

## Pastor and People.

### FAST FALLS THE EVENTIDE.

Fast falls the eventide; 'tis so.  
The words were uttered soft and low,  
The pallid cheek, the furrowed brow,  
The locks all white with winter's snow—  
These, these, alas! they testify  
The evening of my day is by!

I do not think at dawning day  
So swift the morn would fly away;  
Nor did I dream at regal noon  
That eventide could come so soon:  
I did not ever think to be  
So old and helpless as you see.

It seemed at morn so very far  
Ere I should reach the evening star;  
At noon I still felt young and strong,  
All full of hope, all full of song;  
And age seemed ever far away  
Until I felt its withering sway.

Alas! I find small space between  
The morning with its shine and sheen,  
The evening with its gloomy shade,  
With all its load of hopes decayed.  
Ah, heart, the truth I cannot hide;  
Around me falls the eventide!

I've almost reached the river's brink—  
The cold, dark stream from which we shrink—  
Hope promised much, but little gave;  
My forward look is death—the grave.  
But there's a promise I have heard  
That in my need doth aid afford—

A richer promise I can say  
Than any of my early day;  
It soothes my heart like healing balm;  
It fills my soul; it makes me calm;  
It strengthens all my failing sight;  
"At eventide it shall be light!"

Not like the radiant light of morn,  
When day and hope are gaily born,  
That fades so quickly from the skies,  
We weep in sorrow and surprise;  
But this will light my pathway through  
Till I begin life's day anew.

—*Christian at Work.*

### HOW WE KILLED THE MINISTER.

Those are the very words in which she put it.

It was the senior deacon's wife who told me the story at the sea shore last summer. It was not my minister but hers. I never knew any such man as Luke Hopkins, and I am thankful to say that our parish was never guilty of these indictments.

She was old Mrs. Deacon Snow from Jackson—one of the fifty-seven Jacksons, more or less, in the United States—and this is what she said:

Now, I pity a young minister who has got his experience to get. Some of the people are ready to eat him up at first, and then very likely they are the first ones to get tired of him. And most of the people are apt to criticize him, and that is a harder trial than the other kind. Mr. Hopkins was too young, only twenty-five, when he came to Jackson. We had just turned off a minister because some thought he was too old. It is a foolish thing, let me tell you before I go any further, to turn a useful minister off because a few people are not suited. You can keep on doing that, and matters will grow more unsatisfactory the more you try. Well, Mr. Hopkins came. He was sensitive and refined, studious and devout, but he did not know any more about human nature than a young robin just hatched—at least of human nature as it is in a parish and a congregation and a Church, and that was the kind he had to do with. He was so full of ardour he thought he was going to move the world, though he was not conceited, not at all. He had the genuine holy fire, if ever a minister had, and he was ready to efface himself, to wear himself out. He was ready for almost anything except the very trials and torments there were for him.

You ask if our parish is a hard one? Why, no. Nobody ever called it so. But we slew Mr. Hopkins. The first trouble that I knew was that the different ones began, after they got well acquainted with him, to tell him about all the unpleasant things that had ever happened in the parish. He did not want to receive gossip, but he had to listen sometimes to what this brother, or that sister, had done, till one little circumstance and another would get a lodgment, just as seed will. One came with a grievance against a fellow-member. Another was full of criticisms of indi-

vidual characters. He, poor innocent, had thought his Church, and all Churches for that matter, perfectly in harmony. If he had not been so young, if he had had any experience, if he had been forty-five instead of twenty-five, he would have known that no Church is without some antagonisms and misunderstandings.

Yes, it was to his credit that he thought his Church so united and pure and peaceful and heavenly. But that did not make it so. Before the second year was out he began to look worried. The knowledge that there had been envyings and bickerings and petty difficulties made him unhappy, and it was a pain and a grief to him to have his faith in any of his people shaken. He tried hard to remain unprejudiced, to maintain the balance of feeling. He confided once to a friend in a prayer meeting he actually found himself wandering off into speculations about the innocence of a certain Brother A., who was apt to exhort with great fervour, though there had been intimations that he was cruel in his family.

"I am not willing," said this conscientious minister, "to hear of wrongs which have been done. I need to believe in my people. I want to, and I mean to. And I can not, I must not, feel that my Church is not a unit in endeavour and work."

But he began to lose his hopefulness. You could see it. He did not preach with so much animation. He looked dejected, and then he began to wonder whether he was really the right man for the place, whether he had come up to the expectations of the people; and, just at this unfortunate stage one of those officious persons whose conscience cannot be satisfied until he has "freed his mind," told Mr. Hopkins that some one had said his prayers were too long, and his sermons not doctrinal enough; and as this poor young divine had a feeling that he ought to know all of his short-comings, he lent an open ear for any opinion that might be expressed.

Now a minister may imagine that it is for his good to know what his people think of him, but he will never be likely to put himself in the way of a second experience of knowing what they don't like in him. Mr. Hopkins did not solicit the knowledge, but when without his seeking it came, he accepted it in humility as a means of grace; but, unfortunately a frame of humility did not happen to be his special need. Encouragement was life to him and the opposite was paralyzing. "I am discouraged," he said one day, "and what is a discouraged minister good for?"

People were not slow in noticing his dejection, and they whispered that he was losing his interest. Some had suggested that it would be well for him to exchange oftener; so he did. And then they complained because he was away so much. Being very young and very human, and very sensitive, he tried to please in this way and then he tried that. These things did not all happen in one year, nor in two; they were four years happening, and they kept coming along, just enough to prevent his having peace of mind for any length of time. There was no repose of feeling for him.

You say he should not have listened. I grant it, but he felt that it was his duty to hear his faults. But I really think that did not distress him so much as when they began to tell what Mr. Hume had done (that was his experienced predecessor). "Mr. Hume used to call on every family in the parish twice a year and pray with them." "Mr. Hume used to hold meetings in each school house in town twice a year." "Mr. Hume was real good at funerals, he could comfort the mourners so." "Mr. Hume used to be around more among the people, he was just like one of our own folks;" until that gentleman would have opened his eyes in amazement to know himself so quoted and he was such a model minister in the pulpit, prayer meeting, and in what one of his congregation spoke of as "pastoral work."

Poor Mr. Hopkins blamed himself, examined himself, lacerated his own heart, tortured himself with that introspection (it all came out afterward), till he became convinced that he had mistaken his calling, and finally he broke down, sick from worry, wounded nigh unto death by pin-pricks. It is supposed that the life can be as surely killed out of man by persistent pin-pricks, if there are pins enough used, as it can if he is run through the body with a sword. Before the pins had quite finished him, his father came and took him away.

You say you should think the Jackson Church people were like a pack of hounds in full cry after one

poor terrified hare. Oh, no! Jackson Church folks are good men and women; but they did not consider.

And what became of Mr. Hopkins? Oh, he is at a sanitarium, under treatment. The physicians call it nervous prostration—an extreme case—but I think it about as much a case of martyrdom as that of John Rogers at the stake.—*Congregationalist.*

### THE BIBLE AND BUSINESS.

In making plain the bearing of the Bible upon business, the following truths may be stated:

1. The Bible does not forbid the acquirement of wealth by honest means. To the Ephesians whom Christianity had reformed it was said, "Let him labour, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." "Not slothful in business" is one of the marks of a Christian. The Bible, therefore, does not forbid honest trade. Nay, as honest and healthy trade is for the good of both parties, it rather encourages it, for it requires us to do good to all as we have opportunity. And it is well worth noticing that trade flourishes best in an atmosphere filled with Bible truth. A man on the other side of the globe will give an order involving half his fortune, trusting to the integrity of a British merchant. This "confidence" is one of the first essentials to traffic, and all the more fearful therefore, is the loss of it, and all the more criminal those who impair it. But the Scriptures lay down clear and explicit rules for the guidance of trade. "Thou shalt not steal" is the embargo laid by the Bible on every fraudulent transaction. And when the buyer declares "it is naught, it is naught," and having seduced the less skilful into a bargain, straightway boasteth of his acuteness, the Bible comes in and declares, "Lie not one to another." And when seller or buyer would take an unfair advantage of the ignorance or the want of his customer, the Bible comes and lays between them the golden rule, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

2. The Bible does forbid unduly valuing money. The wealth, to save which for an heir the owner hoarded, putting away from him many a generous emotion and many a pressing claim, instead of blessing, often curses him who inherits it. The joy it is expected to give the living is often never reaped. As he came, so he goes—empty and naked. The heathen prince may have his wives and his horses sacrificed on his tomb, to contribute to his joys in the spirit world, but religion banishes such a delusion. Sleep is often enjoyed in a smoky cabin and on a hard bed, when it is wooed in vain to the chambers of the rich. The wealthy man is offered upon plate dainties which he dare not eat, while the poor "cottar" eats his dinner of herbs with gladness. Money cannot and does not give a tithe of the happiness it is supposed to give. Yet the great evil of our day is the undue value put upon money.

For money, professions are chosen, children are educated, marriages are made. Money covers more sin than charity. A man may be licentious, a swearer, a Sabbath-breaker, nay, even a drunkard or dishonest, but let him be wealthy and he will be generally received and flattered. Now this erroneous estimate of money the Scriptures forbid.

3. The Bible forbids the unduly eager pursuit of wealth. That man whose toils go so near the dawning of the Sabbath that he is unfit for the privileges of the day, is unduly pursuing wealth. Let him reduce his business or get another hand. His soul is being starved to fill his purse. The poor slopworker in the garret is so ill-paid that food and fuel are out of the question, because "the trade" must get the largest price for the smallest outlay. True, "the trade" is doing it, and "the trade" is not expected to have a conscience; but in the haste to be rich, the poor haggard woman and her thin-faced children are suffering. That railway company can make a quarter per cent. off "Sunday" trains. True, porters, engine-drivers and car-drivers lose their Sabbath, and others are tempted to profane it, but a quarter per cent. per annum is gained. Now all this the Scriptures forbid. There is a "sea of perdition" to which they who "will be rich" are led by a few steps like these to be drowned.—*Rev. John Hall, D.D., in Belfast Witness.*