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- DOCTORAL THEISIS ABSTRACT -

THE FAMILY IN THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF
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THE FAMILY IN THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON

-abstract-

The family has been created by God in the Garden of Eden and managed to survive throughout the ages despite all the vicissitudes it faced. It will be always considered as a fundamental institution both for society and the Church, as its main supporter is God and it represents the love between Jesus Christ and His Church. Also the family is a continuous remembrance of the fact that God is the creator of human being, He has made mankind in His own image and likeness, male and female.

The Romanian society has been directly confronting for the last three decades with an unprecedented crisis of the family institution. The opening of the borders to the West and the Romania's fast steps to capitalism have negatively and unexpectedly challenged the Christian Romanian family in different ways, such as: leaving one of the spouses or both of them to work abroad, addiction to alcoholic drinks, shortage of materials, the abundance of valuable material possessions or resources unwisely administered, discord or breaking the relationships within the family.

Nowadays, the Christian Church is still preaching and sustaining the truth according to which the marriage is a permanent union between a man and a woman.¹, directed and blessed by God. Nevertheless the modern and postmodern society struggles to teach people that family life and marriage are made by two persons who have equal rights and freedom to cease this relationship whenever they consider it does not work anymore.²

Many families, even within the churches of Evangelical Alliance of Romania, where until 1990

¹ Nelu Mureșan, *Căsătorie garantată pe viață*, Oradea, Societatea Biblică din România, 2010, p. 9.

² Peter Coleman, *Christian Attitudes to Marriage, From ancient times to the third millennium*, London, SCM Press, 2004, p. 198.

the breakup of a marriage was very rare, have experienced the divorce which has negative impact both on the parents and the children. The family who looks upon life from a human and material point of view only is very likely to pass through dramatic relational experiences and eventually to end up with a divorce and unhappiness. On the other hand, families who understand and accept that the initiator and sustainer of the family is God are filled with spiritual, relational and material blessings as long as they obey God's Word, the Bible.

Giving an in-depth examination of the biblical history and the way God created mankind we come to realize that the relationship between husband and wife are more complex than they tend to be. Elaine Storkey claims that there are four paradigms that describe the relationship between husband and wife and they are interchangeable.³

The first paradigm refers to difference. The first book of the Bible, Genesis, narrates that Adam and Eve were very different from one another: they were made differently, got different names, sinned in different way and were punished differently for their sins. In the Bible it can be noticed that the man's responsibilities are different from the woman's and there are different set of rules for men and women.

The second paradigm refers to similarity. The analysis of the relationship between husband and wife proves that they resemble each other very much even if they are so different. There was no person who could match Adam's needs and that's why God created Eve. Both of them were given the commandment to be fruitful and multiple as to fill the planet and be responsible to procreate. Within the family the children are asked to honor their parents, which means both the husband and wife have a great responsibility to bring up and educate their children. From the spiritual point of view both the husband and wife have major responsibilities as members in the church, although their roles cover different areas.

The third paradigm refers to complementarity. A husband and wife complete each other. They were not made to live separately, but together, complementing each other. Although Adam was firstly created and then Eve they live together as husband and wife and have a mandate to grow their children for the glory of God.

The fourth paradigm is called unity. The book of Genesis shows that even if Adam and Eve were two different, similar and complementary partners, they ought to have been one. The way God created man required the two people from earth to be one. The unity of the two people ought to

³ Ibid

have been realized both on the spiritual and emotional plan, but also on the physical and material plan. When it is about unity in marriage, the Bible goes even further and claims that the spouses are not allowed to use their bodies arbitrarily, but the wife is the owner of her husband's body and the husband is the owner of his wife's body; by doing this, there will be a proof of unity between them which is often compared with the unity between Jesus Christ and His Church.

It is important to highlight that the family will suffer from disequilibrium if these four paradigms are not taken into account jointly.

Our deepest experiences, both physical and spiritual, we do not experience them alone, differently or separately, but in the unity of husband and wife in God...If we concentrate only on the differences or the complementary relationship between man and woman, for instance, as a biblical perspective, then we will destroy the husband and wife relationship...But when consider all four paradigms, then we will see the benefits the biblical revelation brings...⁴

The present paper aims to give an in-depth examination of theology of Spurgeon on the subject of family, the analysis through which we will identify the way a husband and wife ought to build their own family so that they and their children may enjoy both the material goods and their relationships within the family, church and society.

The success C. H. Spurgeon had in England during the nineteenth century, both as a pastor and a preacher, as well as a husband and father, determines us to analyze thoroughly his theological perspective regarding the family and to learn from it.

According to C.H. Spurgeon, both the family composed of parents and children and the Church of God, has the name of FAMILY. The family of God is the Church of God and it represents the totality of people who were saved through faith in the Son of God and are leading a life worthy of the calling they have received and in accordance with the Gospel. Agape love is the strongest bond existing between the family and the Church. C. H. Spurgeon presents strong similarities between the biological family and the Church of God, proving that a healthy church depends on the health of the members within the family. He claims that both the parents and the local churches leaders have the same aim: teaching people to respect the principles of the Bible in their daily life, in their relationships within the family, church and society in general.

Biblical knowledge acquired within the family and church, bring a lot of prosperity and positive relationships with people at work and society in general.

⁴ Elaine Storkey, *Created or Constructed? The Great Gender Debate*, Carlisle, Paternoster Press, 2001, p. 117.

The second chapter of the paper presents the analysis of the defining aspects related to the concept of thinking and life of the Puritans, due to the fact that the development of Spurgeon was early and decisively influenced by the Puritans.⁵ His grandfather, Reverend James Spurgeon, who was a genuine Puritan pastor, and the Puritan books he read represented ways through which C. H. Spurgeon was determined to apply the biblical principles in his personal life and to tell and persuade other people to become genuine Christians, the servants of God.

The principles and regulations the Puritans preached are neither obsolete nor ineffective to the family and church of all times as these principles are based on the infallible teaching of the Word of God.

Puritans have so strongly marked Spurgeon's life and way of thinking, that he was deservedly considered "a Puritan in every fiber of his being."⁶

Puritanism was a movement of spiritual revival that arose within the Church of England during the sixteenth century, contributed to the great awakening in the world during the seventeenth century and it still reverberates nowadays.

Puritans protested against the fact that many of the church servants did not have a special calling from God; they even were ignorant and inefficient. They were of the idea that only the things commended in the Bible should exist in the church and worship.⁷

The topics approached by the Puritans were highly diverse: politics, social, educational, ecclesiastical and family topics. Puritan leaders expressed their point of view regarding any aspect of daily life and taught the believers that the Bible is the norm of faith for each domain of daily life. They strongly believed in the infallibility of Scripture. Although they were very different from one another, namely one of them were the Anglicans whereas the other ones were the Separatists; some of them Hyper-Calvinists and others Arminianists, some of them were moderate whereas the others were radical; they reached to have the same perspective: the Bible was not a book to be analyzed if it is true or not, but the Bible ought to have been studied and fulfilled. This aspect made the Puritans to bring a strong spiritual revival that stirred many generations.

⁵ James Leo Garrett, Jr., *Baptist Theology: A Four-Century Study*, Macon, Mercer University Press, 2009, p. 266.

⁶ Erroll Hulse, *The Story of the Puritans, Who were they? What did they accomplish? Why should we listen to them today?*, Darlington, Evangelical Press, 2000, p. 9.

⁷ Ernest W. Bacon, *Spurgeon: Heir of the Puritans*, London : Allen & Unwin, 1967, p. 103.

Benjamin Brook sustained that Puritans were a group of people whom the world was not worthy; as they were entirely and incessantly devoted to the Bible study; enjoying the spiritual intimacy with God; they wanted to make a clear separation between God's truths and heresy of their time and purify the Church of any secularism and corruption.⁸

The Puritan preachers did not approach the Bible from a specialist's position that knows everything in society and later on analyses the Bible to see if it matches the reality or it could have matched the time it was written for. The Puritan leaders considered the Bible as the Word that comes directly from the mouth of God, word that ought not to be doubt, but lived and fulfilled daily. Being fully persuaded that the Bible is the Word of God, the Puritans did not focus on telling the biblical stories only, but especially on the practical applications of the biblical passage. They showed great interest in apocalyptic aspects of the Bible, considering that the most important event for a Christian is the coming of the Kingdom of God. Consequently the Puritans had a lot of practical approach of their sermons, through which they came up with solutions for the listeners' objections and feelings of unease. They did not feel ashamed to bring a biblical answer to frequently-asked-questions within the family, believers and society – the latter had a lot of question marks about the existence of God. The Puritan preachers reckoned that the passage from 2 Timothy 3:16-17 ought to be applied to daily living of believers. Therefore, they analyzed during their sermons the life of society they were living in and tried to reprove vehemently the behavior of those who broke God's law.

The Puritan preachers spoke fearlessly when delivering the Gospel message as they were men of prayer. One of the preachers, Bramwell, was known by people as a man who could always transmit a new message as he was so close to the gates of heaven that he was able to hear a lot of things from there, things that other people could not hear.⁹

According to their view, prayer was not considered only the time spent within the local church, but they placed great emphasis on personal and family prayer. The Puritan families used to have a daily sermon within their families similar to the one from the church, but shorter and with a smaller audience size.

The inner force coming from a daily prayer life made the puritan preachers real divine messengers of that time and who had a great impact on generations. They were more than some moralists of the time they were living in, as after the presentation of the biblical history they got into all the aspects of human

⁸ Benjamin Brook, *The lives of the Puritans, Vol. I.*, London, James Black, 1813, p. vii.

⁹ C. H. Spurgeon, *Feathers for Arrows; or, Illustrations for Preachers and Theachers*, London, Passmore

existence, showing the way a Christian's life would be pleasant, firstly, in God's and then people's eyes. Hence their preaching consisted of six elements:

after the text presentation, doctrines were sustained by biblical excerpts, through questions and answers to the objections frequently brought; then they used firstly informing, secondly confronting the catholic theological perspectives, thirdly reproving, fourthly analyzing, fifthly encouragement and finally compassion.¹⁰

This chapter emphasizes the role of the Bible, society, church and family in the Puritans' life. Therefore, it has been acknowledged that the Puritans did not only read and listen to the Word, but they complied with the divine commands, considering that the Bible should be the norm of life not merely for the church and family, but for society, too. Although they were target for public attacks, they continued to fight for the biblical principles to be the basis of a society, excluding worldly desires of human nature.

They believed that the church ought to be purified of any unbiblical issue and reacted against any unscriptural customs and principles that the Church of England had. According to the Puritans the Church of England did not come off the influences of Catholicism.

Family had a major role in Puritan perspective. As claimed by them, the relationship between husband and wife was of divine origin and this relationship is based on the covenant of marriage, covenant which God Himself took part in. They spoke freely about the sexual relationship in marriage and it was viewed as a mutual duty of husbands and wives towards each other.

Puritans considered that the family and church ought to work together for the common good of the family, obeying the principles of the Bible. In this respect, Thomas Watson felt comfortable enough to talk freely about the decayed society he was living in and to highlight what havoc this sin shall make among the priests and the members of Catholic Church.

The Church of Rome is accused of permitting the sin of adultery and fornication. The church cannot tolerate its priests to get married, but they are allowed to have courtesans. The worst type of impurity, the incest with the closest relatives is allowed in exchange for money. It has been once said about Rome, *Urbs est jam tota lupanar*, namely, Rome has become a mixture of everything. It would not be a surprise when the Pope gives permission and

Alabaster, 1881, p. 173.

¹⁰ David L., Larsen, *The Company of the Preachers: A History of Biblical Preaching from the Old Testament to the Modern Era*, Grand Rapids, Kregel, 1998, p. 258.

authorization for committing the impurity;...¹¹

Watson claimed that while the papists of his time were coming up with different excuses for the sin of adultery, the Bible condemns even the desire to sin. He considers that the most frequent sin of his time was adultery, and it is not the unique period of time in history when this sin reigns.

Looking at the Puritans' thinking, it can be said with confidence that in a world where moral and spiritual values are neglected and material values are divinized, it is possible to improve considerably the personal, family, church and social life. The Puritans had some precise values they promoted and struggled to prove that the personal satisfaction should not be dependent on material welfare.

The third chapter consists of a detailed biography of C. H. Spurgeon. This remarkable man of faith, who lived during the nineteenth century, was a model father, husband and a pastor and preacher full of grace, truly respected and appreciated by his coworkers. Spurgeon's success is not limited to England's borders of his time, but it is spread all around the world and he reaches generation after generation until our time. Spurgeon modestly reckons that his tremendous results in evangelical service and family are due to God's grace and it was Him who has chosen to work more powerfully through his life than the others'. Despite all his achievements, he remained a highly modest man, unloving money, but full of enthusiasm in his love for God and people.

The great preacher C.H. Spurgeon "was born in the old village of Essex, named Kelvedon, on 19 June 1834; alongside his brother James, who was three years younger..."¹² he raised up in a blessed family, where he was taught the basic principles of Christian faith and felt in love with the Word of God, the Bible.

A world that believed more in accidental happening than God's leading, C.H. Spurgeon spoke passionately and successfully about the supremacy of character. His life was an excellent example of his sermons. He highly differentiated himself from other preachers of his time by the fact that "he lived the faith he was preaching"¹³ During a time of material prosperity and spiritual

¹¹ Ibid., p. 154-155.

¹² George Haven Putnam, *The life of the Rev. C.H. Spurgeon : Pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle.*, London, Ward, Lock & Co., 1881, p. 708.

¹³ Ibid., p. 298.

abundance, Spurgeon wholeheartedly wanted to save London from destruction. Besides the material achievements that left a mark on the progress of society, Spurgeon sadly noticed what was happening in personal and family life of the people. He was worried about the believers who did not have a genuine Christian life with the Savior Jesus Christ and very often the religious life was formal and deprived of the power of Holy Spirit.

The most numerous audience size he had was on 7 October 1857, on the National Day of Humiliation, when in Crystal Palace room he preached in front of 23,654 people, the largest audience from Europe or worldwide a preacher has ever had.¹⁴

Even if he suddenly became a remarkable figure of his time, Spurgeon was fully aware of the fact God was worthy to be praised for all the abilities he was gifted with. He considered that joyfulness, not sadness should be the main characteristic of each Christian. We, those who are real followers of Jesus Christ, should not feel ashamed of being happy; we truly believe we have the right to be happy due to the fact we are Christians.¹⁵

It is said that one of the days, Spurgeon went to one of his less visited church, where his first student, Thomas Medhurst from the Bible College founded by him, was in charge. After the sermon he joyfully recognized that he overheard a conversation between members of that church. The first one asked the second how he liked Spurgeon's sermon. The second one answer he enjoyed it, but he would have had a greater joy if Spurgeon had not imitated so much his beloved pastor, Medhurst.

The two brothers Spurgeon, good friends and coworkers in evangelistic mission, were highly attentive to each other and they were not jealous of each other. Selfishness was absent, and the extraordinary results achieved in evangelistic ministry were, to a great extent, due to this relationship. Every one highly appreciated the other's advice and in many cases the eldest brother preferred to listen to his brother judgement, not his own. A similar remark could be made about the youngest brother; when was awarded a PhD Degree by Colgate University, Sir James Spurgeon acted strictly according to his brother's advice. Many other illustrations can be presented...¹⁶

The relationship between the two brothers in evangelistic ministry was an extraordinary one, due to the fact that both C.H. Spurgeon, as elder brother and James Archer Spurgeon as younger one,

¹⁴ *Baptist History and Heritage*, October 1, 1984, p.8-10.

¹⁵ C. H. Spurgeon, *The Rev. C.H. Spurgeon, his friends and his foes : a trip to Rosherville, and a journey to thenorth, comprising a Sabbath in Glasgow....*, London, James Paul, 1855, p. 5.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

knew how to respect and appreciate each other. This aspect was of great help to the church and God's ministry.

Spurgeon got married to Susannah Thompson, Robert Thompson's daughter, on 8 January, 1856 in

Falcon square, London. The religious ceremony was performed in their church, in the presence of numerous friends and it was directed by Dr. Alexander Fletcher. It is said that two thousand people wanted to participate in the religious ceremony but could not enter the hall.¹⁷

Susannah Spurgeon gave birth to twins on 20 September 1856, in their first house from London. The children were named Charles and Thomas; Charles after his father first name, and Thomas because he had a twin brother and it recalled Susannah's surname, Thompson.¹⁸

Dallimore claims that even if Spurgeon was equipped to deal with profound spiritual gifts, we cannot overlook the fact that he smoked and consumed alcoholic drinks. Both the believers of his time and Christians in the third millennium could hardly understand this aspect. Dallimore does not try to hide this form of Spurgeon's behavior, but he describes Spurgeon's vices during the time he lived in and mentions that it is unknown the age when he started to smoke and drink alcohol. On the other hand, it has been clearly stated that he gave up smoking and consuming alcoholic drinks at the end of his life.

Another aspect connected to the period of nineteenth century is the fact majority of servants of the church from England, Scotland, France and Holland had no feel of remorse or regulation on smoking habit and alcoholic drinks consumption.

It seems that Spurgeon did not smoke only, but he did it proudly sustaining that he was smoking for the glory of God. He never felt ashamed of smoking and even fought against those who accused him of this practice sustaining that he would give up his habit, as he truly wanted to do everything for the glory of God, but still was not able to support pharisaical attitude of some people from his time. During his time the mass media wrote that he went to the Tabernacle every day "enjoying his morning cigarette."

It is extremely difficult to imagine how such a famous theologian and very spiritual man as Spurgeon did not see anything wrong with consuming alcoholic drinks and smoking habit. His fight against those who tried to correct him regarding the aspects mentioned above is beyond

¹⁷ Reginald Henry Barnes, *Spurgeon: The People's Preacher*, London, Walter Scott, 1892, p. 51.

¹⁸ W. Y. Fullerton, *C. H. Spurgeon: a biography*, London, Williams and Norgate, 1920, p. 165.

understanding. Although it is difficult to understand the cohabitation of these lights and shadows in some famous people's life stories, these things happened in history and the modern believer, in his walk with God, should learn from the mistakes and experiences of his predecessors.

Starting with 1854, Spurgeon published his sermons weekly and he did so until the end of his career. His sermons which he wrote every week to be edited and many other sermons that were not published, contained 18 million words.¹⁹ In addition to his sermons, Spurgeon also wrote about 23 million words in his books alongside some well-known works such as: *The Treasury of David*, seven volumes that contained 2,250,000 words, *Lectures to Students*, 400,000 words and *Sermon Notes*, 375,000 words. Apart from sermons and books, Spurgeon wrote about 10 million words in *Sword and Trowel*, the magazine that had been edited by him for 22 year. Altogether, it has been claimed that he wrote about 51 million of precious words that numerous Christians of each generation are still reading them. C.H. Spurgeon's sermon was accompanied by divine presence and in this way people of different social classes were touched by the Word of God.

When the small eyes of the preacher, so expressive and piercing, fanned into flame the gift of God that touched all the efforts made at the pulpit, a heavenly light spread all over his face and the whole scene was of a seraphic beauty. It has been often said that: "He looks like an angel! What a shining face he has! Somebody said: "I saw him bowing down wholeheartedly, peacefully under the heavy burden of the Lord; then his topic was a succession of extreme thunderstorm sounds..."²⁰

Spurgeon's listeners were aware not only of incontestable qualities of the pastor and preacher, but especially the presence of God during the sermon. People were touched by the presence and glory of God within the sermon and in this way they became real followers of the Lord Jesus whom Spurgeon preached with boldness and passion.

Sufferings and trials were a continuous presence in Spurgeon's life. All throughout history it can be noticed that God chose to refine through suffering great people who delivered the message received from God. On the pages of Holy Scriptures we can find a lot of people who had to pass over unimaginable trials and sufferings even if they were entirely dedicated to God.

¹⁹ Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *The best of C. H. Spurgeon: A treasury of extracts from the writings of C. H. Spurgeon*, Eastbourne, Kingsway, 1983, p. 12.

²⁰ George J. Stevenson, *The prince of preachers, Charles H. Spurgeon: a sketch of his marvellous life-work, past and present, with an account of the Metropolitan Tabernacle...*, London, George John Stevenson, 1867, p. 16-17.

Although a third of his last twenty years spent in evangelical ministry Spurgeon was off the pulpit either due to sufferings or convalescence, or precautionary measure after the curing of a disease, he always considered that all his sufferings passed through God's hands firstly who weighed and measured the weight and power. ²¹

The first time Spurgeon seriously confronted suffering was in October 1867. It was the beginning of 24 years of physical and mental suffering which exhausted him both physically, spiritually and psychically. Although he was diagnosed with gout, it was believed that it was an inherited genetic disease from his grandfather, at the end of his life doctors gave another diagnosis: Bright's Disease or chronic nephritis.

In his letters he did not focus on his needs and sufferings, but on what the Church of God should do and live in every generation. In his letter sent from Menton, France, on 28 December 1879, Spurgeon said to the brethren from London, friends, deacons and presbyters and members of church that the most important thing in every generation is to lead souls to Christ. ²²

The death of Spurgeon or in other words his passing "in solemn night of Shabbat – time for rest and peace"²³, later on his funerals had an international echo, and the city of London was overcrowded due to this event.

Meanwhile the news was spread all over the world and a lot of people had the feeling they lost something personal, while reading or hearing this story. The Mentone Telegraph was rapidly blocked by the multitude of message Mrs. Spurgeon received – Prince and Princess of Wales were among the first people who "wanted to express their profound compassion to her during tough times"²⁴

The palm-branches were Spurgeon's emblem as Susannah Spurgeon desired for his husband's glorious entering in the kingdom of God and at the head and leg position of his olive wood coffin were written on a plaque the following words, in the memory of the great preacher:

In ever-loving memory of
CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON,
Born at Kelvedon, June 19, 1834;
Fell asleep in Jesus at Mentone, January 31, 1892.

²¹ <http://livingbyfaithblog.com/2012/03/16/how-spurgeon-saw-his-pain-and-depression/>, last accessed on 27 April 2017.

²² Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *The Suffering Letters*, London, Wakeman Trust, 2007, p. 37.

²³ Edwin Drew, *Charles H. Spurgeon: his life and death. With stories, anecdotes, and incidents connected with his noble career*, London, General Publishing Co., 1892, p. 15.

²⁴ *The Autobiography of Charles H. Spurgeon, compiled from his diary, letters, and records, by his wife and his private secretary, Vol. IV, 1878-1892*, Chicago, Curts & Jennings, 1900, p. 371.

„I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.”²⁵

Family had an extremely important role in Spurgeon's life. He was always accompanied by his family: parents, grandparents, aunt, wife and children. Loved by family, friends, he was strongly attacked by enemies, but he was always victorious due to prayers and trust in God.

The fourth chapter focuses on the presentation of family of God, namely the Church, in theological works of C.H. Spurgeon. According to Spurgeon, the family term refers to two concepts. The first one is related to the family of God or the Church of Jesus Christ. Many of his teachings are related to the relationship between the follower of Jesus and church, relationship that has an impact on all aspects of a Christian's life and it compares life within a church to family life. Within this large family called church, God is the Father of all the followers; moreover they are brethren and should behave as such.

The second meaning refers to the biologic family, composed of mother, father and children. During Spurgeon's time all the servants were considered to be part of their family. Although there is no evidence of premarital and marital counselling in Spurgeon's works, in his sermons he emphasized the biblical teachings regarding parents', children's and servants' daily behavior in order to have a great family relationship and be pleasant in God's eyes. Spurgeon sees the Church of the Lord Jesus as the family of God, redeemed by the precious blood of Christ.

The basis cell of the church, the large family of God is family. The healthier and stronger the families of the church are, the more powerful and influential in society the church will be. The church is portrayed as being in a special relationship with God, by faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the power of Holy Spirit which is received by praying and humbling yourself to the Lord. The spiritual fight of the church is both against the unfaith of worldly people who do not know God as Father, and religious formalism that struggles to substitute the spiritual dynamism of the church. C.H. Spurgeon strongly fought against formal religion and wanted the church to be set free of the burden of formality and have a special relationship with God, through the Lord Jesus Christ and have an abundant spiritual life coming through the power of Holy Spirit.

Just as within a family the parents have an important role to educate their children, equally, in the church, the religious leaders' role is to teach to believers the Word of God and the way it involves in different domains of life.

²⁵ Ibid.

Spurgeon shows that, at first, the Church is called to a special relationship with God, the church being loved, guided and chosen by God. Then the Church is called to fight against formal religion and do its best to have its members born again through the power of Holy Spirit and be filled with the power of Holy Spirit in their daily life. Suffering has never passed by the Church of God, but every generation is called to suffer for the sake of Christ.

The church is also called to be the light in the world and its followers should spread everywhere the fragrance of Christ to others. Like in a family, the members of church ought to have spiritual parents who shall teach them how to live for the glory of heavenly Father.

The fifth chapter of the present paper provides an analysis of the family relationship in C.H. Spurgeon's theological perspective. Humankind history begins with a marriage in the Garden of Eden and it ends up with a marriage, too, marriage of the Lamb, which proves the fact that there is a strong connection between the family and church history.

This chapter is meant to analyze the parents' and children's roles, as well as the principles and methods parents use to educate their children so that when they reach the full maturity they will be a crown both to the aged, church and society. In his works, Spurgeon highlights the spiritual aspect within a family and considers that the Bible ought to be the main guardian both for the parents' personal life and children's, as well as for the relationships developed with school, workplace, business and society in general. If society desires good, more hardworking, more honest, more loyal and more useful people in all the activities, then it should lay emphasis on the learning of biblical principles in every family and applying them in daily life. Within an economically progressive society, C.H. Spurgeon did not feel ashamed to preach God's Word in front of Londoners of the nineteenth century and stress out the fact that the formal religion and material welfare would not lead us to joy and spiritual fulfillment, the two components every family needs, but only God can give them to us in His love.

In his teachings about family, Spurgeon highlights some important aspects. The first aspect is related to the importance a family has for the believer over his lifetime. In this regard, Spurgeon shows that a real follower cherishes his family and through this family relationship he gets to the point to know God as Father and personal protector. The second aspect deals with spiritual disciplines that have to be practised within a family. Prayer, fast, Bible reading, church attendance are good customs that parents are responsible to teach their children about, and children have to obey their parents. The third aspect refers to the fact that parents do not have

only the responsibility to tell children how to live, but they ought to be a model of faith for them as children do not follow rules and pieces of advice, they follow examples. The father is responsible to bring his sons and daughters to Jesus and then to provide guidance for their life through personal example and advice. The fifth aspect is related to the future of family, future that is connected both to earthly life and especially eternal life. Spurgeon teaches the believers that it is important to assure you family needs, but the most important part is to take care of their souls, being certain of their eternity.

The last chapter is especially intended for the conclusion of the study. Contemporary decayed society²⁶ urgently needs a spiritual and moral revival. This awakening can be achieved neither by material goods, no matter their abundance, nor by the greatest modern discoveries brought in the field of science and technology. Therefore, one must find the spiritual solution.

This chapter briefly distinguishes the seven most difficult problems that humankind confronts with. These are: poverty and famine; refugees and terrorism; adultery, divorce and abortion; addictions, pornography and depression; state child care; family redefinition and sexual identity; worship to demons.

In the end, we provided the most important solutions to these problems that keep devastating the family, society, church and political leaders of our time. These solutions were always effective throughout the ages and once they are applied the results are visible, no matter the place and the time.

The given solutions are the following: reading and fulfilling the Bible; spiritual renovation through prayer; family appreciation; reaffirmation of Judeo-Christian values; life protection; thanking exercise in life; and authentic worship to God.

While Atheism, Satanism and other pagan and monotheist religions are increasing the number of followers, the Bible and authentic Christianity ought to offer clear solutions to revive the family, church life and society. By studying and applying the Word of God in our daily life, people will be able to find satisfaction, fulfillment and abundance both in their families and churches God has placed them in.

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