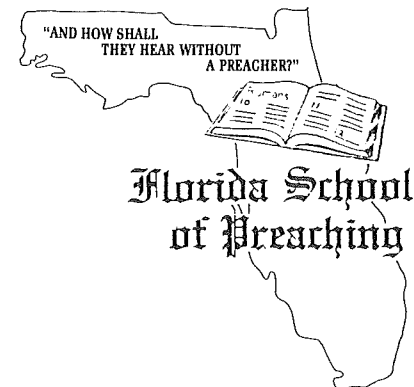


THE HARVESTERS



VOLUME VIII

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SPIRITUAL EUTHANASIA

By
Jackie M Stearsman

There are times when people are shocked into thinking or acting. In a recent article in *The Lakeland Ledger* (June 6, 1990, Page 1A) a doctor is cited with helping a person commit suicide. His stated reason for doing so is to force the medical profession to become more involved in helping people take their life. His words are: *My ultimate aim is to make euthanasia a positive experience. I'm trying to knock the medical profession into accepting its responsibility, and these responsibilities include helping their patients with death.* This procedure is new in the medical profession of our country. However, it is not new in the religious world.

Famous Proponents Of Spiritual Euthanasia

The Devil has been helping people with spiritual suicide from the beginning (John 8:44). He sought and obtained the assistance of Adam and Eve to introduce death into the human race. The human race is subject to physical death because of this sin. When individuals commit sin they die spiritually. The ten spies in Israel in the days of Moses helped a generation with spiritual euthanasia (Numb. 13-14). Jeroboam the son of Nebat was able

to persuade Israel to commit spiritual suicide by building the calves and instituting false worship (II Kings 17:22-23). Jezebel and Ahab helped many in spiritual death with the false prophets they sustained (I Kings 18). In the days of Jesus the Pharisees and Sadducees were renown for their ability to assist those who would listen to them in spiritual euthanasia (John 8-9; Matt. 21-22). Jesus expressed it in these words: *"But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. . . . Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves"* (Matt. 23:13, 15).

"The Soul that sinneth, It shall die"

The Bible teaches that sin causes spiritual death. *Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.* (Ezek. 18:4). Anyone that encourages another to sin (to violate the will of God, James 4:17, I John

3:4; 5:17) is encouraging spiritual euthanasia. Anyone who does not have his sins forgiven through the blood of the Christ will face the second death (Rev. 20:11-15; 5:9).

Contemporary Promoters Of Spiritual Euthanasia

Promoting spiritual death did not end with the writing of the Bible. It is very much alive today. It is the end result of the following popular beliefs.

1. Those who teach that one **cannot fall from grace** are encouraging spiritual euthanasia (Gal. 5:4).
2. Those who teach that **one church is as good as another** are encouraging spiritual euthanasia (II John 9-11).
3. Those who teach that one may **worship God as the individual desires** without consulting the will of God are encouraging spiritual euthanasia (Matt. 15:8-9).
4. Those who teach that one may **put away a faithful companion, marry another, say I sorry, and remain in the second marriage without sin** are encouraging

- spiritual euthanasia (Matt. 19:9).
5. Those who teach that one may fellowship those in religious error (**unity-in-diversity**) are encouraging spiritual euthanasia (I Cor. 1:10; Eph. 5:11).
 6. Those who teach that **it is a sin for churches to help nonchristians** in benevolence are making laws for God and to do so is to encourage spiritual euthanasia (Matt. 5:43-48; I Tim. 4:1-5).
 7. Those who teach that one may **change the organizational structure of the church** (Boston/Crossroads groups; women preachers, etc.) are encouraging spiritual euthanasia (II John 9-11).
 8. Those who teach that we must **develop a new hermeneutic** that would enable individuals to accept irrationality in religion are encouraging spiritual euthanasia (I Thess. 5:21-22).

No New Methods

The people of God in the past were assisted in spiritual death by a variety of means. In fact, I would say that they were so well equipped in this matter that we cannot find a new way of practicing spiritual suicide today. We may look about us and marvel at some supposedly new method, but, if we will but reflect upon the Word of God we will observe that it has already been practiced.

The closer to the truth error remains the more successful it is in masquerading its devastating effects.

Systems

Most Effective

In the Bible we may evaluate the success of each method

practiced. The most successful methods are those that make it the least painful and/or succeed in disguising the actions and promoting them by popular appeal. The closer to the truth error remains the more successful it is in masquerading its devastating effects. The ten spies were all relatives and respected persons in the nation of Israel. Jeroboam was divinely chosen King of the Northern Kingdom. Jeroboam did not call upon the nation to change her "god's" he merely changed the prescribed worship of Jehovah God. Ahab and Jezebel were king and queen. Korah and his associates were not unknown to the people. *Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men: And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown: And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?* (Numb. 16:1-3).

Conclusion

Many would take up the crusade to oppose the doctor who seeks to encourage the ending of physical life. How many will feel any obligation toward those who are promoting the ending of spiritual life? Over the years many have come under attack for opposing promoters of spiritual euthanasia (Acts 7:52-53; Matt. 5:11-12; 10:32ff.).

Every person who has ever lived and been accountable for his actions is in one or the other of these opposing forces--those who promote spiritual euthanasia or those who oppose those who promote spiritual euthanasia. *"He that is not with me is against me; and he that*

gathereth not with me scattereth abroad" (Matt. 12:30). Which side are you on?

June 2, 1990



Dear brother Stearsman,
Just wanted you to know how much I appreciated your classes this past year. I have learned so many new things which have been brought out in a different light. My faith has been strengthened and I have grown as a person. I am looking forward to next semester. Hope all your plans for the summer go smoothly.

In Christ,
John Strachan, Jr.

LECTURESHIP PLANS

On the following page is the schedule for our annual lectureship. We have made plans for the subjects and the speakers. We have reserved the dates and have interrupted the schools schedule that all might profit from this special occasion.

Have you made your plans so that you may enjoy the week of good things? May we count on you to attend? Your presence should make the lectureship a greater blessing. If you attend you will enjoy the fellowship of faithful brethren from near and far. Mark your calendar and put your desires into action.



The Harvesters

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SIXTEENTH ANNUAL LECTURESHIP

JANUARY 21-24, 1991

THEME: UNDERSTANDING THE WILL OF GOD

MONDAY--January 21

- 9:00 "Rules of Bible Interpretation"
Roy Deaver, Austin, TX
- 9:45 "Understanding the Sayings of Jesus"
V.P. Black, Chickasaw, AL
- 10:45 "Can We Understand the Bible Alike"
Chris Steele, New Port Richey, FL
- 11:30 LUNCH
- 1:30 "Some Things We may Never Understand"
Daniel Denham, Eagle Lake, FL
- 2:30 "Understanding The Grace of God"
Eugene Clevenger, Abilene, TX
- 3:30 "Difficult Texts Explained"
Jackie Stearsman, Lakeland, FL
- 4:30 DINNER
- 7:00 "Understanding Providence of God"
Ted Wheeler, Englewood, FL
- 7:45 "Understanding The Love of God"
Wendell Winkler, Montgomery, AL

TUESDAY--January 22

- 9:00 "Rules of Bible Interpretation"
Roy Deaver, Austin, TX
- 9:45 "Understanding the Sayings of Jesus"
V.P. Black, Chickasaw, AL
- 10:45 "Understanding The Mission of the Church"
Demar Elam, Madison, AL
- 11:30 LUNCH
- 1:30 "Understanding Gods Attitude Toward Sin"
Jack Tittle, Rocky Mount, N.C.
- 2:30 "Understanding the Indwelling Godhead"
Bobby Duncan, Adamsville, AL
- 3:30 "Difficult Texts Explained"
Wendell Winkler, Montgomery, AL
- 4:30 DINNER
- 7:00 "Perverting The Doctrine"
Larry Williams, Bradenton, FL
- 7:45 "Revelation and Inspiration of The Will of God"
Jim Laws, Memphis, TN

WEDNESDAY--January 23

- 9:00 "Rules of Bible Interpretation"
Roy Deaver, Austin, TX
- 9:45 "Understanding The Sayings of Jesus"
V.P. Black, Chickasaw, AL
- 10:45 "Hindrances to Proper Understanding"
Bobby Liddell, Pensacola, FL
- 11:30 LUNCH
- 1:30 "Understanding Book of Philemon"
Winfred Clark, Athens, AL
- 2:30 "Understanding Gods will for the Work of Preachers"
Curtis Cates, Memphis, TN
- 3:30 "Difficult Texts Explained"
Eugene Clevenger, Abilene, TX
- 4:30 DINNER
- 7:00 "Understanding Leads to Unity--Not Diversity"
Bruce Harris, Garden City, MI
- 7:45 "Understanding the Greatness of God"
Demar Elam, Madison, AL

THURSDAY--January 24

- 9:00 "Rules of Bible Interpretation"
Roy Deaver, Austin, TX
- 9:45 "Understanding the Book of Jude"
Winfred Clark, Athens, AL
- 10:45 "Understanding Gods Will in Caring For the Needy"
Cletus Stutzman, Mount Dora, FL
- 11:30 LUNCH
- 1:30 "Passages of Scripture Misapplied"
Paul Eubanks, Orlando, FL
- 2:30 "Proper Attitudes Aid Understanding"
Tom Blewett, Vinton, VA
- 3:30 "Difficult Texts Explained"
Curtis Cates, Memphis, TN
- 4:30 DINNER
- 7:00 "All Men Are Amenable to The Will of God"
Harold Rodriguez, Sarasota, FL
- 7:45 "Understanding the Severity of God"
Bobby Duncan, Adamsville, AL

We Must Have A Standard

By
Jackie M. Stearsman

In *The Lakeland Ledger* (June 6, 1990, Page 4A) we read: "We must agree on what we believe before we can agree on much else." These are the words of assembly Moderator Price Henderson Gwynn III of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). They were meeting "to adopt a new statement of faith."

I find this very interesting. At a time when many of our brethren are promoting the foolish position that we are to have no firm belief and standard for our religious conduct, other religious groups must meet and establish a standard. Without a standard chaos results. This is true be it in the field of religion or international diplomacy.

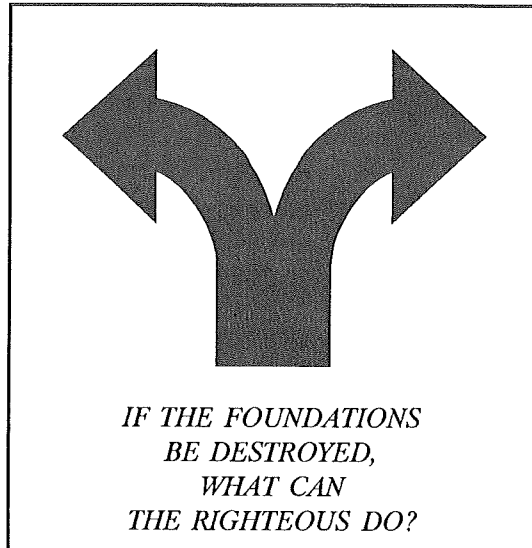
A Standard Is Essential

We must have a standard to direct us. No one can function ignoring any and all standards. He must have a standard for monetary exchange. He must have a standard for drug distribution. He must have a standard for operating an automobile. He must have a standard alphabet in order to communicate in writing. He must have a standard in the work place, ad infinitum.

Religious Standards

It is not a question of

whether we will have a religious standard or whether we will not have a religious standard. All individuals have standard. If there is no religious standard we will establish one. If we are not satisfied with the standard we have we will change it. This is too



obvious to need proof. If there are any doubters read again the quote from the assembly Moderator of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) cited above. We must have a religious standard. The following must have a religious basis for regulation:

1. Objective moral behavior requires a standard.
2. To identify the brother-

hood of faithful believers requires a standard.

3. To maintain proper fellowship requires a standard.
4. To determine my purpose in life requires a standard.
5. To determine what is detrimental to spiritual health requires a standard.
6. Deciding my work and worship in the Lord requires a standard.
7. To have confidence in my life in the Christ requires a standard.
8. To measure our progress in the Lord requires a standard.
9. To identify defeat requires a standard.
10. To return to walking in the light requires a standard.

Conclusion

So vital is my need for a standard that I must have one to exist. "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Psalm 11:3). Each one is building upon some foundation. It may be the sand but rest assured you are building. Let us never forget the storms of life will test our building. If our spiritual house falls because of the poor foundation--great will be the fall thereof (Matthew 7:21-28).

FLORIDA SCHOOL OF PREACHING

1807 SOUTH FLORIDA AVENUE
LAKELAND, FLORIDA 33803-2653

DIRECTOR: B. C. Carr
Phone: (813) 683-4043

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