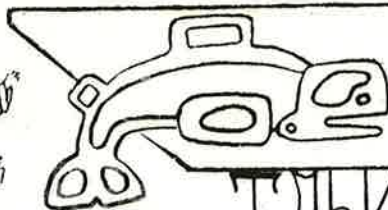


Feb 75



THERE SHALL BE NO
SIGN GIVEN SAVE THE
SIGN OF JONAH



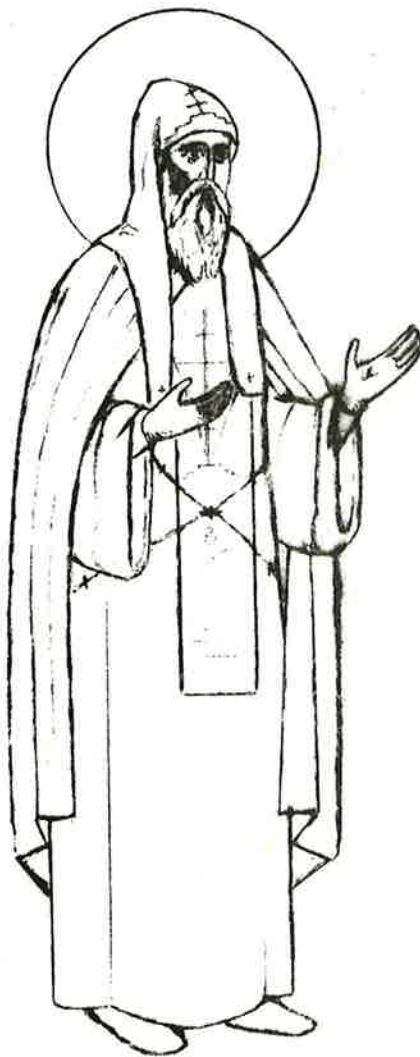
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HERALD

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF DMITRY-ISHKHANALYKH, THE ENLIGHTENER

HOLY-RIGHTEOUS

HERASMOS



OF THE

KIEV-CAVES

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PATERIKON.

Chanson
37

Holy Righteous Herasmos
(24 February)

It is a great matter to know how to handle wealth. Not every one knows what to do with it. Some pile up wealth for themselves and, together with it, ruin. The best examples of how one must handle wealth come to us from the lives of the holy Saints. Many of them had great wealth in the world and knew how to use it not for their own benefit, but for others. Such a one was Herasmos, a monk of the Caves.

This holy-one unexpectedly inherited great wealth, but realizing that it was not suitable for a monk to have it, he began to give it away. The Saint "loved the beauty of the Lord's house" and gave his entire wealth for the adornment of the church and ikons. At the same time, he laboured fervently to adorn the temple of his own soul, not with silver and gold, but with purity and love and all the virtues of the monastic law, saying with the prophet, "The law of thy lips is better to me than thousands of gold and silver" (Ps. 118:72).

The Saint, however, experienced great temptations after he had given away his wealth. The evil-one first tempted him of suggesting that he was wrong to have spent money on the adornment of the church, but should have given all his money to the poor. The blessed-one did not comprehend this temptation, fell into despair and began to live in listlessness and carelessness, spending his days indecently. But the generous and just God, recalling the former virtues of the Saint, saved him from ruin in this manner: He caused a critical illness to befall St. Herasmos. The ill monk lay near death, unable to see or speak for seven days, and scarcely breathing. On the eighth day, the brethren came to Herasmos' cell, and seeing with what difficulty he was dying, one of them said, "Woe to the soul of this brother, for he lived in laziness and in sins, and now his soul sees something but tarries, not even having the strength to come out of the body."

Then, suddenly, Blessed Herasmos arose as if he had not even been ill, sat down and said to the brethren, "Fathers and brothers! It is true, as you say, that I am sinful and did not repent, but today our holy fathers Antony and Theodosy appeared to me and said, 'We prayed to the Lord God for you and He granted you time for repentance.' Then I also saw the Most Holy Theotokos, as on the ikon, bearing in her hands her Son, Christ our God, and a multitude of Saints with her, and she said to me: 'Herasmos! Because you adorned my church (The Dormition Cathedral) and exalted it with ikons, I, too, will adorn you and exalt you in the kingdom of my Son, for you always

have the poor with you, but you do not have churches everywhere. Arise now, repent, and take on the great angelic image; on the third day, you will be taken from this life'."

Having said this, Blessed Herasmos began to confess his sins before all the brethren, without shame, then he arose and went to the church where he was tonsured into the skhema, and the third day, as the Most Pure Theotokos had foretold, he departed to the Lord.

Let everyone know then, that the decoration of God's church with ikons is pleasing to the Lord and is accepted as a service before God, as it was accepted from St. Herasmos, through whose prayers may we be thought worthy of Grace in Christ Jesus our Lord, to Whom be glory with the Father and Holy Spirit unto ages of ages. Amen.

QUESTIONS TO THE EDITOR

- Q. "There is a verse in 1 Corinthinas which I do not understand. Since we do not have any priests who speak English, I asked some other clergymen and got confusing answers. The verse is 1 Cor. 15:29; Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?'(K.J.V.)

"This is a major doctrine in the Mormon Church and their missionaries are always pointing to it and telling how they keep this ancient commandment by making geneologies and being baptized in behalf of everyone of their ancestors.

"A Baptist minister told me he did not understand the verse, a R.C. priest told me that he guessed that early Christians really were baptized for dead relatives and friends but that the practice must have just died out. The chaplain of our local Upper Room Drop In Centre (ed: a chain of Evangelical youth counselling centres across Canada) said that this was talking only about the Jews. Since they were the chosen people, the ones who had now accepted Christ into their hearts could be symbolically baptized for dead members of their family, and God would accept this because of the promises of the old law.

"What is the Orthodox meaning of that verse?"

- A. Your question demonstrates two things: the disaster which befalls our people when they have no way to communicate with their clergymen and the utter impossibility of understanding Divine Scripture without the Sacred Tradition.

In 1 Cor. 15:29, Paul does not go into great detail because the people to whom he wrote were living with the question about which he wrote, and they had no need of a detailed description of the question. From Sacred Tradition and the living history of the Church we know that there was a group of Gnostic heretics in Corinth at that time who taught that the dead will not rise from the grave on the last day. They nevertheless

taught that one ought to be baptized in behalf of all ones ancestors. Perhaps they had heard how the Forerunner had descended into hades to baptize all our righteous forefathers-in-the-faith, and simply formed a self-willed teaching based upon this.

Paul wrote, in effect, "What a silly contradiction these heretics have created for themselves, teaching, on the one hand, that the dead will not rise and on the other hand that we ought to be baptized on behalf of the dead. If the dead don't rise, what need would they have of baptism anyway?"

Of course, those who have cut themselves off from the life of the Holy Church could not give you a straight answer, because the Scripture is only a segment of the Sacred Tradition, and pulled away from the body it becomes as blind as an eye which has been ripped out of a body.

* * *

When the whole of Christ's Church pronounces a condemnation of anything, then it is a condemnation by the Holy Spirit and not by men. It is not possible that the Church could condemn anything from hate, from fear, from fanaticism, from inbred prejudices or from a refusal to forgive, for all these things are inimical to the nature and being of the Holy Church. Such things as the Church condemns, She condemns with profound reason and justice, motivated by the most perfect love. There may be some persons in the Church who approach these anathematized things foolishly, not knowing or understanding the fullness of the matter. For the rational child of the Church, however, it is well understood that we cannot question the condemnations of the Church catholic, but that we ought rather to seek to know and to understand the reasons why these condemnations have been pronounced and so oppose these things with a well reasoned opposition, not from hatred of the thing but from love of God and our neighbour.

If you have questions concerning any of the things which Holy Church has spoken against or condemned, write your questions to the editors of Synaxis and they will try to explain the position of the Church in a comprehensible manner.

ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY
IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

WHAT DOES THE SCRIPTURE MEAN BY "SAVING FAITH"?
by Metropolitan Antony (Khrapovitsky).

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POSITIVE CONTENT OF SAVING FAITH IN CHRIST

The cited eleventh chapter of the letter to the Hebrews is not limited to the aspects of Christ's faith which negate (the world); this chapter also reveals its positive qualities. To believe in Christ means to believe in (selfless) love which received its highest justification through Him, to acknowledge (selfless) love as the higher law of life and to be guided by it. In this respect, the following words are especially notable: "by faith Moses, when he had grown to maturity and become great, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, because he preferred rather to share the hardships and bear the shame of the people of God than to have the fleeting enjoyment of a sinful life. He considered the contempt borne for Christ to be a greater wealth than all the treasures of Egypt..." (Hb. 11:24-26).

Observe that while the Apostle was citing examples of obedience to God's will and contempt for the world, he was speaking simply about faith, and he places this struggle of love for brethren into direct union with the work of Christ.

But perhaps some will say, "If this is so, then is faith in Christ's Person and the Divine Worthiness of His Person necessary for salvation? Is it not enough to have a general belief in the kingdom of love?"

Of course not! It is true that there is much natural sympathy for love in our nature, but how groundless and casual it is if its sole support lies only in our spirit. Today we bow before it while tomorrow we scorn it. Today it seemed to us that by love one can conquer, but tomorrow and the day after tomorrow we will be convinced by much more self-evident proofs that the order of life and the world is contrary to the spirit of love, that not a single person, much less society, can live it through.

Only the conviction that this love was brought as a final guide of life, by the Incarnate Word, only faith in the divine power of Him Who called Himself Love, can elevate to the level of firm faith those faint-hearted gusts of the soul by which it is drawn to love.

Therefore, faith in the Divinity of Jesus Christ is saving because by it and only by it is love affirmed and elevated, leading us to God, so that we truly are not saved by our strength but "by grace through faith." (Eph. 2:8).

Here is how blessed John wrote about love as an object of love:

SAVING FAITH-Cont.

"We recognized the love which God has for us and came to believe in it." (1 Jn.4:16) Only through the God-revealed knowledge that God is love do we know that our love is not a casual feeling but the highest truth of life so that "...He who dwells in love dwells in God and God dwells in him." (1 Jn.4:16). From these holy and life-giving words we see that to love is truly impossible without faith in Christ, but also that faith in Christ is faith in the loving Christ, faith in Him as in love which has become, through His advent, a highest law of life, the basis of all truth.

And so there is no love and truth without Christ, and Christ's salvation is given only to those who believe in Him, precisely as in the source of love and truth. We have already cited His words by which He censured those who believe in Him only as in a person (i.e., those who believe in the Person of Jesus Christ the God-man and hope to be saved merely by this belief). Here are other words by which our Saviour directly indicates in what properties of His one must believe in order to be saved: "believe in the Gospel" (Mk.1:13); "...believe in the Light that you may be sons of the Light" (Jn.12:36). Finally, He says directly that He does not demand a (mere) personal devotion to Himself, but to that path of life which He revealed through Himself: "If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me." (Jn.10:37).

And so, faith in Christ is saving (faith) only when it is at the same time, faith in His love. Only he who has learned to love, however, can begin to believe in love; if our natural love is powerless without faith, then faith in Christ's love is impossible without the co-operation of voluntary love. It is in this sense that the Apostle wrote: "...in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith activated through love." (Gal.5:6). Our faith in Christ is affirmed to the degree that love grows, and then, on the other hand, according to the measure of the growth of faith, love becomes clear, Christian joy grows and worldly seductions appear to be most insignificant. To have saving faith in Christ means to develop His love in one self, to strive toward His perfection. According to the word of Paul, we become sons of God by faith in Jesus Christ only because "As many as have been baptized in Christ have put on Christ" (Gal.3:27), i.e., are penetrated by His feelings, His love (cf. Phil.2:5), for it is precisely by this that one attains the very "knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Pet.1:8).

This is knowledge based upon the striving to assimilate to oneself Christ's virtues and to create within oneself that saving faith about which St. John said that, "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God" (1 Jn.5:1). This adoption to God through likeness to Christ's spirit (1 Jn.3:2) contains

SAVING FAITH-Cont.

the final aim of that saving faith which, therefore, is not assimilated by us by external means, but is affirmed in us through our striving toward good. In order to have saving faith in Christ, it is necessary to voluntarily renounce the vices of the world, to develop and maintain love within one-self in order to acknowledge the Incarnate Bearer of the highest love as the true infinite Son of God and through this acknowledgment to again elevate one's love to everlastingness.