

the well-known sanctity of that day to account for the extraordinary quantity of manna which was found upon the ground on the day preceding it. But the appointment of the Sabbath, to which his words allude, must have been earlier than the appointment of it in the Law, of which no part was yet given: for, this first gathering of the manna, which is recorded in the sixteenth chapter of Exodus, was in the second month of the departure of the Israelites from Egypt; and at Sinai, where the Law was given, they arrived not till the third. Indeed, the antiquity of the Sabbath was a thing so well understood among the Jews themselves, that some of their Rabbins had the vanity to pretend that an exact adherence to the observation of this day, under the Egyptian servitude, was the merit by which their ancestors procured a miraculous deliverance. The deliverance of the Israelites from the Egyptian bondage, was surely an act of God's free mercy, in which their own merit had no share: nor is it likely that their Egyptian lords left them much at liberty to sanctify the Sabbath, if they were inclined to do it. The tradition, therefore, is vain and groundless; but it clearly speaks the opinion of those among whom it passed, of the antiquity of the institution in question, which appears, indeed, upon better evidence, to have been coeval with the world itself. In the Book of Genesis, the mention of this institution closes the history of the creation. An institution of this antiquity and of this general importance, could derive no part of its sanctity from the authority of the Mosaic Law; and the abrogation of that Law, no more releases the worshippers of God from a rational observation of a Sabbath, than it cancels the injunction of filial piety, or the prohibitions of theft and murder, adultery, calumny, and avarice. The worship of the Christian Church is properly to be considered as a restoration of the patriarchal, in its primitive simplicity and purity, and of the patriarchal worship, the Sabbath was the noblest and perhaps the simplest rite.

The observation of a Sabbath was not only a general duty at the time of the institution, but, in the nature of the thing, of perpetual importance; since, in every stage of the world's existence, it is man's interest to remember and his duty to acknowledge his dependence upon God as the Creator of all things, and of man among the rest. The observation of a Sabbath was accordingly enforced, not by any