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### Dangers Facing The Church In Failing To Care For The Fatherless and Widows

Barney Brock

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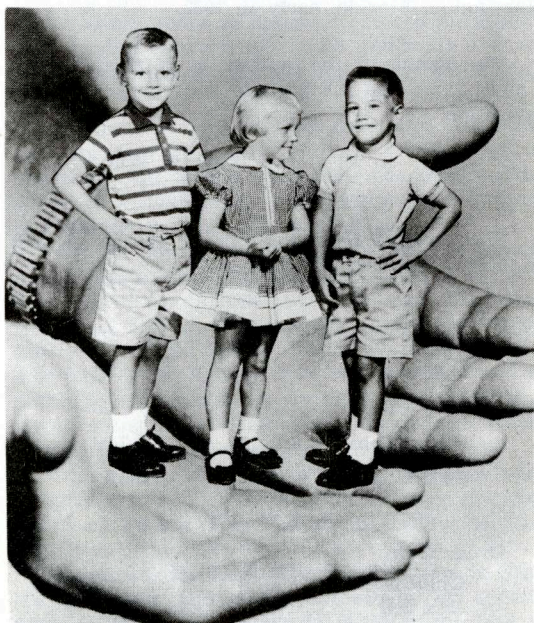
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# **Dangers Facing The Church In Failing To Care For The Fatherless And Widows**

**By Barney Brock**



***Their destiny here and in eternity  
is in our hands.***

The author, J. L. (Barney) Brock is Superintendent of Childhaven, at Cullman, Alabama, and has been since its beginning almost 13 years ago. By the children he is affectionately known as "Daddy Brock." This lecture was originally delivered in the "West Florida Lectureship" in Warrington, Florida, early in 1962.

We commend the author as a Christian of highest type, and his tract to your prayerful consideration.

Sterl A. Watson

The receipts from the sale of this tract will be used to support Childhaven.

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# **Dangers Facing The Church In Failing To Care For The Fatherless And Widows**

It is indeed a privilege and a pleasure as well as a distinct honor to appear on this lectureship. I have looked forward to it with much joy and sincerely trust that I may add something worthwhile to it.

I commend this congregation and its Elders for your courage, vision and love for the truth of almighty God, which I am sure has inspired this series of lectures each year and which no doubt has already done a great deal of good.

Let me appeal to you to recognize the seriousness of the subject that has been assigned to me to discuss with you at this hour. This is a very timely subject and of vital interest to members of the Church of Christ today. There are many sincere members of the Church who are confused and do nothing for fear of doing wrong regarding the matter of caring for the fatherless and widows, or the practice of pure and undefiled religion.

The subject assigned to me is not "How", the fatherless and widows should be cared for, but "Dangers Facing The Church in Failing to Care for Them".

Regarding the how of caring for those in need, the fatherless and widows, there is no specific plan, no suggestion in the least, as to the how or where.

As in the command to go into all the world and preach; we may choose any mode of travel

that we desire and best suits our taste and is expedient. We may go by car, train, bus, boat, air, horse, run or walk so long as we obey the command. Further, regarding the preaching of the Gospel, we are given the command to preach, but we may choose the medium. We may speak over the radio or T.V., write, or talk in person. We may go into peoples homes, invite them into our own home or speak from the street corner, court house steps, under a tree or in a Church building.

No friends, regarding the care of the fatherless, or the preaching of the gospel, there is no suggestion as to how, but there is not only a suggestion as to who should care for them, but specific command is given. It is the Church of our Lord and its members. It comes under the head of Pure and undefiled Religion. James 1:27.

When our Lord was on the earth, it was his deeds of human kindness and his thoughtful concern of those in need that made him such a stand-out. Jesus did and taught, Acts 1:1, and the things which he did is what made his teaching so effective. - - - The Poet says, "I rather see a sermon than hear one any day." - - - Jesus was a living sermon. We are living sermons known and read by all men as declared by the Apostle Paul. The sermons some of us are living however, is not so impressive, I regret to say.

But some of my brethren are so confused about the how and the who and so afraid of doing wrong, that they do nothing. - - - They observe but do not serve. They say but do not obey.

There is much said about who. Those who oppose such efforts as CHILDHAVEN say the Church does not have a responsibility toward the fatherless. Some time ago one of our well known preach-



ers said, "its not the Churches problem, let the State take care of the little bastards".

The "Little bastards" as he calls them are the fatherless. The writer of Psalms in Psalms 68:5 says, "God in his holy habitation is the father of the fatherless." Bastards? - - - Yes, in the eyes of some of my brethren, but not in the eyes of God, and not in the eyes of faithful children of God.

Brethren, when we talk about the fatherless, we are talking about souls, individuals, made in the very image of God himself. We must not loose sight of the fact that eternity is involved and the destiny of souls are at stake.

There has been much said about the drain on the Church treasury and the cost involved in caring for the fatherless. - - - Yes, it costs. That we do not deny. But let us see just how much it cost. Members of the Church of Christ are spending about a million and a half dollars annually in caring for the fatherless, the practice of pure and undefiled religion. Can you imagine that? Yes, we are spending about one and one-half million dollars each year in this work.

Now let us go further. We have two million members in this nation of ours and we are spending one and one-half million dollars a year to care for the fatherless or an average of 75c a year for each member, or 6¼c per month or 1¼c per week. }

Brethren, it has been estimated that we spend more than twice as much moving preachers from one location to another as we do in caring for the fatherless. Think of it, three million dollars a year to move preachers from one location to another and only about half that amount in the practice of pure and undefiled religion. 20

It is interesting to note that many of these preachers are "Anti", who ask for scripture, for

the method, the how, of caring for the fatherless but are not concerned in the least about scriptural authority to take money out of the Church treasury to move them and their families from one location to another. *Mat 28. 19*

Friends, it costs to care for the fatherless, but the cost does not begin to compare with the value. Every dime that has been spent at **CHILDHAVEN** is not worth one-hundredth part of one per cent of just one child. Every cent that has been spent at **CHILDHAVEN** and every other home among us is not worth one hundredth part of one percent of just one child. Let me say more, every penny spent in all our homes throughout their history and the cost of every church building, preacher home, school, printing press and preachers salaries, secretaries, janitor and song leaders included, does not begin to compare with the worth of the soul of just one child - - - especially if that child is your child. - - - The trouble is, they are not your children, rather they are God's children and made in His very image.

A negro boy hurrying down the street on a bicycle had a sudden impulse and swerved into the curb, and letting his bicycle fall across the curb ran into the corner drug store. Hurrying up to the cashier he said, "Please sir, would you please give me change for a quarter." The cashier handed him the change for a quarter and the negro said "does you mind if I use your phone please sir?" The cashier pointing toward the phone booth over in the corner said "you may help yourself". He rushed over to the telephone booth and leaving the door open dialed a number. In a moment he said, "Is this 273-4938. Tis; does you need no more help". You got all the helps you needs?" he pauses. "Ye got the best boy yous ever had? You is? Well,

thank you sir" and he quickly hung up the receiver and rushing out the door was stopped by the cashier. The cashier said, "Boy I sure hate that you did not get that job." The negro stopped and took a couple of steps toward him and said, "Ah, thats all right sir, thank you sir, never you mind that sir, thats all right sir, don't you worry about that ner bit; thats where I works, I was just checking up on myself." - - - Brethren, we need to check up on ourselves. I can't understand why some feel as they do. Why is it? Is it selfishness, indifference, meanness, envy, or just down right stubbornness.

Not, let us consider some of the dangers facing the Church in failing to care for the fatherless and widows.

**FIRST, IT IS CONTRARY TO THE VERY NATURE OF CHRISTIANITY AND DOES NOT BEGIN TO MANIFEST THE LOVE, MERCY AND GOODNESS OF JESUS.** Listen to Jesus, Matthew 5:43-48; "We have heard that it has been said, thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that we may be the children of your father which is in heaven: for he maketh the sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends his rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect as your father which is in heaven is perfect. - - - But some are like the scribes and pharisees of Christ day. They were such sticklers for the letter of the law or pretended to be that



they had no concern for the spirit of the law. They tried to prove that Jesus had broken the law by saying he had no right to heal on the Sabbath. The truth was, that they hated Jesus and wanted to put him to death and they wanted to do it under the guise of religion. Matt. 6.

Could it be that some of us hate the homes so badly as we see the good that is being done that we are trying to put them to death under the pretense of religion? Sticklers for the letter of the law of Christ, but no concern for the spirit of Jesus. Having a form of Godliness but denying the power thereof.

We call ourselves the Church of Christ? And some teach it is wrong for the Church to take care of the fatherless and widows? Such a spirit is abhorrent to God and man. It is one of the most selfish and damnable doctrines that anyone could conceive and certainly that I have ever known. I am convinced that if the Church of Christ is ever recognized by the world as believing what some of our objectors to CHILDAHVEN and such homes teach we can close the doors of our church buildings and take down our signs.

I am not and would not be associated with such a cold and heartless religion, and it is as far from and different to the truth and spirit of Christianity as Heaven is from Hell.

Such teachings will discourage obedience to the Gospel. When we become known as believing that it is sinful and that we are so cold toward the homeless children and widows that we cannot supply their needs from the Church treasurer, people will turn away from us in disgust.

Being a member of a club or a social order would be more to be desired. That kind of doctrine would make infidels out of people rather

than Christians, and it is a shame that anyone associated with a Church of Christ teaches such a doctrine and frankly it is hard to believe that they truly believe it themselves. Romans 12:20 commands us to care for even our enemies who are in need; if our enemies are hungry we are commanded to feed them and if thirsty we are to give them drink. Why? Romans 2:4 tells us that the goodness of God leads men to repentance, and God's goodness is reflected through his people. So - - - our benevolent work is a means of leading people to obey the Lord.

He has no hands but our hands to do his work today;

He has no feet but our feet to lead men to his way.

He has no voice but our voice to tell men how he died;

He has no help but our help to lead men to his side.

Jesus says, "Help the just as well as the unjust". Not just our brethren or their children or relatives. Why? Why help the unjust and our enemies as commanded in Matthew 5:44. The next verse tells us; "that ye may be the children of your father which is in heaven" and the next verse the 46th he says, "For if ye love them which love you what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?" Verse 47 further emphasizes this by saying, "And ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so?"

What is the point Jesus is making here? Simply this; when we do benevolence to those who are not members of the Church, who are in need, is one point toward making us perfect and children of God Matthew 5:44-48.

The parable of the good samaritan also brings out this truth. The Priest and the Levite were suppose to have helped the man who was in need because they were religious, but they refused. The lesson for us is, that we should help those in need. But, if we turn our head, close our eyes and ears; walk by on the other side or use any kind of excuse to try to justify our failure to care for those in need, it reflects upon us and we are condemned as was the Priest and the Levite. It hinders the church and reflects greatly upon it.

The second danger that we would like to discuss in failing to care for the fatherless and widows is - - - **WE SHIRK OUR DUTY, AND FAIL IN OUR MISSION, AND LET OUR GOOD BE EVIL SPOKEN OF.**

Let us consider what we are doing to cause the disturbance of recent years. Did you know that in this nation of ours there are about ninety-five thousand children in institutional homes. Listen to this please, - - - of this ninety five thousand - - - seventy five thousand are being cared for in Catholic homes. Get it please, of ninety five thousand children in institutional homes seventy five thousand of these are in Catholic homes. About ten thousand are in denominational homes and eighty-five hundred in homes supported by lodges and municipalities.

How many are being cared for in homes supported by the Churches of Christ and members of the Church? About sixteen or seventeen hundred, less than 2%.

What do you think the seventy-five thousand children in the Catholic institutions are going to be religiously speaking when they grow up. How can we teach them the truth? How are we going to even approach them? How are we going to an-

swer them when they say, I was hungry, naked, and in destitution and ye would not help me; you closed your eyes, ears and heart and bowels of compassion against me; I can almost hear them say, "Depart from me, you make me sick."

When we try to refute their doctrine and lift our voice in protest against the Catholics, they will feel as did the poet when he said, "Woodman spare that tree, don't touch a single bow; in youth it sheltered me and I'll protect it now".

Not only are the Catholics caring for seventy-five thousand children, but they stand ready to take more. I hear so often when we must say, "we can't take children", that the Catholics have already offered to take them. They stand ready and they want the children. They realize that youth is the time to teach them and these multiplied thousands of children who are being cared for by them will rise up to call her blessed(?) A living and vocal testimony.

The third danger facing the Church in failing to care for the fatherless and the widows is that **IT HINDERS THE CHURCH BY FAILING TO CAPITALIZE UPON A GREAT POTENTIAL OF FUTURE WORKERS.**

Did you ever stop to realize that the progress of civilization is marked by milestones of harnessed power - - - Primitive man made a step forward when he began to harness the beast to do his chores and carry his burdens. He took another step forward when he harnessed the wind to drive his boat across the water, and still another when he dammed up the streams to turn his mill and grind his grain, and then larger streams to light our cities and turn the wheels of industry and progress. On and on we go, making progress by harnessing forces of power until now we can send



a man in space and around the earth three times in less time than it took to go to town and back when you and I were children.

But did you ever realize that all these forces have been with us all the time? What is the secret? We've just taken advantage of these forces, and harnessed them to make them powerful. The song which says, there is nothing new under the sun is true. They are not new, they have just taken new shapes and used in different ways.

Likewise, the poor and fatherless have been with us. Jesus says, "the poor ye have with you always, and whensoever ye will, ye may do them good."

But, not until recent years have members of the Church of Christ caught the vision and realized the great potential of this power that has been wasted in the form of fatherless youth. But the tragedy is, that this force has not only been lost to the Church, but has become a force against us.

The statement, I can't go back on my raising is largely true here. When a child is taken and nurtured and given love and care it will take a lot of convincing to make him believe that those who took him and cared for him did wrong and still a greater task to make him believe that their doctrine is wrong. Rather, he will stand up and fight for it, and defend and protect it at all cost, and like the poet shout loud and clear, "Woodman spare that tree don't touch a single bow; in youth it sheltered me and I'll protect it now."

A few days ago one of our children, Van Phillips, a senior in high school asked me a question that expressed what I'm trying to say; he said, "Daddy Brock, if we were in Church and the preacher talked against the homes would it be all



right to ask to say something and get up and tell them what we think about the homes and what it has done for us?"

Christianity is not just a gospel to teach, but one to practice. It is doing the will of God from the heart in a spirit of love, not just talking about it and trying to justify our failure or find reasons to do it. Jesus tells us in James 2:13, "For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shown no mercy and mercy rejoiceth against judgment."

There are some who show no mercy and are so heartless as to declare that if a non-Christian man were injured in front of a Church building that it would be sinful just to wet your handkerchief in the Church house to bath his face. That is the extreme to which such a heartless doctrine will lead you.

We believe that it is sinful to see someone in need and not do what we can to supply that need. James 2:15-16.

The fourth danger facing the Church for failing to care for the fatherless and widows is that **IT HINDERS THE CAUSE OF CHRIST IN THAT IT CAUSES CONFUSION AND DIVISION IN THE CHURCHES BY MAKING LAWS WHERE GOD HAS NOT AND WHICH IS CONDEMNED AND SINFUL.** I Cor. 1:10 and Gal. 1:6-7.

The results of this anti-doctrine upon Churches is tremendous. I understand that you have several examples in your own state of Florida. For example, reliable sources say that the Seventh Avenue Church in Miami which was a strong Church with about 500 members became infested with the Anti sentiment and has suffered greatly and now I hear that their attendance is off nearly 60%. I also understand that the 10th and Francis Street in Oklahoma City with 775 members

*in deacent, no water to baptize*

in 1948 became of the anti persuasion and now has less than half that number. This is true of Churches all over the brotherhood that have become infested with antism.

Furthermore, this no cooperation doctrine deprives weak Churches a part in helping in evangelistic work. Many weak Churches could help support evangelistic work or a benevolent program, but could not support the whole program alone. But because of this anti doctrine they do nothing.

The Fifth and last danger facing the Church in failing to care for the Fatherless and Widows is that **WE SAY AND DO NOT, WE TEACH BUT WE DO NOT PRACTICE, WE PLAY THE HYPOCRITE.**

Friends, one thing we often do in our public prayers is pray for the widows and orphans. I always taught that when we pray for something, we should do all within our power to bring about its fulfillment. I once read an article about a man in a boat, he lost control of his boat and the rapids were tossing him to and fro. He finally covered his face and started praying. Finally the boat was swept against the bank and the people on the shore yelled aloud, "you crazy man, stop praying and step ashore". - - - I also read another article which said, "Don't just pray for the fatherless and widows, but do something for them".

Like the little boy after hearing his Daddy pray for the fatherless and widows and every one in need, said to his Daddy when he has finished praying, "Daddy, I wish I had your money." His Daddy said, "What would you do with my money, son?" The boy replied, "I'd answer your prayer."

Brethren, we need and want your prayers, but we also need your good will and support.

Souls are at stake, eternity stares us in the face and they are too valuable to take any risk. We must obey the truth in these matters, of pure and undefiled religion.

May the Lord help us to come to a unity of the spirit that we may stand before the world united in heart, in purpose and in truth.

It's only a half truth the poet has sung  
Of the house by the side of the way,  
Our Master had neither a house or a home,  
But he walked with the crowd day by day.  
So I think as I read of the poet's desire  
That a house by the road would be good,  
But service is found in the tenderest form  
As we walk with the man in the road.

So I say let me walk with the man in the road,  
Let me seek out the burdens that crush;  
Let me speak a kind word of good cheer to the  
weak

Who are falling behind in the rush.  
There are wounds we must heal, there are breaks  
we must mend,  
There are cups of cold water to give,  
But the man in the road by the side of his friend  
Is the man who has learned how to give.

So tell me no more of the house by the way,  
There is only one place I could live.  
It is there where men are toiling along,  
Who are needing the help I can give.  
Tis pleasant to dwell in the house by the way,  
And be a friend as the poet has said;  
But our Master is bidding us bear ye their load,  
Your rest lieth yonder ahead.

So I can't remain in the house by the way,  
And just watch as the toilers pass on;  
Their faces beclouded with pain and with shame,  
So burdened their strength nearly gone.  
I will go to their side, I will speak in good cheer,  
I will help them to carry their load;  
And I'll smile at the man in the house by the way,  
As I walk with the crowd in the road.

Out there in the road that runs by the house  
Where the poet is singing his song,  
I'll work and I'll toil 'neath the heat of the day,  
I'll help struggling brothers along.  
Too busy to dwell in the house by the way,  
Too happy for such an abode,  
And my glad heart will sing to the Master of all,  
Who is helping me serve in the road.