

# Ever Changing Doctrines of Men

By Phil T. Arnold

While the truth of God's word does not change, the doctrines of men are ever undergoing evolution to suit the current thinking, adapt to cultural desires or, in short, make them most appealing (**Matt. 5:18; 1 Pet. 1:24-25**). We certainly should not be surprised by this for, after all, they are the doctrines of men and not of Christ. As an example consider the following two quotations:

1. *'No divorce, except for adultery, shall be regarded by the church as lawful; and no Minister shall solemnize marriage in any case where there is a divorced wife or husband living; but this rule shall not be applied to the innocent party to a divorce for the cause of adultery...'*

2. *"In view of the seriousness with which the Scriptures and the Church regard divorce, pastors may solemnize the marriage of a divorced person only when they are satisfied by careful counseling, that (1) the divorced person is sufficiently aware of the factors leading to the failure of the previous marriage, (2) the divorced person is sincerely preparing to make the proposed marriage truly Christian, and (3) sufficient time has elapsed between the divorce and the contemplated marriage for adequate preparation and counseling."*

Did you note a little difference? Both are quotations from the Methodist Discipline. The difference being that the first quotation is from the 1904 edition, and the last quotation is from the 1972 edition. Neither edition is the true standard for determining faith or practice – only God's word can do that - but at least the 1904 edition far more closely represents what God's Word says in **Matthew 19:9**.

Why the change? Because this creed (as with all other creeds) is merely the product of man and the basis of a church of man, and it is not confined to consistency. It can be altered, updated, rewritten and modified through the years. But it did not lead to salvation in 1904, 1972, or today, because it is not the Word of God, but the doctrine of men.

"Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (**Matt. 15:7-9**).



### Classes this Week

|   |  |   |                           |
|---|--|---|---------------------------|
| College Devotional tonight at Davis' Home               | Kid's Class today at the Building at 5:15 PM | Wed. 10 AM Ladies Class Arlene Harkrider will teach on "Esther" | Thursday 7 PM Acts Study  |
| Bob Harkrider will teach "Requirements of a Godly life" | All are invited!                             | Meets at Carla Humphrey's House                                 | Meet's at Jillian Petty's |

### Sick

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Jim and Barbara Kicker                      | Pam Dial<br>(Laura Weldon's Mother)                         |
| Heather Adams<br>(Luke Bridges' Cousin)     | Rose Tate<br>(Toni Herd's Cousin)                           |
| Adriana Mininno<br>(Haley Chittam's Cousin) | Dave Bradford, Sr.  |
| Blake Whatley<br>(Hunt's neighbor)          | Dave Brown<br>(Friend of the Lanier's)                      |
| Marty Meeks<br>(Toni Herd's Nephew)         | Call Yvette at 734-2134<br>To Have Someone Put on this List |

### News and Notes

- Let's remember our expectant mothers: Anna Miller and Laura Humphrey.
- Rachel Bradford gave birth to a baby girl, Libby, on Wed. Libby has been kept in the Hospital for breathing issues.
- Please sign up to host or teach the Monthly Home Kid's class (Grades 1-8). Our college students are encouraged to be study leaders.
- Our meeting with Bob Harkrider begins today and will go through Wed. Let's invite others!
- Let's remember Jonathan and Katie Dvorak in our prayers in the loss of their baby.
- Audio CDs of Today's Sermon will be immediately available.

A weekly publication of the University church of Christ in Auburn, Alabama

# The Auburn Beacon



Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (**Matthew 5:16**)

Volume 1, Issue 12

January 24, 2010

## But for the Grace of God.

### Thought to Ponder

From a sign in California: Absolutely No Trespassing -Violators Will Be Prosecuted to the Full Extent of the Law. Signed, "The Sisters of Mercy."

Do You Have a Bible Question?  
Call (334) 734-2133 or  
E-mail:  
LarryRouse@aubeacon.com

### SCHEDULE OF SERVICES Sunday

Bible Class .....9:30 AM  
Worship .....10:20 AM  
Evening Worship ..... 6:00 PM

### Wednesday

Bible Classes.....7:00 PM

Ask about our home Bible Study Groups!

Larry Rouse  
Evangelist and Editor

## Grace and Righteousness

By Forrest D. Moyer

It seems to me that so many members of Christ's body have a grave misconception of the role of grace in our right-standing with God. Because of this many feel insecure in their relationship with God. They tend to rely on their own righteousness, and, realizing their frailties, imperfections, and short-comings, lose heart or become fearful that they might miss Heaven. The fact of our imperfection is precisely why God's grace is provided and why it is so valuable in our lives.

### Why Law Cannot Produce Righteousness

In a law system such as we see in the Mosaical age, absolute obedience is required in order to produce righteousness. "For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them.' Now that no one is justified by the Law before

When my faith leads me to repent and be baptized and to "walk according to the Spirit" (**Rom. 8:4**), then I have full faith that God's grace accepts "such a worm as I" (**Ps. 22:6**). Truly, I can praise Him for imputing to me a righteousness which I have not earned and be as Abraham of old, who "believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness" (**Rom. 4:3**).

God is evident; for 'The righteous man shall live by faith.' However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, 'He who practices them shall live by them'" (**Gal. 3:10-12**). Those who feel that right-standing comes only by law-keeping (any law) must face up to the consequences of their choice. That choice demands total and perfect law-keeping. "So you shall keep My statutes and My judgments, but which a man may live if he does them" (**Lev. 18:8**). If you miss one little point,

(Continued on page 2)

Check Us Out On the Internet: [www.aubeacon.com](http://www.aubeacon.com)

(Continued from page 1)

you are a law-breaker (**See James 2:10**). Now, if you are a law-breaker, you are a sinner and are not "righteous" and cannot stand before God, but are under a curse (v. 10 above). "Cursed is he who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them" (**Deut. 27:26**).

### What Can Forgive Sin?

Law cannot forgive sin. You will have to rely on something other than law to have right-standing. The fact is that no one perfectly keeps the law (except Jesus). For that reason, "no one is justified by the law before God." It is this realization of our falling short that often makes us miserable in our religion because we feel that we must render perfect obedience to be right, but we don't!

If we cannot obtain right-standing by law-keeping, then by what means does it come? Enter the grace of God. You see, God loved us even when we were sinners (**Rom. 5:6-9**). That love provided a way through Jesus Christ who came and who died in our place and for our sins. "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us" (**Gal. 3:13**). But how do we gain access into this grace and thus obtain righteousness? The answer is plain. It is by faith. Our text above says, "The righteous will live by faith." Or to put it another way, "The man who is right with God by faith will live." Paul stated it this way, "Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand" (**Rom. 5:1-2**). The way of faith takes God at His

word. It trusts Jesus and His sacrifice to take away our sins. When my faith leads me to genuine repentance and to a burial with Him in baptism, it is His blood that forgives and gives me a right-standing that I have not earned and do not deserve. Actually, what I have is an imputed righteousness (**Rom. 4:5-8**). It is not of debt but of grace that I am declared righteous. And, I might add, it is this grace which continually provides the blood of Christ by which I can daily stand in righteousness before God and have fellowship with Him (**1 Jn. 1:7**).

Paul speaks of the "righteousness of the law" (**Rom. 8:4**). That is, the righteousness which was demanded by the law and could only come by perfect law-keeping. Paul says that this right-standing that perfect law-keeping could have produced can be fulfilled in us. How? Remember, it doesn't come by perfect obedience. Then how? By grace on God's part and by our faith accessing that grace. When my faith leads me to repent and be baptized and to "walk according to the Spirit" (**Rom. 8:4**), then I have full faith that God's grace accepts "such a worm as I" (**Ps. 22:6**). Truly, I can praise Him for imputing to me a righteousness which I have not earned and be as Abraham of old, who "believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness" (**Rom. 4:3**).

One other thought: God's grace is not a license to sin. I cannot reason that since I am saved by grace that it doesn't matter whether I try to follow His will or not. His will was given for the purpose of our striving to follow it in our lives. Our faith takes Him at His word and seeks to walk in His way so long as we live. Understanding His grace helps to have full assurance as we walk humbly with our God. (1989)



## Getting Older

By W. Frank Walton

"The silver-haired head is a crown of glory, if it is found in the way of righteousness" (**Proverbs 16:31**).

As soon as we are born, everyone begins to get older. Have you ever plucked out a gray hair? Our sensual culture worships youth and good looks more than virtue and good sense. This began with those who came of age in the 1960's, saying, "Don't trust anyone over 30." Those

spoiled baby boomers have had to revise their mantra, pushing it ever higher as they themselves age. However, there is more to life than being young, looking good, and having a good time.

In the Biblical world, gray hair was a badge of honor, not a sign of being decrepit. "The splendor of old men is their gray head" (**Proverbs 20:29**). It represented maturity, hard-won experience and wisdom by living long and learning well from God's university of hard knocks. God's purpose for our lives is our spiritual and moral development, "so we might share in His holiness" (**Heb 12:10**).

It is not how long we live, but how well we live before God that counts. "Teach us to number our days, that we may present to you a heart of wisdom" (**Psa 90:12**). As the years roll by, we never retire from the Lord's service. Caleb was one of the faithful few to the divine vision to conquer Canaan with God's help against all odds. He remained active and alert to the end, with youthful exuberance to take on new challenges (**Joshua 14:6-15**). "Paul, the aged," still wrote encouraging letters during his final Roman imprisonment (**Philemon 1:9**). To keep his mind sharp and occupied, Paul was still studying toward the very end of his life (**2 Timothy 4:13**). Victor Hugo said, "Winter is on my head, but spring is in my heart."

May this be our epitaph, that we were faithful to the Lord and His Word, as we get older until the very end of our life on earth. It is better to wear out than rust out in the Lord's service.

Someone has said, "Experience is what you get after you don't need it." No, if we keep active in the Lord's work, we can use our experience somewhere in the future, even if it is teaching someone younger (**cf. Titus 2:3-5**). Contrast this with some elders who may think serving as an elder is a lifetime appointment to a board of directors, regardless of their declining fitness of age and ability to execute the "hands on" work of shepherding the flock.

David Lipscomb, long-time editor of the Gospel Advocate and co-founder of David Lipscomb University, knew the Bible in his day about as well as anyone. In the very last months of his life at 84, he would sit in his rocking chair and study his Bible for up to 2 hours daily. In 1916, a year before his death, he wrote, "We have long ago passed the threescore and ten years allotted to man on earth.... As we approach the end, the more we study the word of God, the more anxious we are to meet him, knowing we have opposed all innovations and changes upon His order at every point along the line of duty drawn by Him" (Gospel Advocate, 1916, p. 1).

May this be our epitaph, that we were faithful to the Lord and His Word, as we get older until the very end of our life on earth. It is better to wear out than rust out in the Lord's service. Christians should not detest getting older. As we progress through the Lord's school of discipleship, it brings us closer to graduating to that heavenly shore where there are delights with our Lord forever more (**2 Cor 4:16-18**). The sick and physically weak are then forever healthy and strong.

