Metropolitan Hilarions' book "The Beginning of the Gospel" presented at Biblio-Globus Bookstore in Moscow



On 23 September 2016, the presentation of the book "The Beginning of the Gospel" by Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, took place at the Biblio-Globus Bookstore. It was published by the Sretensky Monastery's publishing house.

Among those presenting the book were Mr. Boris Yesenkin, president of the Biblio-Globus Trading House, president of the Guild of Bibliophiles Nonprofit Partnership; Mr. Yury Belyaev, president of the Academy of Russian Literature; Mr. Valery Narinyan, vice-president of the European Foundation of Slavic Literature and Culture, vice-president of the Academy of Russian Literature; and Mr. Sergei Mironenko, head of research at the State Archive of the Russian Federation.

Addressing all those present, Metropolitan Hilarion said in particular:

“This book is based on the Gospel as the main and, in fact, the only reliable source of information about Jesus Christ. Yet, it seems that the treasure is, so to speak, hidden behind the seven seals, and in order to understand the Gospel and to reveal the image of Jesus Christ to people, one needs a special approach to the Gospel text.

“In my book, I compare the text of the Gospel to a treasure hidden in a safe closed with two locks. To open the safe and touch the treasure, one has to use two keys.

“The first key is the understanding that Jesus Christ was a real historical person, real man… with all the traits and emotions, characteristic of a human being. In one of the chapters I draw an emotional portrait of Jesus. It turns out (we learn it from the four Gospels) that He could be glad and cry, that He grieved and suffered, got tired and slept, endured the hardest physical and moral torments.

“The other key is the understanding that Jesus Christ was not just a human being, that He was God who became man. That was what determined His role in the history of humanity.

“I try to show in my book that the fact that Jesus Christ was Godman makes Him neither semi-god, nor semi-man. He was not some handicapped person, and the fact that He was God did not help Him, for instance, to endure physical sufferings that were so hard.

“Today I am presenting the first volume. The whole edition will consist of six volumes. They all have been written and will be published in due course, one in two-four months, I guess.

“The first book contains an introductory part, in which I explain what the Gospel is, why there are four Gospels, who the Evangelists were, what the difference is between the Gospel texts, what other sources can be used to reconstruct the events pertaining to the life of Jesus Christ, etc. In the introduction I also examine some of the contemporary theories.

“In this book I focus on the first chapters of the four Gospels, that is, on the story of Matthew and Luke about the nativity of Jesus Christ, on the story of the three Gospels concerning the outset of Christ’s preaching and His receiving baptism from John, and on how He called His disciples; as well as on the first chapters from the Gospel according to John that tell about Jesus’ meetings with John the Baptist and His calling the first disciples.

“Although this book is in some way targeted at the academic community (it has, for instance, footnotes, bibliography and words in foreign languages, in particular, in Greek and in Hebrew), it is, nonetheless, not a scientific research. According to the responses that I get from my parishioners, as well as from

people, unknown to me, who meet me in the street, in airports and in other places, this book is accessible to a wider audience.”

During the presentation, Metropolitan Hilarion told about the other volumes in this series and answered numerous questions from the audience.

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