

is the poor man's day, the home day, the Church day, God's day. Its profanation will bring retribution. In this country there are tendencies and influences at work to bring about a similar result, and it behoves all who love God and care for society to see that they be checked. To turn the Lord's Day into a day of toil is a blighting curse to a country; to turn it into a day of dissipation would be worse. Turning to the continent of Europe, we see that, while in this country the tide has been rather against the strict observance of Sunday, the current there seems to be in the direction of Sunday rest. In France a movement under the leadership of the Count de Cissey was started among the Roman Catholics some years ago in favour of a better observance of Sunday. It received the cordial support of Pope Pius IX., and the present Pope has given it his earnest sanction. It is still making progress, and has secured the closing of many factories, shops and stores on Sunday. The Social Democrats of Germany and France make the demand for Sunday rest a part of their platform. In Switzerland and Italy there are motions in Parliament and popular movements toward securing Sunday as a day of rest. And while even atheistic societies favour the cessation of labour on Sunday there is an increased desire in the churches for the establishment of a more strictly religious character of the day. While in Great Britain and America the 'Puritan' Sunday is denounced, there appears, in lands where it has not prevailed, a desire for some, at least, of its advantages."

We have privileges, how many we know not, until some trial or disappointment takes them away. Let us not wait till we experience the loss ere we prize and use the blessing. The Sabbath is a boon together with the rest which it antedates, for God's rest of full tide blessedness is ours if here we accept the Gospel message. Oh, enter therein! No rest like that which the soul finds in Him who is made righteousness, and peace, and joy. And, oh the dread awakening, should any here awake to the solemn consciousness that for ever they have lost that rest! God forbid it, Christ prevent it, Spirit of Holiness quicken. Give faith that we may lay hold upon the redemption wrought, that we may find our rest "for ever with the Lord."

MINORITY RULE IN CONGREGATIONS.

The theory is that Congregationalists are self-governed people. They elect their own deacons, managers, and ministers, and control their own affairs generally. The theory is a very fine one. It looks well on paper—a good deal better on paper than it sometimes does in practice. It is a good theory to make speeches about and expound at associations, inductions and other places where the "true blue" most do congregate. A man who cannot make some good points when showing how beautifully the electing power vested in the people is balanced has no capacity for making points.

No doubt our system of government has worked fairly well. It has some defects, but what system is perfect? The fact that it breaks down occasionally is no argument against its general excellence. Examine its operations in many countries, and for a long period of time, and it will be found to have worked as well as, if not better than, any other system. This is the true test for any system. One of its most serious defects in practice is that—in spite of the theory that majorities should rule within certain limitations—minorities, as a matter of fact, do often rule congregations. Some congregations are ruled practically by one family. Some by one man, a few by one woman. It would be going too far to assert that in every such case the practical effect is bad, and only bad. Much depends on the character of the controlling parties. Many a struggling congregation has been kept in existence by one family, or by one man, and a few by one woman. Now if one or two persons have more zeal, more energy, more working power, more of the spirit of self-sacrifice than all the rest of the congregation, the few will rule in spite of any theory of church government. Other things being nearly equal, the man who does the most work, and makes the greatest sacrifices, will always have the most influence among Christian people. If any man in a congregation have more grace, more working ability, and makes more sacrifices than the whole session, that man will have more influence than the whole session. If any man have abilities equal, or nearly equal, to those of the minister, and have a more spiritual mind—and shows more devotedness and self-sacrifice in the work—than the minister, that man will have as much influence as the minister, probably more. Mere officialism goes for very little in this country. Earnest, persevering, self-sacrificing work always brings influence among Christian people. When these qualities are combined in one or two men they can usually control matters in spite of any theory. Against that kind of minority rule nobody protests much. Most men bow willingly to the power of goodness. May kind heaven send us more of such minority rule.

There is, however, another and very different kind.