

The Close of a Life of Prayer.

The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended. Psalm 72-20.

A sermon preached at Tryon, P. E. I., by Pastor J. Clark, on the death of Deacon W. B. Howatt.

There is scarcely any history more interesting and instructive than that of David. Children are charmed by the story of his exploits. Young men are never wiser than when they are imitating his virtues and avoiding his mistakes. The aged are never nearer the fount of eternal truth than when they are deriving their comfort and strength from David's Saviour and Lord. The afflicted find both help and consolation in remembering his experience, and nursing on his words of grace. The joyful and successful can never voice their gladness more expressively than in David's psalms of exultation and delight. The penitent is never more lowly and tender-hearted than when he takes his place at David's side in prostrate self-abasement. The suppliant is never more successful in his supplication than when he pleads in David's fervent spirit. The dying find no sweeter fellowship, no closer companionship in their last journey, than so many in days gone by have done, in David's Shepherd Lord, who accompanies his loved ones through the dark valley, and whose rod and whose staff comfort them.

Something like a hundred years ago an eminent English poet sang, "England, with all thy faults, I love thee still; and, changing one word, the devout Christian may exclaim "David, with all thy faults, I love thee still." Many features in his character awaken our admiration. But only to one of those features do we invite attention at the present moment.

DAVID'S PIETY.

David prayed. He was a man of prayer. He had more prayers than one. There are people who pray; but their prayers have one peculiarity—they are generally much the same. There may be an occasional verbal alteration, but they are radically the same in tone, in phrase, in emphasis, year after year. Variety of experience, variety of circumstance, variety of need, deeply realized, calls for variety of utterance. David offered many prayers. It was prayer upon prayer; supplication upon supplication; confession upon confession; praise upon praise through many eventful years. Those prayers secured innumerable blessings for himself, for his family, for his country during his own eventful life, and have enriched the hearts and minds and lives of succeeding generations down to the present hour. Notwithstanding his many and mighty gifts, and his marvellous ability, he could not live without prayer. And if David could not, it is folly for us to attempt to do so. "Men ought always to pray."

"Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air;
His watchword at the gates of death;
He enters heaven with prayer.

David prayed on until the end came. Many of David's prayers were answered the very day they passed his lips; some at a later period. Many a glorious answer followed his petitions. Some were answered after his death; some are not answered yet—not to the utmost extent. But they will be. The prayers in this Psalm are nearing their fulfillment. Men are being blessed in his far greater Son: all nations shall yet call him blessed; and the whole earth shall eventually be filled with his glory.

"He shall reign from pole to pole
With illimitable sway;
He shall reign, when, like a scroll,
Yonder heavens have passed away;
Then the end; beneath his rod
Man's last enemy shall fall;
Alleluia! Christ in God,
God in Christ, is all in all."

Doubtless, up in heaven, the prophet psalmist has the joy of seeing that his long-ago petitions—his far, far reaching prayers—are gradually and grandly being answered, and his mighty gospel prophecies are being brought to pass. Some of David's prayers were so deep, so great, so comprehensive, that it requires the flight of centuries upon centuries to bring about their answer in completeness.

Some years ago I baptized a sea captain in Yarmouth, N. S. When, in open meeting he came out on the Lord's side, he gave a striking testimony to the abiding faithfulness of God in regard to his promise to hear and answer prayer. "I remember," he said, hearing my mother pray fifty years ago. Her prayers have been following me all along, and I can hear them still." And then he told us that there were ten children, and the mother prayed often, and until her last breath, for their conversion. Those prayers had all been answered. The ten had grown up, and, one after another, they had sought their mother's God. Some had joined their mother in the skies. He had held out long, but the Lord had melted his hard heart, subdued his proud will, and brought him to the cross at last, and he hoped, by Divine grace, to find his way to heaven, and join the redeemed ones near the throne. Fifty years went by before that mother's prayers were wholly answered, but answered at last they were, long, long after her praying days were ended. Pray, brethren, pray! Pray, sisters, pray! Your prayers must only end with life. The time will soon come when all your prayers will be ended. God will see to

their answers. You can leave them all with him.

DAVID'S DEATH.

David's prayers are ended. But they only end because his life has reached its close. His throne must be vacated for another occupant, his sceptre wielded by another hand, and his crown be worn by another brow. "The old order changeth and giveth place to the new." Holy breathings pass his lips, and then those lips grow still. He can toil on earth no more; reign on earth no more; awake the slumbering thunders of his harp no more; go up to the house of God no more; bend the knee in prayer no more. He has reached the Border Land. Another step—and then, Home!—another breath, and then Heaven! Our minds can picture the last scene. Without, the earth grows dim—twilight deepens into dark; within, the vision of Messiah's coming splendors brightens all his soul. The attendants, filled with breathless awe, gaze on one of the most touching scenes the earth has ever known; and almost before they know it, he flits away into the great realities of the after life. They look; but they see no movement in his features; they touch his hand but there is no response. They speak—they cry: "Our peerless king! Our hero! Our champion! Our prophet! Our Master! Hast thou gone? Wilt thou speak with us no more? Alas! Alas! we shall never see thy like again."

Let him alone. He is not there. He is at home with God. Let him alone. He is not listening to earthly sounds, or lips of clay, but to the songs the angels sing. Let him alone. He is not looking at you, but at the splendors of the heavenly world, and the beauties of the great king whose throne is in the heavens, and whose kingdom ruleth over all. It is well with his soul. His battles are all fought, his journeyings all ended, his labours all over. No more perils, watching his father's flock; no more sling and stone, confronting the mighty giant, vaunting in his pride; no more fleeing away from the face of an angry and jealous king; no more troubles from rebellious sons or subjects; no more seasons of dreary exile; no more wanderings on the mountains; no more hidings in the cave; no more partings from dearest friend or fondly cherished child; no more anxious waitings for the day; no more thwarted purposes; no more scalding tears; no more occasions for repentance—the battle scene, the crafty foe, the word of scorn, the weary limb, the aching brow, the grief-bowed heart, the dread of sin,—no more! "The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended." All ended; all ended, now.

It is a great loss to the world when a good man dies. But David's influence is not ended yet, though his prayers were ended with his life long centuries ago. One can never tell when and where his influence for good or ill will end. It does not end with life. It goes beyond earth and time. How guarded should our conduct be! What pure and consecrated lives we all should live!

David's prayers are ended. They are sounding through the Christian church to-day; they are sounding further and further over the whole wide world to-day, and increasing in their uplifting helpfulness through all the passing years. In every language that Christians use beneath the sun his holy psalms are rising towards the heavens, and blending in sweet accord around the throne of God. And, up, beyond the skies, his own sweet spirit voice is sounding rich and clear, and grand and strong, among, if not above the ceaseless songs that rise from bright celestial choirs whose music fills the palace halls of heaven. There, there will David's praises never end. His prayers give way to everlasting praise.

The warrior dies; the monarch dies; the hero prophet dies; he cannot live when he has not strength to pray, and thus our text connects itself with another scripture, "David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep." He prayed, he toiled, he served his generation, and then he "fell on sleep." We, who are gathered here today, meet with our hearts yet tender as we think, and cannot fail to think of one of our membership who for a long series of years served his generation, and then "fell on sleep." Having already borne my testimony to the worth of one so deservedly and universally esteemed in this community, and far beyond, it may not be deemed needful to repeat that testimony to-day, especially as the neighboring pastors, on the day of the interment, with great depth of feeling, spoke warmly and eloquently as his sterling Christian character and eminently useful life. That life and its lessons will often come before us, this beautiful sanctuary itself, and the various offices be filled, and so faithfully filled, will times without number, call his name reverently and affectionately to remembrance, and we shall give evidence of our wisdom if everything we see that reminds us of him, his work, and his departure shall effectively quicken us to duty, and lead us to instant preparation for our own approaching end. He was ready for the change, and thus sudden death proved to be sudden glory.

His prayers are ended. His prayers for himself and the partner of his life are ended, his prayers for his children and his children's children are ended; his prayers for his relatives and friends are ended; his prayers for his pastor and all Christian laborers are ended; his prayers for the church and all its varied interests are ended; his prayers for the Sabbath school in which he took such a deep and abiding interest

are ended; his prayers for the triumph of the Gospel throughout this land and all lands are ended:—all, all are ended. Those prayers have been heard in heaven, and whatever portion of them remains unanswered is kept in Divine remembrance, and will be answered in God's own time, and in God's own way, and his time will be the best time, and his way the best way.

Let those that remain pray more. Prayer must be woven into our very life. It must accompany every footstep, sweeten every sorrow, sustain under every burden, and sanctify every labour. A praying soul is a saved soul, and a saved soul will soon be a glorified soul—a soul that, passing out of time, enters upon a life of eternal blessedness at God's right hand above. To that high joy may God in infinite mercy bring us all through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Why I Am a Baptist.

BY REV. T. B. COOPER, D. D.

Having been a Baptist nearly sixty years, and preached and written much, I desire now in my 80th year, after the example of Bro. J. N. Kilpatrick, to tell why I am a Baptist.

Some prominent Articles of Faith, Church Order and Practice, which I believe and approve, in common with the Baptists:

Doctrines. 1. There is only one true God in a Trinity of equal persons—the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. He is a self-existent, spiritual being, unseen, except in his works and operations. He is everywhere present; all-knowing, all-wise, all-powerful. He is perfect in truth, love, mercy, justice, holiness, goodness. He is God "from everlasting to everlasting, without variableness or shadows of turning." He is the Creator and Maker and Upholder of all things that exist, in all the universe; who only is to be bowed down to and worshipped in religious service, according to his sacred commandment.

2. The Bible is the Word of God; as it is written, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works;" and is the only correct rule of Christian faith and practice.

3. According to the Bible, God made the first man Adam and Eve, his wife, "in his own image, in righteousness and true holiness." They disobeyed him, and fell into sin, which they communicated to all the human family, their descendants; every one of whom, except the "Son of Man," has been "conceived in sin and brought forth in iniquity" and "there is no man that liveth and sinneth not."

4. The "Eternal Covenant of Grace," made by the persons of the Trinity, for man's redemption and salvation.

5. In accordance with this covenant, "in the fulness of time, Christ Jesus, the Son, came into the world to save sinners," for "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He was born of the Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and became the "Son of Man;" lived a life of perfect righteousness; was rejected by the Jews, and was crucified; thus making an atonement for sins by the shedding of his own blood. When he had made this "one sacrifice for sins once for all and forever, He sat down on the right hand of God, till he comes the second time to raise the dead and to judge the world." "He was delivered for our offense, and was raised again for our justification." "He, of God, is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption." "He is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth in him." "For whom God did foreknow, he also did predestinate, to be conformed to the image of his Son; and whom he did predestinate them he also called; and whom he called them he also justified and whom he justified them he also glorified." Therefore Christ says, "All that the Father gave me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out;" and so the purpose of God, according to election, shall stand; "we are saved by grace through faith, and not of works;" for "He hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself according to the good pleasure of His will," "we are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time."

6. The Holy Spirit is God, and differs from God, the Father and the Son only as a Person and in special work. He inspired the writers of the Scriptures; "convinceth the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment;" by him souls are regenerated, or "born again into the kingdom of God's dear Son." "He maketh intercession for the saints," and is their divine "Comforter." "Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God."

Note. In view of the above Scriptures, and many others of like import, I believe the following doctrines: Election, Predestination, Effectual Calling, Regeneration, Adoption, Progressive Sanctification by the Spirit and other means of grace, and Perseverance or Preservation in grace to glory; all of which are generally accepted by the Baptists.

The Church. The word church is used in four senses in