

religious festivals of the Israelites were observed by joyous celebrations. There were the three great agricultural feasts—unleavened bread, the first fruits, and the ingathering of the harvest; there was also the festival of the new moon; and the Sabbath was regarded as a similar religious festival. It was on an equality with these natural seasons. Hosea groups them all together:—"Her feasts, her new moons, her Sabbaths, and all her solemn assemblies." So does Isaiah: "New moon and Sabbath, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with iniquity and the solemn meeting." And Amos scornfully represents the people as asking: "When will the new moon be gone that we may sell corn? and the Sabbath that we may set forth wheat?" The Sabbath, then, in early Israel was one of the great national religious festivals—a day for assemblies at the local shrines for the joyous worship of Jehovah and therefore a day of rest from secular toil. It was a beautifully humane institution, a day of feasting and wearing good clothes, a day of good fellowship and glad some rest. It was also a religious institution. The worship of Jehovah was essential in the prophetic thought of the Sabbath. This was evidently what Hosea meant when he predicted that in the coming exile the Sabbath, along with the other festivals, would be suspended. There could be no sanctuary in exile, no shrine for Jehovah-worship in the country of strange gods, and therefore the Israelitish feasts could not continue. So essential to Sabbath-preservance in Hosea's thought was the idea of worship, that when there would be no church there could be no Sabbath. The Sabbath in the eighth century, then, was a humane institution—a day of rest from secular toil; and a religious institution—a day for assembling to worship Jehovah. It was a holiday and a holyday combined.

In the following century the local shrines were abolished and the national worship was centralized in the temple at Jerusalem. The weekly gatherings for worship were no longer possible for the great majority of the people; an occasional pilgrimage to the Capital was their only opportunity of worship. Under these circumstances, what happened to the Sabbath? To this period belong Deuteronomy and the