

worship of forms, both belong to the past. While the new creation is the resurrected manner of life, that was given to us with holy Baptism. It does not cease however to be a constant co-crucifixion with Christ “with the passions and the desires”, as Paul will again say to the Galatians. So for this reason also, he will close this epistle – that also justly was called “the epistle of the Cross” with the apologetical breaking out full of pain: “henceforth cease causing toils and bothering to me, asking me to defend myself for the things that I am doing. Because I am carrying in my body the marks of the wounds that I suffered for the sake of the Lord Jesus”. And with his golden “foghorn”, Saint John, he will resound: “My stigmata are shouting more loudly than a trumpet to those who doubt me. If someone were seeing a soldier wounded with innumerable wounds, would he put up with being accused of being cowardly and a traitor?”

Archim. B. L

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 08, 2019 SUNDAY BEFORE HOLY

CROSS, *The Nativity of Our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary , Sophronios, Bishop of Iberia*

TONE OF THE WEEK : *Third Tone*

EOTHINON : *First Orthros Gospel*

EPISTLE READING: *St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 6:11-18*

GOSPEL READING: *John 3:13-17*

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2019 SUNDAY AFTER HOLY

CROSS, *Nikitas the Great Martyr, Philotheos the Righteous, Bessarion of Larissa, Righteous Father Symeon, Archbishop of Thessalonica , John the New Martyr of Crete, Afterfeast of the Holy Cross , Porphyrios the Actor*

EPISTLE READING: *St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 2:16-20*

GOSPEL READING: *Mark 8:34-38; 9:1*



67TH YEAR SEPTEMBER 8 2019 PAMPHLET #36 (3458)

UNDANGEROUS OR “DANGEROUS” CHRISTIANITY

“Whoever pities his rod, hates his son. But he who loves him, chastises him with diligence”. These words from the book of Proverbs of the Old Testament reminds us that the proper love of parents to the children is not always identified with leniency, but sometimes the analogous strictness is required. A classic example of a father’s unacceptable leniency to his children is the high priest Eli in the Old Testament (1 Kings 2:12-4,18), who paid costly for his god-hated leniency to his impious and sacrilegious sons.

The false religiosity

It would not be possible for the deep knower of the Scriptures, Apostle Paul to forget this teaching. So for this reason, as a genuine spiritual father and teacher, he did not “spare his rod”, whenever it was needed. This shows particularly in his Epistle to the Galatians, which – not unjustly – is characterized as “fired up”. The sacred Chrysostom strengthens the characterization, saying that the entire epistle is “full of anger and a great train of thought”. And repeating the saying from Proverbs in different words, he concludes: “For one to behave with leniency to his students, when they have need of strictness, this is not a mark of a teacher, but of a destroyer and enemy”.

THE GOSPEL 1ST FIRST LETTER TO GALATIANS 6:11-18

Brethren, see with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that would compel you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For even those who receive circumcision do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may glory in your flesh. But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. Peace and mercy be upon all who walk by this rule, upon the Israel of God. Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen..

The Apostle's pedagogical anger is obvious also in today's epistle passage, which comprises an epilogue and essential recapitulation of the epistle. The intensity of his words is increased also by his declaration that he wrote it with his own hand. So, closing his epistle, he again uncovers the hypocrisy and the humble motives of those false brothers who were forcing the Christians from the gentiles to be circumcised. Their purpose was, on the one hand, the showing off of a religious "propriety", on the other hand, the boast that the fishing of followers would give them. Their sick attachment to external legal regulations – and especially to circumcision – was caused by the vainglorious agony for a supposed good-appearing religiosity. Naturally this was a hypocritical and false religiosity, that essentially invalidated the healthy spirit of the Law. "They were killing themselves" to please the Judaizers, because down deep, they feared that maybe they will be persecuted on account of the Cross of Christ.

The boast of the Cross

The preference of the undangerous and often profitable religiosity is customary also in our days. The Christianity of the Cross is considered, if not dangerous, at least, very costly. On the contrary, the keeping exclusively and only of some external typos, does not cost very much. So for this reason, there are not a few people whom it suits to be sickly attached to them. Rather than forgiving, for example, him who mistreated him, it is more suitable to be going from one pilgrimage to the other one. Rather than saying "good morning" to his enemy, it is easier to be fasting. So it is not rare for these truly useful types who contained the essence to be isolated and, empty from every substance, to be becoming absolutized and to be becoming cheap flags and banners of Orthodoxy. Fasting, the prayer rope, religious tourism, ecclesiastical ethnophyiletism and other things can become such "flags".

The Apostle Paul, the formerly "blameless one in righteousness and in the law" now does not boast about the fact that after his conversion he ascended up to the third heaven. He considers the Cross of Christ his only boast. And with the mouth of the sacred Chrysostom he admits: "For me Christ suffered all that He suffered. For me the slave, his enemy, the ungrateful one. He was not ashamed to be crucified for me, and should I be ashamed of his Cross?" and not only was he not ashamed of Him, but his entire life he lived the "the world is crucified to me and I to the world". Thus he also became dead for the world, and the world dead for him.

The stigmata of the Lord Jesus

This refers, of course, to a life giving deadening. Because with the Cross of Christ, everything henceforth became a "new creation". The world of idolatry, and the world of the Jewish