tempt by the surrounding nations, who derided them no less for their sabbaths than for their circumcision. All sorts of writers ridiculed them on this account. Seneca charged them with spending the seventh part of their time in sloth. Tacitus said, that not only the seventh day, but also the seventh year, was unprofitably wasted. Juvenal brings forward the same charge ; and Persius upbraided them with their *recutita sabbata.* Plutarch said that they kept it in honour of Bacchus ; Tacitus affirmed that it was in ho­nour of Saturn ; but the most abominable assertion of all is that of Apion, who said that they observed the Sabbath in memory of their being cured on that day of a shameful disease, called by the Egyptians *sabbo.*

Some, perceiving the force of this objection, have con­tended that time was divided into weeks of seven days, that each of the planetary gods, the Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn, who were the *Dii ma­jorum gentium,* might have a day appropriated to his ser­vice. But if such was the origin of weeks, how came the great and ancient goddess Tellus to be omitted ? She was worshipped by the early idolaters as well as the other planets, and must surely have been deemed by them as worthy of a particular day set apart to her honour as the planet Sa­turn, who was long undiscovered, afterwards seen but oc­casionally, and at all times considered as of malign aspect.

Others have supposed, that as the year was divided into lunar months of something more than twenty-eight days, it was natural to divide the months into quarters from the different phases of the moon, which would produce as many weeks of seven days. But this supposition is less tenable than the former. The phases of the moon are not so precisely marked at the quarters as to attract to them any particular notice ; nor are the quarterly appearances of one month commonly like those of another. We cannot, therefore, conceive what should have induced the earliest observers of the phases of the moon to divide the month into four parts rather than into three, or five, or seven. Had the ancient week consisted of fourteen days, it might have been inferred, with some degree of plausibility, that its length was regulated by the phases of the moon, because the shape of that luminary, at the end of the second quarter, is very precisely marked; but there is nothing which, in the pre­sent hypothesis, could have everywhere led mankind to make their weeks consist of seven days. This division of time, therefore, can be accounted for only by admitting the primeval institution of the Sabbath, as related by Moses in the book of Genesis. That institution was absolutely ne­cessary to preserve among men a sense of religion ; and it was renewed to the Jews at the giving of the law, and its observance enforced by the severest penalties. It was ac­cordingly observed by them with more or less strictness in every part of their commonwealth ; and there is none of the institutions of their divine lawgiver which, in their present state of dispersion, they more highly honour. They re­gard it, indeed, with a superstitious reverence, call it their spouse, their delight, and speak of it in the most magnifi­cent terms. They have often varied in their opinions of the manner in which it ought to be kept. In the time of the Maccabees, they carried their respect for the sabbath so very high, that they would not on that day defend them­selves from the attacks of their enemies. But afterwards they did not scruple to stand upon their necessary defence, although they would do nothing to prevent the enemy from carrying on their operations. When our Saviour was on earth, it was no sin to loose a beast from the stall and lead him to water ; and if he had chanced to fall into a ditch, they pulled him out. But now it is absolutely unlawful to give a creature in that situation any other assistance than that of f∞d ; and if they lead an animal to water, they must take care not to let the bridle or halter hang loose, other­wise they are transgressors.

As the law enjoins rest on that day from all servile em­ployments, in order to comply with the injunction, they undertake no kind of work on Friday but such as can easily be accomplished before evening. In the afternoon they put into proper places the meat that they have prepared to eat the day following. They afterwards set out a table co­vered with a clean cloth, and place bread upon it, which they also cover with another cloth ; and during the sabbath the table is never moved out of its place. About an hour before sunset, the women light the sabbath lamps, which hang in the places where they eat. They then stretch forth their hands to the light, and pronounce the following bene­diction. “ Blessed be thou, O God, king of the world, who hast enjoined us, that are sanctified by thy commandments, to light the sabbath lamp.” These lamps are two or more in number, according to the size of the chamber in which they are suspended, and continue to burn during the greater part of the night. In order to begin the sabbath well, they wash their hands and faces, trim their hair, and pair their nails, beginning at the fourth finger, then going to the second, then the fifth, then the third, and ending with the thumb. If a Jew casts the parings of his nails to the ground, he is *rascah,* that is, a wicked man ; for Satan has great power over those parings of nails ; and it seems they are of great use to the wizards, who know how to em­ploy them in their enchantments. If he buries them in the earth, he is *tzedic,* that is, a just man ; if he burns them in the fire, he is *chesid,* that is, worthy of honour, or an holy man. When they have performed these preparatory cere­monies, they repair to the synagogue, and enter upon their devotions. As soon as prayers begin, the departed souls spring out of the purgatorial flames, and have liberty to cool themselves in water while the sabbath lasts, for which reason the Jews prolong the continuance of it as much as they can ; and the rabbin have strictly commanded them not to ex­haust all the water on the sabbath day, lest those miserable souls should by these means be deprived of the refreshing element. When they have ended their prayers, they return home, and salute one another, by wishing a good sabbath. They then sit down to table. The master of the family takes a cup full of wine, and lifting up his hand, says, “ Blessed be thou, O God our Lord, king of the world, who hast created the fruit of the vine. Blessed be thou, O God our Lord, king of the world, who hast sanctified us by thy commandments, and given us thy holy sabbath ; and of thy good will and pleasure hast left it to us an in­heritance, the memorial of thy works of creation. For it is the beginning of the congregation of saints, and the me­morial of the coming out of Egypt. And thou hast also chosen us from all other people, and sanctified us, and with love and pleasure hast left thy holy sabbath an inheritance. Blessed be thou, O God, who sanctifiest the sabbath.” Af­ter this benediction is ended, he drinks, and gives the cup to all who are present. He then removes the cloth, and taking bread, says, “ Blessed be thou, O God our Lord, king of the world, who bringest bread out of the earth.” Then he breaks off a bit, and eats, and also gives a piece of it to every one of the company.

On the morning of the sabbath, the Jews do not rise so early as they do at other times, thinking, the greater plea­sure they take on that day, the more devoutly they keep it. When they come into the synagogue, they pray as usual, only the devotions are somewhat longer, being intermingled with psalmody, in honour of the sabbath. The pentateuch is then produced, and seven sections of it are read in order by seven persons chosen for the purpose. Several lessons are likewise read out of the prophets, which have some relation to what was read out of the law. After morning prayers, they return to their houses, and eat the second sabbath-meal, showing every token of joy, in honour of the festival. But if one has seen any thing ominous in his