

of the Creation, but the *Light*, the *Expanse*, (and so the *Air*,) the *Earth*, the *Waters*, &c. were made on the first and second. Now where-ever is *Earth* and *Air*, to go no further, there must be *Gravitation* and *Levitation*, otherways the *Earth*, *Trees*, &c. would have all tumbled into the *Air*, and return'd to *Chaos*. We must therefore find some new *Hypothesis* to solve these difficulties—and we'll freely give him our own in return for his. We suppose, nay think we can prove, a Center of gravity in the *Earth*, that is, a Point to which all other *Bodies* tend, but the Question is *how*. We answer, the *Earth* is in the Nature of a great *Animal*, and has something equivalent to breathing out and drawing in the *Air*: Or, to speak with the new Philosophers, the one great *Magnet*, and has a *Magnetical* Quality in every part of it, and much stronger in the whole. Now in all *Electrical* and *Magnetical* *Bodies*, there must some *Particles* go out, and some be still returning in the *Current*, where-of such things are drawn along, as it lights on, whose *Pores* are proportion'd for those little *Bodies* which seize upon 'em. Now *Light* things make not equal resistance, or rather don't Tally so well with the returning hamated *Particles* of the *Earth*, as those that are heavy.—For Example, a *Feather*, as a *Stone*, or *Iron*, whence those heavy *Bodies* are sooner drag'd to the *Earth*, whereas the *Magnetical* particle can't take such fast and sure hold of those *Bodies* we call *Light*; besides the heavy crouding fastest under, thrust 'em by. If nothing else, yet so much *Air* getting under 'em as the *Pillar* of *Air* is altogether more solid, and stronger than the single weight of the *Straw* or *Feather*, especially if mov'd with a *Breath* of *Wind*, accordingly the lighter Substance must necessarily float on the *Surface* of the *Air*, even when smooth and undisturbed, tho' easier when there's more *Air* beneath, as *Wood* in the *Water*, nay when agitated with *Wind* it takes up heavy Substances, more of it's *Particles* being then crouded together, as in an *Air Gun*, which we know throws a *Bullet* several yards, as a swift current of *Water* will for a short time, sustain even *Stones* and *Iron*, and hurry 'em along with it.

Quest. 1. *Whether Men shall be tormented with Fire and Brimstone, or any Torment after this Life?*

Ans. We receiv'd this among several other Questions sometime since, from the same hand. The rest will be answer'd either in the next twelve Numbers, or our promis'd Appendix, but this being of more concern, and having been hinted at, in our discourse against Gods ordaining or necessitating Sin, Vol. 2. N. — we think it most proper to reply to it in a single *Mercury*. Only we must here ask the Querists leave to give him our own Thoughts, before we produce his, and to let the *Antidote* go before the *Poison*. Accordingly we answer in the Affirmative, which must be true, if God himself is. "That Wicked Men shall suffer Torment after this Life, that this Torment is express'd in the Scriptures by that of Fire and Brimstone. Nay, that the Scriptures unanswerably affirm those Torments shall

be Eternal, and that therefore they must be so if the Scriptures themselves are true.

Our Arguments for it shall be taken from Scripture, and from Reason — Those from Reason are as follow — 1. Sin deserves it. 2. Man chuses it. 3. There's a Necessity for it. 4. Providence requires it. 5. All Nations acknowledge it. Those from Scripture will come in, in their proper Places.

1. Sin deserves it, and that in its own Nature. This all Protestants hold of every Sin, who allow none to be in themselves Venial, and unless this be prov'd, we in vain attempt to save Gods Justice; nor is any way so effectual to evince it, as by the considering Sin as objectively infinite — against an Infinite God, or why else shou'd it deserve infinite Punishment? This is confirm'd — because Man's Option or Choice of this infinite Punishment, the known unavoidable consequence of Sin, tho' it might be sufficient to render Man inexcusable, does not, we think, clear the Justice of God in inflicting it, unless the Sin it self really deserv'd it, any more than the Resolution or Will of sinning infinitely, for tho' supposing Sin in it self deserves infinite Punishment, both the Option of Man, and Contumacy of the Will are strong Arguments both to Silence Man, and to vindicate the Justice of God; yet it seems not Consonant unto it, to inflict Punishment actually infinite for Sin that is not actual, or if so, for no other Reason than because it deserves it. Besides Men are punish'd after this Life, for Sins they have committed, rather than for those they would, at least those they might have committed — or if those they would, such as they immediately will'd, not such as are will'd at a distance in causes far remote, they having actual Sins more than enough to answer for. The Objection here urg'd is, "That this makes all Sins equal. In answer, they may be all said to be equal, as to that infinite Object against whom they are ultimately committed, and so are punished with infinite Pains, which are equal in their Duration — But they are unequal as to Degree, one Sin admitting more or less aggravations than another, or being in its own Nature more hainous; and accordingly there are unequal Degrees of Pain appointed for 'em — as our Saviour himself tells us, who says, Mat. 10. 15. It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for Chorazin and Bethsaida in the Day of Judgment.

It's again urg'd — Infinite, Eternal Punishments are unproportionate to Finite Temporary Acts. It's answer'd, as before, the Object inhances the guilt of the Act. It's a higher Crime to attempt a Princes Murder than another, and in our own Laws the Punishment lasts longer than the Crime, which may be committed in a Moment.

2. After this, Option comes in. Man chuses it. If Sin deserves Infinite Punishment, and yet God has found a way for Man to escape it, and he yet chuses Sin, when he knows what's the unavoidable consequence thereof, then Gods Equity is sufficiently vindicated in the inflicting it, nay Man may more properly be said to inflict it upon himself than God. His destruction is of himself, and he as much Damns himself



self when he leaps into Hell, as drowns himself when he leaps into the Water.

3. There's a Necessity for it — by which we mean *Eternal Punishments* are the necessary consequences of Sin — Necessary both from the Nature of the Soul and the Nature of Sin. From the Nature of the Soul — 'tis immortal, and must exist after Death: It can't in Joy, because habited to Vice and Hatred of God — It must then in Misery. Pain of Loss, is it self a real Misery, (as loss of pain a real happiness;) It causes Despair, and that alone is a great part of Hell. From the Nature of Sin, the longer 'tis continu'd in, the more it hardens, and will still do so, as habits still grow stronger, unless checkt by some contrary Principle or Habit. This, in this World Gods Grace performs, in those who don't too long wilfully resist it; There it will not, for the state of Probation is over, (unless we allow a Purgatory) and the miserable Damned Souls are under the Government of his Wrath, and not his Mercy: They have no Grace, no Mediator, therefore they must actually Sin eternally, and could they cease sinning, cou'd yet have no attonement for those Sins they formerly committed; and this is much more than a Will or Resolution of Sinning, and for this their Pains must be actually eternal.

4. Providence requires it. This is plain as far as Punishment after Death. For how else can God be a just Judge? how does he equally dispense Punishments and Rewards, both which are required from the Governour of the World? This is not always, nay not often done in this World, at least not clearly and evidently. A guilty Conscience does not do it, for generally the more Wicked a Man is, the more 'tis cauteriz'd and harden'd — at which rate the more a man deserv'd Hell, the less of it he'd suffer; where then is he punish'd? if not here it must be hereafter, and if hereafter to Eternity for the Reasons before mention'd, and as will appear more plainly when we come to consider the general Objections. However we shall add something on this Head. It must be either to Eternity, or else for a short, or a long time, and then to Heaven or Earth, or Annihilation. But none of the latter, therefore the former. Not for a short time, because it equals not their Sin, which might then have as well been punish'd, in this Life — besides, all grant the Expressions in Scripture must denote a long-time, if not Eternity — *Diuturnitas*, if not *Aeternitas*. Nor for a long-time only, suppose Millions of Years, and then to cease, because the Scripture won't admit it, as will anon appear; and because this wou'd be unproportion'd to Finite, Temporary, Transient Acts of Sin, as well as what's Eternal and Infinite. Not to remove thence to Heaven, where no unclean thing can enter, for the former Reasons. Not to Earth, because the World's destroy'd, or at least not fit for them: Not to nothing, because the Substance of the Soul's indissoluble — nor can any Accident destroy Substance, tho' it may alter it; nor can we suppose it by any positive Act of God, who is the Fountain of Being — there's then only remaining a Suspension of his Influence to make this Annihilation so much as possible; but how little Reason there is to expect so

much as this, nay how much certainty there is from the infallible Testimony of Heaven that the damned shall never obtain this last sad remedy, we shall clear when we come to produce the Arguments from Scripture which confirm our Opinion.

5. All Nations acknowledge it. We don't say, all Men in all Nations, nor all Sects of Men. We need not stretch it to all Men, tho' the Argument from Conscience is not easily answer'd; nor to all Sects of Men, some of which have at least pretended to deny or doubt of it. We affirm it, therefore, of the whole Bulk of the civiliz'd World, nay we may take in even most of the Barbarians, tho' it has been long since observ'd, the better men have been, either in Communities or single Instances, the more firmly they have still believ'd it. 'Tis further observable, that hardly ever any were known who granted Rewards after this Life, but acknowledge Punishments also, one being as equal as t'other, nay one being hardly equal without the other: And those Punishments Eternal, which they express'd by the Torments of *Tantalus*, *Titius*, the *Belides*, &c. And if 'tis said these were Fables, they had however some Moral in them, and if any at all, it must relate to this Eternity. But we han't time nor room here to prosecute this Argument, drawn from consent of Nations, to particular Instances, which has been largely and sufficiently done by *Numenius*, and many other more Modern Writers — who make it unanswerably appear, that this Principle has obtain'd in Nations at the greatest distance, who were ne're known to have had Communication with each other, Barbarous as well as Civil, without Laws as well as with 'em, nay before any Laws or Law-givers, besides the Law of Nature and God, who writ it on the Hearts of all Men too deeply to be ever totally effac'd again — which takes off most of the Objections against it, as they'll all fall to the Ground, if we fairly consider that cou'd any Instances be produced to the contrary out of any Authentick History, as we hardly believe there can, they might yet be as easily accounted; for as the profess'd Atheism of some single Persons in our own Nation, notwithstanding which we surely may with sufficient Propriety of speech affirm, that the English believe a God, since there are and will be Monsters in Morality as well as in Nature, tho' the latter less deform'd of the two, and tho' the one can no more invalidate universal Authority, than the other Disgrace or Denominate all Humanity, and thus much for the Arguments from Reason, for the Eternity of Punishments.

The second Head of Arguments arises from Scripture, whence this Truth is yet much more clear than from our own short-sighted Reason. For the Old Testament, whether this be plainly there described or no, it's no valid Exception, nor so much as any considerable prejudice against it, since it's unanswerably clear in the New, Life and Immortality both of Good and Bad, being brought to Light in the Gospel, which were before more clouded under Types and Figures, and Promises of Temporal Felicity. However we'll not grant the Sadducee so much as this is, who is like to fight for every Inch of ground before he shall have it; nor will we in-