

intelligent students of their law would regard the covenant :

"This day was specially consecrated to devout occupation with holy thoughts. In earlier periods the people visited the prophets to listen to their instructions and exhortations. It was a day of holy assembly; the religious service was, especially in later times, most solemn, and in the synagogues the law was read to the congregation. Even light, thoughtless, every day conversation were avoided on the Sabbath. It was intended to induce the Israelite to reflect on the state of his soul and on the nature of his conduct, and thus to be a day of self-examination, of true repentance and internal reformation. For the sabbath is *holy* and the rest of the sabbath is a *sanctification*; it shall fill the pious man with a part of the holiness of the Creator, and therefore the sabbath is significantly connected with the number seven which represents holiness and divine perfection. The more incomprehensible is the opinion of those, who place the whole weight of the sabbath in the mere negative element of refraining from labour, without allowing that that great institution implies another positive element, which constitutes its real and more internal character. Freedom from *all* occupation, both physical and mental and moral is indolence and thoughtlessness and apathy which cannot possibly and on any account produce that sanctification, which is the ulterior aim of all human aspirations. The rest of God is our prototype; but God watches and rules (it might be added carries on his redeeming work) and is a perfect spirit at all times. To approach him is therefore the end of the sabbath; mental and moral indifference would remove us from him, and the sabbath, instead of being the greatest blessing of mankind would be the greatest curse.

Fourthly.—The regulations of the Levitical code and the usages of the Jewish people show that the sabbath was a day of worship. Mr. Bennett admits that there was public worship at the tabernacle or temple, but supposes that there could be none in any other part of the land. It is true that in ordinary cases their sacrifices

could be offered only at the tabernacle, but a close examination of the Old Testament would have shown not only the command for solemn religious assemblies, but ample provision made for their maintenance throughout the land. In Lev. xxiii. 3, we have the command, "Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, a HOLY CONVOCATION." Undoubtedly this was the origin of the synagogue worship. Some writers indeed have supposed that this institution originated at the time of the Babylonish captivity. But not only is there no evidence of this, but it is opposed to the facts of the case.

For the worship thus appointed ample provision was made by the separation of the whole tribe of Levi. It has been supposed that their whole work was the discharge of priestly functions. But it is easy to show the contrary. Only a small number of those were priests, and a small number would be sufficient for all the priestly work of the sanctuary, more especially as they had the Nethinims as servants to do all the laborious work. And if their work was solely the priestly duties at the sanctuary, how came it that they were settled in all parts of the land and cities assigned them in every tribe? Was it that the greater portion of one tribe was to be kept in idleness at the expense of the others? On the contrary, it is expressly asserted, that their office was that of teaching the people. See Deut. xxxiii. 10; Lev. x. 11; Mal. ii. 5-7; 2 Chron. xvii. 8-9. Hence when in later times we have the synagogue worship more particularly described, we find the reading and expounding the law prominent among its observances.

We may add that in the subsequent history there are indication of the synagogue worship. The language of the Shunamite 2 Kings iv. 23, "Wherefore wilt thou go to him (Elijah) it is neither new moon nor sabbath," shows that it was then the practice to resort to the prophets for religious instruction on the Sabbath. In Psalm lxxiv., beside the destruction of the temple it is said,—"They have burned up all the synagogues of God in the land," a passage