

# THE REFLECTOR

JULY 1979 ===== VOL. 19 / NO. 7

## An UNNECESSARY Religion?

I have some dear friends and relatives who claim membership in an unnecessary church that honors an unnecessary ordinance in its unnecessary name and insists that its members live in an unnecessary fashion. All of this is true, if what they tell me about it all is so. This is what they have been telling me:

### ***1. 'The church does not save'***

By this they mean that one does not need to be a member of the church to be saved. So, they have an unnecessary church. But, the saved were added to the New Testament church. (Acts 2:47). Jesus is

said to be the savior of the body (church) in the New Testament. (Eph. 5:23). The church you read about in the Bible is necessary. Jesus died for it. (Acts 20:28).

### ***2. Baptism does not save'***

By this they mean that one is saved before and without baptism. But the Bible says, "Baptism doth also now save us."

(1 Pet. 3:21). "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. (Mark 16:16). Yet, to these friends it is totally unnecessary to salvation.

### ***3. 'There's nothing in a name'***

Hence, the church name that honors baptism really doesn't mean much after all. They ought to be able to lay it aside without any problem and take up the

name of Christ. But, if there is really nothing in a name, then the name of Christ would likewise mean nothing.

### ***4. 'Once saved-always saved'***

Hence, living the life-style prescribed for a Christian has no eternal value. One can go to heaven without it as well as with it. In fact, according

to my friends, there is but one necessary act in a life-time that brings salvation. The moment that one believes in Jesus as his personal savior, he is,

by that act and that act alone, saved forever more. Everything else in life is irrelevant to salvation.

But, is this what the Bible teaches?

Hardly. Paul, after his salvation, was aware that he could lose it. (1 Cor. 9: 27). He warned others of the same danger. (1 Cor. 10:12). Christ made the doing of the Father's will a condition of entering the kingdom. (Matt. 7:21).

He also made faithfulness "unto death" a condition of receiving a crown of life (Rev. 2:10).

I don't believe that most of these good people have stopped to think about what they are saying -- that it all adds up to what we stated at the beginning. There is an unnecessary religion by their own standards. Think about it.

-- Editor

---

# Children of God surrounded by a corrupt society

*"That ye may become blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation". -- Phil. 2:15 ASV.*

If a Christian makes it to heaven, he will do it in spite of the society in which he lives. Each generation of Christians has had to obey God in the midst of a "crooked and perverse generation".

It is time that we quit blaming our worldliness, indifference and general unfaithfulness to Christ on society. It is time that parents quit blaming their inability to successfully rear children on the social conditions of our time. The Ephesian brethren were told to "bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord". (Eph. 6:4) The moral and social environment of Ephesus at that time would make most American cities look like bulwarks of righteousness.

How often have we heard, "I can't live right and work with the folks that I do"; or, "I can't be a strong Christian and live in my neighborhood"; or, "I can't be faithful and associate with the folks that I am forced to be with"? If such is really true, one would do well to change jobs, residences or associates. But more times than not such is not the case -- but one is simply excusing himself for

not having the moral courage to stand up and be counted as a faithful Christian. We may as well accept the fact that as long as the earth stands, society as a whole will be corrupt and make up our minds that we can live pure, decent and holy lives in the midst of and in spite of it.

I sometimes think that Christians (preachers, even) spend too much time lamenting over the woes of our corrupt society and in efforts to force reforms and not enough time trying to save in-souls for such corruption. We need to realize that to what extent we convert individuals to Christ, to that extent society will be reformed. I read very little of first century saints setting out to clean up the mess in Rome or Jerusalem. Little attention was given to straightening out society as such. They urged every man to repent, turn to the Lord in obedience, and to bring forth fruits meet for repentance.

Maybe we should spend less time trying to clean up Washington, the state capitol, city hall, and society at large

# Works of flesh disguised as religion

*"For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." --Gal. 5:13*

## CORRUPT SOCIETY .....

and more time trying to convert *each individual* to Christ and teaching them they can and must live "without blemish in the midst of a crooked a perverse generation". Attempts to save men by cleaning up moral and social conditions in society, as a whole, makes about as much sense as trying to save a drowning men by trying to drain the ocean. One's time could be better spent in trying to snatch each one out of the water.

Brethren, let's fact it. There is very little we can do to change the corrupt practices of a corrupt society controlled by corrupt minds. But, we can live "soberly, righteousless and godly in this present world; looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Tit. 2:12,13), regardless of what society does. There may be very little that we can do about dirty TV, dirty movies, vulgar music, drug and alcohol abuse, and open gross immorality in our society -- but we can keep such things out of our lives. We can insist upon the same from our brethren. We can try to separate individuals from such with the power of the gospel.

--Editor

## Our Religious World



We suspect that about every work of the flesh has been done by men and passed off as doing God service. That danger is always present, so Paul warns the Galatians. After warning against using our liberty, as Christians, as an occasion to the flesh, he names some of the works of the flesh.

## Sensuality

"ADULTERY, FORNICATION, UNCLEANNESS (AND) LASCIVIOUSNESS" have all been done and justified on religious grounds. History will bear this out. We read in the newspaper of one fellow who had several "spiritual wives". Brethren let their passions rule them, becoming involved in unscriptural marriages and then abuse scriptures to give religious sanction to adultery. (Matt. 19: 9). We know of a preacher who spent a lot of time counseling(?) a young lady (to help her spiritually, of course), but he proved his designs to be lascivious. All of us need to be careful in our speaking concerning these things. We should teach so as to be understood and the dangers properly pointed out -- but not as to produce the very lascivious effect that we are trying to condemn.

## Superstitions

"IDOLATRY AND WITCHCRAFT" are sometimes promoted in the name of Christ. Bowing down to graven images and carrying "good luck" charms are quite common among religious groups. It is not unusual for these pagan superstitions to be passed off as being "Christian".

## Dispositions

"HATRED, VARIANCE, EMULATIONS, WRATH, STRIFE SEDITIONS, HERESIES (AND) ENVYINGS" have all been called upon to do

God service. Brethren who would never think of doing the other works of the flesh are often guilty of these things in the name of standing for the Truth. We know of no factious man who does not suppose that he is contending for the faith.

Sometimes it is hard to tell the difference in contending for the faith and just being contentious. But when we see one in the middle of nearly every controversy that arises among brethren, whose sharp criticisms are constant, who can pretty well be depended on to take the contrary part of about any position the other brethren may take --we just get suspicious that he might be slightly given to strife.

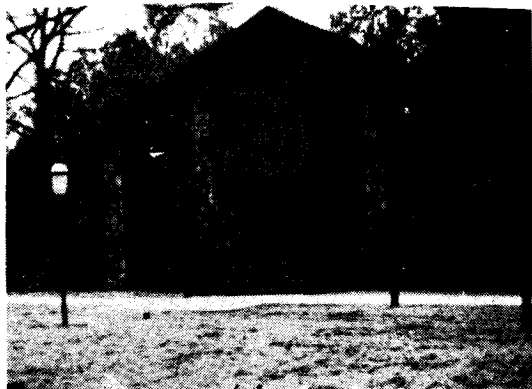
It is easy to use God's word (and God's people) as a club to get at another for whom we may have personal hatred; and justify it all by saying we are just trying to save them. We, preachers, have to be awfully careful that we do not either grind our own or another's axe. I have seen marriage go sour, or two brethren fall out, and one party come to me asking that I either talk to the other or else say something in a sermon for the others benefit. Yet, in the course of the conversation it is quite evident that

the purpose is not so much to about repentance or reconciliation, but to use religion as a means to give the other a good whipping. If I detect that such is the case, I refuse to be so used, even if it does leave me open to their charge that I am not interested in helping. If I have reason to believe that talking to the other party, or even preaching to them will help save them, I will do it --but I refuse to knowingly be an extended arm for some brother's wrath or hatred.

Christians are not to be partial. Yet, there are times when brethren are justly recognized for their service to the Lord's Cause, while others seem to go unrecognized. If we are not careful our envy will surface -- but we won't call it that. We will call it our sense of fairness, not wanting one brother to receive more attention than another. It is easy to call pure envy something else that would sound like we are really concerned spiritually.

Christians are to be humble. Yet, we must beware lest we become s o o o proud of our humility.

Other works of the flesh have been done under the cloak of religion, but these will suffice to warn us of the danger of Satan's getting to us, make us do his bidding, and convince us that we are really serving God.



### SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

**Sundays:**

Bible Classes	9:45 A.M.
Worship	10:45 A.M.
Worship	6:30 P.M.

**Wednesdays:**

Bible Classes	7:30 P.M.
---------------	-----------

A monthly publication of the Fultondale Church of Christ meeting at 2005 Elkwood Drive, Fultondale, Alabama. Our mailing address is 3004 Brakefield Drive, Fultondale, Alabama. Edited by Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.

Second Class  
Postage Paid  
at Fultondale,  
AL 35068