

to any such interpretation of any part of the oracles of God, let it come from whomsoever it may. Its direct tendency is to discredit divine revelation, by exhibiting it as a doubtful and uncertain guide. Besides, in the present instance, if resting from his work on the seventh day was the reason that God sanctified and blessed it—and this is affirmed in the fourth commandment, as well as in the passage I have quoted—this reason was as powerful for the religious observance of the day, before the time of Moses, as after it. God had a church in the world, as really then as afterwards; and without some specified time for his worship, it would soon have fallen into general, and at last into total neglect; for the whole experience of the world establishes the position, that religious worship, whether private or public, will not long be continued, unless set seasons be appointed for its performance. Nor is it at all reasonable to suppose, that through the long period of the patriarchal dispensation, the people of God were denied the inestimable privilege of that sabbatical institution, which his church has ever since enjoyed.

The only reason assigned by those who adopt the strange opinion to which I have adverted is, that the Scripture is wholly silent, in regard to the observance of the Sabbath, from the time of the creation till the Exodus from Egypt. Suppose the fact to be exactly as this objection states; we may still maintain that it is wholly without weight. We do not read of any observance of the Sabbath during the whole time of the Hebrew judges—a space of about four hundred and fifty years; and yet our opponents themselves do not question that it was observed through the whole of that period. The truth is, the history of the church, in the early ages of the world, is so brief and summary, that its silence in regard to a particular fact is no conclusive evidence that such a fact did not take place. It is not even a strong presumption against the existence of any fact, which is rendered probable by other evidence.

But brief and comprehensive as are the records of the Pentateuch, we do by no means admit that it contains no intimations, or evidence, that a Sabbath was observed, even from the days of our first parents. We read, Gen. iv. 3, 4, that “in process of time,” Cain and Abel brought their offerings to the Lord. The phrase “process of time,” when literally rendered from the Hebrew, is, “at the end of days;” and this is the marginal reading in our common translation. Now “the end of days,” here mentioned, appears to refer to some period by which time was then measured; and it is highly probable, as many judicious critics have observed, that it refers to the end of the week, or the day on which the week terminated, which was the seventh—reckoning weeks from the day on which God rested from his work.

Again. In Gen. viii. 6-12, we have a re-

markable account of the sending forth of a raven, and a dove, by Noah, to ascertain whether the waters of the flood had so subsided as to permit his leaving the ark. Three experiments were made, and it appears that there was an interval of seven days between each. On this the judicious Scott remarks: “The repeated mention of seven days seems an intimation of the observance of the Sabbath in the ark; after the ordinances of which the dove was sent out.”

Further—There is positive evidence that a Sabbath was observed by the Hebrews before their arrival at Mount Sinai, and the giving of the decalogue, of which the fourth commandment is a part. When the Israelites were in the wilderness of Sin, which was some time before they entered the wilderness of Sinai, we find that the Sabbath was observed. There is a particular account of this, with an especial reference to the gathering and preservation of the Manna, in the 16th chapter of the book Exodus, which you may read at your leisure. Scott’s commentary on this transaction is as follows: “It is remarkable that three miracles were wrought every week in honour of the Sabbath, even *before the promulgation of the Mosaic law*. Double the quantity (of Manna) fell the day before; none fell on the Sabbath day; nor did that stink which they kept for that day. This confirms the supposition that the institution of the Sabbath was from the beginning.” If it be alleged, as it has been by some, that the Sabbath was first instituted at this very time—that is, while the Israelites were in the wilderness of Sin—we reply that the allegation is made, not only without evidence, but in opposition to all the evidence which exists in the case. There is no intimation whatever of a new institution or ordinance then appointed and introduced; but on the contrary, the language of Moses most naturally imports, that he reminded them of a divine appointment, of which they had before been apprised. In Egypt they had no doubt been compelled by their tyrannical prince, and his rigorous task-masters, to violate the Sabbath, and perhaps had so long neglected its appropriate duties as to be in a great measure ignorant of them. They had doubtless been accustomed to perform servile labor on this sacred day, and needed to be particularly instructed and guarded on this point. This was done by the divine dispensation in regard to the Manna, and at the same time Moses took occasion to teach them that the whole day was to be spent in the immediate service of God.

Once more. “The division of time into weeks, or periods of seven days, which obtained so early and almost universally, is a strong indication that *one day in seven* was always distinguished in a particular manner. WEEK, and *seven days*, are in Scripture language synonymous terms. This septenary division of time has been, from the earliest