

On the Close of the Year.

FROM THE "CIRCLE OF THE YEAR."

"The end there's no end to a circle complete,"
 "There's no end when the line has no angle to meet."
 "The earth has a circle she yearly must run,"
 "There's no end to her glorious race round the sun!"
 "The end of the year people talk of, but lo,"
 "No beginning no ending that circle can know."
 "Once more, then, this season returns and reminds,"
 "There's no end to the friendship which heart to heart binds."

E. LECKY.

The Queensland Baptist on Denominational Names.

Among our exchanges the *Queensland Baptist*, a monthly paper, is ever welcome. A few weeks ago we said that "If its genial editor would just advocate the disuse of denominational names and one or two other little Baptist 'improvements' on the apostolic model, it would pass among the readers of this paper as an orthodox representative of New Testament Christianity." An article on "The *Christian Pioneer* and Ourselves," appears in the October issue, in the course of which the editor says:—

As to little *et ceteras* which stand between us and the ideal of our friends, we are not quite sure as to what may be referred to. One thing only is mentioned, namely, that we should "advocate the disuse of denominational names." On this matter we do not pride ourselves, and we think that our friendly critic is wrong. We care not two straws about the names; the thing, or the truth only is important. To us it seems that so much should not be made of so little. Certainly John was called Baptist and for a similar reason. So far we have Scripture in our favor, and we are the only body which can quote Scripture for a special name because of a special rite. Possibly it may be found that "name" and "denomination" are almost synonymous, and that whatever name we may take becomes our "denomination" for to denominate is simply to name. The name which others gave in old and evil times was *Ana-Baptists*, the name we have gone by ourselves is *Baptists*. The former was an accusation that we baptized again those who were already baptized, the latter that we immersed believers without recognising any ordinance applied in days of infancy or non-belief; or even any form which did not symbolise the burial and resurrection with Christ. The disuse of the word *Baptist* would fail to emphasize a special truth and fact. Put clearly it indicates that we are Christ's disciples who have seen the need and the duty of a special testimony on the subjects and symbolical form of baptism. In view of the fact that our esteemed contemporary has printed the tract on "Who then shall be saved?" in full, we are glad to find that our views meet with so much approval, and hope for the time when the lesser matters will not be deemed so essential to orthodoxy.

While recognising and reciprocating the friendly spirit evinced in the above extract, we cannot endorse our contemporary's reasoning nor accept his conclusions. John was called the Baptist because he baptized, but of course those he baptized were not Baptists. Strictly speaking a man cannot be a baptist unless he himself baptizes. Thomas was called Didymus because he was a twin, but it does not follow that other Christians are therefore to be called twins, though the name is certainly as Scriptural as the word Baptist. If "the disuse of the word Baptist would fail to emphasize a special truth and fact," then the apostles have "failed to emphasize this special truth and fact," and this leads us to the conviction that it requires no such special emphasis. Our

friend will doubtless admit that the "special truth and fact" is emphasized sufficiently by some who are content to be called simply Christians or disciples of Christ.

We cannot approve of the name Baptist as applied to Christians, because: 1st. It is unscriptural, never being used as a church name in the Word of God. 2. It is a sectarian or party name, which many Christians cannot adopt, and it therefore tends to perpetuate partyism, which the pious of all denominations long to see abolished. All the followers of Christ can, without compromise of principle, accept the name Christian, which is unsectarian and loved by all. 3rd. It gives too much prominence to an ordinance of Christ instead of Christ himself. We rejoice to know that our Baptist brethren yield to none in their love and reverence for the Saviour, and yet their name would imply to many an undue regard for one particular command. We honestly believe that we attach as much importance to baptism as the teaching of Christ warrants, but we cannot regard it as of sufficient importance to be named after it.

But our brother says: "We care not two straws about the names; the thing or the truth only is important." Just so, and we have about as much of "the thing or the truth" along this line as he has, and without the disadvantage of the name. We rejoice to believe that thousands of Baptists have no particular love for the name they wear, and if they realized that it was one of the barriers to the union of Christians they would be prepared to dispense with it at once. Christ prayed that his followers might be united, and whether we live to see this desirable consummation or not, it behoves all who love the Saviour to labor in this direction. Some day our hopes will be realized. In the meantime let us cultivate the spirit of unity as far as we can within the limits of loyalty to the Word of God, saying with the pious Wesley—

"Let names of sects and parties fall,
 And Jesus Christ be all in all."

—*Australian Christian Pioneer*.

The Baptist Congress.

This congress was recently held in Augusta. While not largely attended it was representative, having such men as Gambrell, Gardiner, Bovill, Horr Gessler and Vedder present besides a number of other distinguished men. Dr. Lansing Burrows, of Augusta, was master of ceremonies. Governor Northern presided with grace and dignity. Some practical questions were discussed such as the Church and the money power, Emotionalism in religion, Shall our young people be organized for Christian work, and Ethical versus Forensic conceptions of salvation. One of the subjects which produced an animated discussion was "What constitutes valid baptism?" Upon this subject there appeared to be considerable difference of opinion. As baptism is the ground or basis of communion among the Baptists it was natural to expect that there would be differences of opinion on the subject. Some of our Baptist friends believe in restricting communion to the individual congregation, others to congregations of "like faith and order," and others are broadening out into "Open communion." J. Judson Taylor, of Mobile, Ala., and E. B. Pollard, Jr., of Roanoke, Va., two bright, broad spirited and progressive young men of talent and culture, took the ground that the validity of baptism depended upon the faith and qualifications of the candidate rather than on the qualifications of the administrator. We think

their views on this point eminently correct. There was considerable murmuring on these positions, for the Georgia Baptists—many of them at least—hold to the essentiality of the qualifications of the administrator as well as of the candidate. Dr. Vedder, the editor of the *N. Y. Examiner*—perhaps the most widely circulated and influential paper in the denomination—sided with the young men, and said that the doctrine of "apostolic succession was pickled through and through with popery." Baptist succession has been a favorite theme with Baptist polemics and it will almost break some of their hearts to hear that Henry C. Vedder says it is a "worshipped phantom" utterly untenable and cannot be maintained.

The renowned J. B. Moody, a fighter of great proportions among the Baptists of Tennessee and Kentucky, had a paper on this subject of validity of baptism. Mr. Moody was not present and it was read by Dr. Burrows, who is himself a little given to casting slings at other people occasionally. Mr. Moody said in his paper he "did not want any one who immersed in order to make a man a child of God to do his baptizing for him," to which remark, W. L. Kilpatrick, a reporter in the *Christian Index*, says "that some old foggy heart of men said amen." We wonder how these Baptist divines would have stood the Saviour's statement to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven," or the language of Peter, "repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of the Lord Jesus for the remission of sins," or Paul's language when he affirms "we are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ, for as many of us as have been baptized into Jesus Christ have put him on." We do not know how much amending they would do for Paul and Peter were they here in person, we do know that they do not amend very much the preacher that quote these passages to sinners just as Paul and Peter did. We must give our Baptist friends time, however. If they will learn in the next five years that the validity of baptism does not depend on the administrator, but on the candidate, that will be a good step and then if they will learn in five more what baptism is for and the meaning of the Master when He says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," they will have made rapid stride towards the open field in the glorious sunlit truth of which the people of God must stand if they ever hope reasonably to take the world for Christ.—*Southern Christian*.

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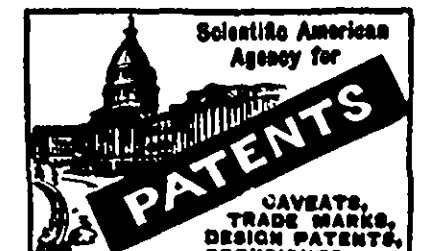
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