SABBATH, in the Hebrew language, ſignifies *rest.* The ſeventh day was denominated the *Sabbath, or day of rest,* becauſe that in it God had reſted from all his works which he created and made. From that time the ſeventh day ſeems to have been ſet apart for reli­gious services; and, in conſequence of a particular in­junction, was afterwards obſerved. by the Hebrews as an holyday. They were commanded to ſet it apart for ſacred purpoſes in honour or the creation, and likewiſe in memorial of their own redemption from Egyp­tian bondage.

The importance of the inſtitution may be gathered from the different laws reſpecting it. When the ten commandments were publiſhed from Mount Sinai in tremendous pomp, the law of the Sabbath held a place in what is commonly called the firſt table, and by ſubsequent ſtatutes the violation of it was to be puniſhed with death. Six days were allowed for the use and ſervice of man; but the ſeventh day God reſerved to himſelf, and appointed it to be obſerved as a ſtated time for holy offices, and to be ſpent in the duties of piety and devotion. On this day the miniſters of the temple entered upon their week; and thoſe who had attended on the temple ſervice the preceding week went out at the fame time. New loaves of ſhew-bread were placed upon the golden table, and the old ones taken away. Two lambs for a burnt-offering, with a certain propor­tion of fine flour, mingled with oil, for a bread-offering, and wine for a libation, were offered. The Sab­bath, as all other feſtivals, was celebrated from evening to evening. It began at six in the evening on Friday, and ended at the ſame time the next day.

Concerning the time at which the Sabbath was firſt inſtituted, different opinions have been held. Some have maintained, that the ſanctification of the ſeventh day, mentioned in Gen. ii. is only there ſpoken of δια *τςολϵψιt* or by anticipation; and is to be underſtood of the Sabbath afterwards injoined the children of Israel at the commencement of the Moſaic diſpenſation. But without entering into a particular examination of all the arguments adduced to ſupport this opinion, a few obſervations, it is preſumed, will be ſufficient to ſhow that it reſts on no ſolid foundation.

It cannot eaſily be ſuppoſed that the inſpired pen­man would have mentioned the ſanctification of the ſe­venth day amongſt the primeval tranſactions, if ſuch ſanctification had not taken place until 2500 years af­terwards. Writers, ambitious of that artificial elegance which the rules of criticiſm have eſtabliſhed, often bring together in their narratives events which were themſelves far diſtant, for the fake of giving form to their diſcourſe; but Moſes appears to have deſpiſed all ſuch flimſy refinements, and to have conſtructed his narrative in great conformity to the series of events.

From the accounts we have of the religious ſervice practiſed in the patriarchal age, it appears that, imme­diately after the fall, when Adam was reſtored to fa­vour through a Mediator, a ſtated form of public wor- ship was inſtituted, which man was required to obſerve in teſtimony, not only of his dependence on the Crea­tor, but alſo of his *faith* and *hope* in the promiſe made to our firſt parents, and ſeen afar of. Of an inſtitution then ſo grand and important, no circumſtance would be omitted that is necessary to preſerve it, or that contri­butes to render the obſervance of it regular and ſolemn.

That determined times are neceſſary for the due ce­lebration of divine ſervice, cannot be denied. Such is the conſtitution of man, that he muſt have particular times ſet apart for particular services. He is doomed to toil and labour; to earn his bread in the ſweat of his face; and is capable of performing religious du­ties only in ſuch a manner as is confident with his situation in the world. If ſtated times for religious solemnities had not been enjoined, the conſequence would have been, that ſuch iolemnities would have been altogether neglected; for experience ſhows, that if mankind were left at liberty when and how often they ſhould per­form religious offices, theſe offices would not be per­formed at all. It is the obſervation of holy times that preſerves the practice of holy services; and without the frequent and regular returns of hallowed days, man would quickly forget the duty which he owes to God, and in a ſhort time no veſtige of religion would be found in the world.

Among the ordinances which God vouchsafed his ancient people, we find that the pious obſervation of holydays was particularly infiſted upon; and the Sab­bath was enjoined to be kept holy, in the moſt ſolemn manner, and under the ſevereſt penalties. Can it then be ſuppoſed that He would ſuffer mankind, from the creation of the world to the Moſaic era, to remain with­out an inſtitution ſo expedient in itſelf, and as well fitted to anſwer the end proposed by it, under the one diſpen­ſation, as ever it could be under the other? No; we have every imaginable reaſon to conclude, that when religious services were enjoined, religious times were ap­pointed alſo; for the one neceffarily implies the other.

It is no objection to the early inſtitution of the Sab­bath, that there is no mention of it in the hiſtory of the patriarchal age. It would have ſwelled the Bible to a moſt enormous ſize, had the ſacred hiſtorian given a particular account of all the tranſactions of thoſe times; besidcs, it would have anſwered no end. When Moſes wrote the book of Genesis, it was unnecessary to re­late minutely tranſactions and inſtitutions already well known by tradition: accordingly we ſee, that his nar­rative is everywhere very concise, and calculated only to preſerve the memory of the moſt important facts. However, if we take a view of the church-ſervice of the patriarchal age, we ſhall find that what is called the *legal* diſpenſation, at leaſt the liturgie part of it, was no new ſyſtem, but a collection of inſtitutions obſerved from the beginning, and republiſhed in form by Moſes. The Scriptures inform us that Cain and Abel offered ſacrifices; and the account which is given of the ac­ceptance of the one, and the rejection of the other, evi­dently ſhows that ſtated laws reſpecting the ſervice had then taken place. “ In proceſs of time,” *at the end of the days,* “Abel brought an offering.” Here was *prieft, altar, matter oſ ſacrifice, appointed time, motive to ſacrifice, atonement made,* and *accepted.* The diſtinction of animals into clean and unclean before the flood, and

Noah’s ſacrifice immediately after his deliverance, with­out any new direction, is an unanſwerable proof of the ſame truth. It is teſtiſied of Abraham, by God him­ſelf, that he kept his *charge,* his *commandments,* his *statutes,* and his *laws.* Theſe expressions comprehend the various branches, into which the law given at Sinai was divided. They contain the moral precepts, affirmative and negative, the matter of religious ſervice, a body of