

A FATHER TO THE FATHERLESS: TRUE RELIGION AND THE CARE OF ORPHANS

JAMES 1:27

2 Goals

- ▶ Exposition of James 1:27
- ▶ Biblical background of ministry to orphans

3 Features of True Religion

- ▶ The Essence of True Religion
- ▶ The Purity of True Religion
- ▶ The Practice of True Religion

The Essence of True Religion

- ▶ **The Meaning of Religion**
 - ▶ Points Forward
 - ▶ Points Backward

The Essence of True Religion

James 1:27
Religion



James 2:1:
“faith in our
glorious Lord
Jesus Christ.”

The Essence of True Religion

James 1:22
“But prove
yourselves doers of
the word and not
merely hearers who
delude themselves.”



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The Essence of True Religion

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James 1:27
Religion

James 2:1:
“faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ.”

A Faith which works

The Essence of True Religion

- ▶ Pure (+)
- ▶ Undeclared (-)
 - ▶ “Clean”
 - ▶ Two terms associated with temple sacrifice

The Essence of True Religion

- ▶ Two Effects of True Religion
 - ▶ Personal Holiness
 - ▶ Practical Compassion

The Purity of True Religion

- ▶ “to keep oneself unstained by the world.”
 - ▶ The world: the system of ideology: the life devoid of God
 - ▶ John MacArthur: “habitual holy obedience”

The Practice of True Religion

- ▶ “to visit orphans and widows in their distress”
- ▶ Hypocrisy
 - ▶ Good works on outside but unholy on inside

OR

- ▶ “Holy” in personal life but no outer good works

Care of Orphans is a God-like Ministry

- ▶ “Orphans and Widows”
- ▶ Calvin says, “James does not define generally what religion is, but reminds us that religion without the things he mentions is nothing.”
- ▶ Orphan
 - ▶ A child who does not have a father
 - ▶ “Orphan” appears 4 times in Scripture
 - ▶ “Fatherless” appears 42 times in Scripture
- ▶ Widow and orphan could be referring to the same family

Care of Orphans is a God-like Ministry

- ▶ **Psalm 68:5:** “A father of the fatherless and a judge for the widows, Is God in His holy habitation”
- ▶ **Exodus 22:22:** “you shall not afflict any widow or orphan.”
- ▶ **Deuteronomy 27:19** ‘Cursed is he who distorts the justice due an alien, orphan, and widow.’

Care of Orphans is a God-like Ministry

- ▶ Bible
 - ▶ God identifies with the people at the bottom
- ▶ All other ancient religions:
 - ▶ gods identify with the people at the top

Care of Orphans is a God-like Ministry

- ▶ **Proverbs 14:31:** “He who oppresses the poor taunts his Maker.”
- ▶ **Deut 10:18:** “He executes justice for the orphan and the widow.”

Care of Orphans is a Compassionate Ministry

- ▶ Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father
 - ▶ Points to the Compassion of God
 - ▶ We must have the same heart of compassion as God
 - ▶ **MacArthur:** “True Christianity is made manifest by how we love people who are in need”

Care of Orphans is a Historical Ministry

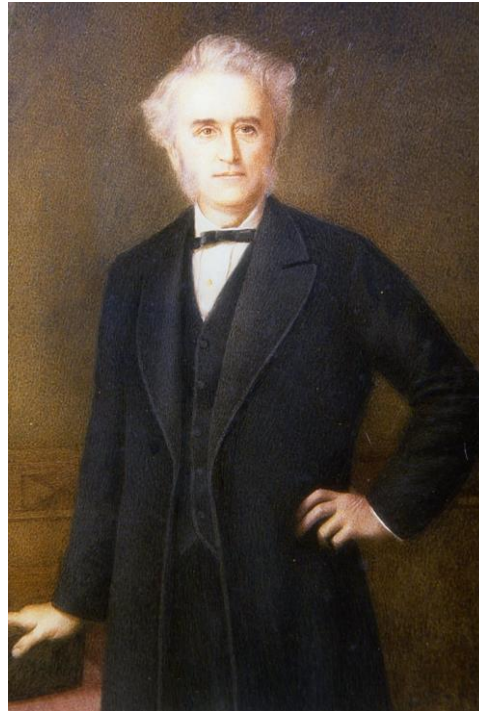
- ▶ Andrew Reed
 - ▶ Founded the first orphanage in England: The Asylum for Fatherless Children



Andrew Reed

Care of Orphans is a Historical Ministry

- ▶ Pastor Reed and Dr. John Down
 - ▶ Founded the first home for children with special needs



Care of Orphans is a Historical Ministry

▶ Church cared for orphans

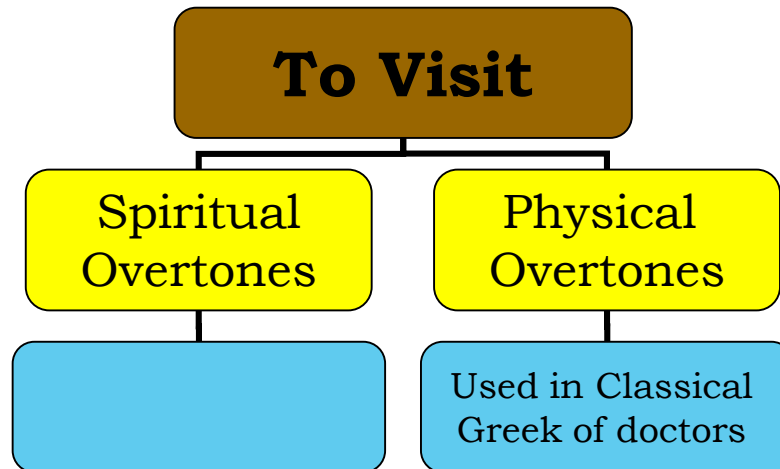
- ▶ Moravians
- ▶ Spurgeon
- ▶ Whitefield
- ▶ Moody
- ▶ Carmichael
- ▶ Mueller

Care of Orphans is a Historical Ministry

- ▶ Church cared for orphans
 - ▶ ...until the Great Depression and the New Deal by FDR
- ▶ Care of orphans reestablished by liberal Christians

Care of Orphans is a Physical Ministry

- ▶ “to visit orphans and widows in their distress”

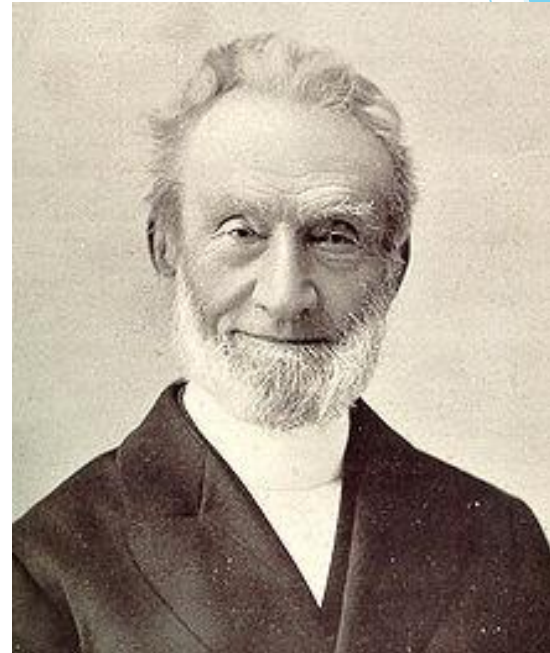


Care of Orphans is a Physical Ministry

- ▶ **Deuteronomy 14:28-29:** the Law commanded that every third year a special tithe
- ▶ **Deuteronomy 24:19-21:** Laws for harvesting

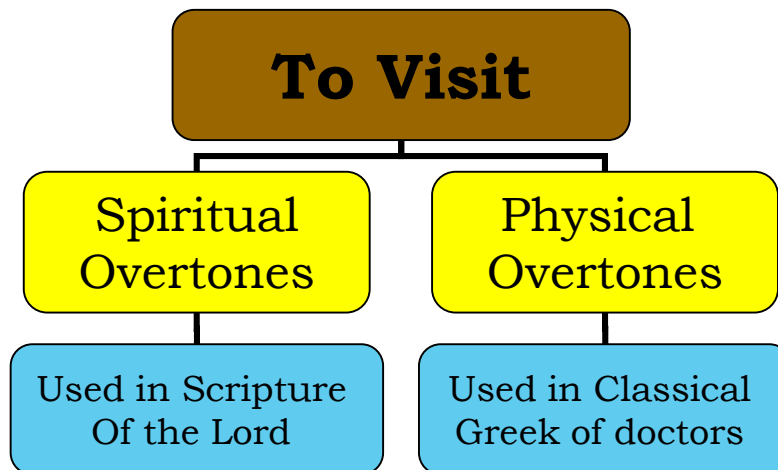
Care of Orphans is a Physical Ministry

- ▶ George Mueller
- ▶ “The three chief reasons for establishing an Orphan-House are: 1. That God may be glorified, and that thus the faith of his children may be strengthened, 2. The spiritual welfare of fatherless and motherless children. 3. Their temporal welfare.”



Care of Orphans is a Spiritual Ministry

- ▶ “to visit orphans and widows”



Care of Orphans is a Spiritual Ministry

- ▶ **Exodus 4:31**, God visited Israel in their affliction. "The LORD had visited the children of Israel [in Egypt], and he had looked upon their affliction."
- ▶ **Luke 1:68** - at the coming of Jesus, Zacharias says, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people."
- ▶ Our Ministry to Orphans should be Redemptive

Care of Orphans is a Spiritual Ministry



Orphan girls under Mueller's Care
(www.georgemuller.org)



Orphan babies in nursery
(www.georgemuller.org)

