nature, or by that general system of rules according to which God governs the physical and moral worlds, and by which he has secured, in some state or other, happiness to the pious and virtuous man, and misery to such as shall prove incorrigibly wicked. The law re­specting the forbidden fruit was sanctioned by the penalty of *death* denounced against disobedience ; and by the sub­jects of that law the nature of this penalty must have been perfectly understood : but Christian divines, as we shall afterwards see, have differed widely in opinion respecting the full import of the Hebrew words which our translators have rendered by the phrase *thou shall surely die.* All how­ever agree that they threatened death, in the common ac­ceptation of the word, or the separation of the soul and body, as one part of the punishment to be incurred by eat­ing the forbidden fruit ; and hence we must infer, that had the forbidden fruit not been eaten, our first parents would never have died, because the penalty of death was denoun­ced against no other transgression. What, therefore, is said respecting the fruit of the tree of knowledge, implies not only a law but also a covenant,@@1 promising to man, upon the

@@@1 It does not appear that any transaction between God and mankind, in general, was denominated by a word equivalent to the English word ***covenant*** till the end of the fourth century, when such phraseology was introduced into the church by the celebrated Augustin, bishop of Hippo. That the phraseology is strictly proper, no man can suppose who reflects on the infinite distance between the contracting parties, and absolute dominion of the one over the other. To be capable of entering into a ***covenant,*** in the proper sense of the word, both parties must have a right either to agree to the terms proposed or to reject them ; but surely Adam had no right to bargain with his Maker, or to refuse the gift of immortality on the terms on which it was offered to him. The word ***dispensation*** would more accurately denote what is here meant by the word ***covenant;*** but as this last is in general use, we have retained it as sufficient, when thus explained, to distinguish what man received from God upon certain positive conditions, from what be bad a claim to by the constitution of his nature.