

The Feasts of the Lord

An Introduction to the Twelve Feasts and Orthodox Christology

Contents

Preface to the Fifth Greek Edition

Preface to the First English Edition

Introduction

Part 1

The Twelve Feasts of the Lord

1. The Annunciation of the Theotokos – The Conception of Christ

- a) The Meaning of the Annunciation
- b) The Deification of the All-Holy Virgin
- c) The Theotokos and Ancestral Sin
- d) Obedience and Freedom of the Theotokos
- e) The Word was Conceived by Way of Creation
- f) The Deification of the Human Nature
'from the First Moment of Conception'
- g) The Natural and Supranatural Pregnancy
- h) Conception without Pleasure, Pregnancy
without Labour and Birth without Pain
- i) The Theotokos as a Pattern of the Age to Come

- j) Personal Participation in the Annunciation

2. The Nativity

- a) A Historical Event and a Mystery
- b) The Incarnation of the Son of God Was Prophesied in the Old Testament
- c) The Veneration of the Shepherds
- d) The Angels' Hymn
- e) The Veneration of the Magi
- f) The Renewal of Creation
- g) The Names 'Son of God' and 'Christ'
- h) The Two Births of Christ
- i) Why the Word of God Became Man and Not the Other Persons of the Holy Trinity
- j) The Purpose of the Incarnation: the Deification of Man
- k) Incarnation and Self-Emptying
- l) Christ's Natural and Blameless Passions
- m) Christ's Two Natures Act "in Two Natures without Confusion, Immutably, Indivisibly and Inseparably"
- n) The Terms 'Composite Nature' and 'Composite Hypostasis'
- o) Personal Participation in the Feast of Christ's Nativity

3. The Circumcision of Christ

- a) Circumcision and Uncircumcision
- b) The Deeper Meaning of Jewish Circumcision
- c) The Circumcision of Christ
- d) Why Christ Was Circumcised
- e) How the Early Church Dealt with Circumcision of the Flesh

- f) The Apostle Paul on Circumcision
- g) Justification and the Works of the Law
- h) Baptism: the Circumcision of the New Testament

4. The Meeting of Christ

- a) The Old Testament Commandment about Purification and the Ritual of Consecration
- b) Christ and the All-Holy Virgin Did Not Need Purification
- c) Christ is First-Born
- d) Christ as an Infant and Pre-Eternal God
- e) The Offering at the Ceremony
- f) The Righteous and Devout Symeon
- g) The Prophetess Anna
- h) Marriage and Virginity
- i) The Burning Coal in Symeon's Arms
- j) "Now Lettest Thou Thy Servant Depart in Peace"
- k) Christ as a Sign Which Will Be Spoken Against
- l) The Sword of the Panagia
- m) The Christian Service Forty Days after the Birth of a Child

5. The Divine Theophany

- a) Christ's Childhood
- b) Christ's Progress and Increase in Age and Wisdom
- c) Theophany – Epiphany
- d) St John the Baptist
- e) Different Kinds of Baptism
- f) Why Christ Was Baptised
- g) Reshaping the Human Race
- h) The River Jordan and the Dead Sea
- i) Manifestation of the Trinitarian God

- j) The Beloved Son in Whom the Father Is Well Pleased
- k) The Son as the Brightness of the Father
- l) The Appearance of the Holy Spirit Like a Dove
- m) St John the Baptist's Divine Vision
- n) Christian Baptism
- o) The Energies of Baptism
- p) Baptism and Spiritual Life

6. The Wisdom of God

- a) Mid-Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles
- b) Christ in Jerusalem during the Feast of Tabernacles
- c) Christ is the Water and the Living Spring
- d) Christ is the Light of the World
- e) The Views of Contemporary Sophiology
- f) The Wisdom of God according to Holy Scripture
- g) The Holy Fathers on the Wisdom of God
- h) The Energy of the Word of God
- i) The Value of God's Commandments
- j) The Relationship between Teaching and Miracles
- k) The Theological Value of Miracles
- l) The Significance of the Names of Christ
- m) The Great Value of the Name 'Christian'

7. The Transfiguration of Christ

- a) There Are Many Events of Transfiguration
- b) The Meaning of 'Transfiguration'
- c) Mount Tabor and the Two Suns
- d) The Light of Christ Is the Glory of the Divinity
- e) The Kingdom of God
- f) Christ Revealed the Prototype for the Creation of Man

- g) Uncreated and Created Light
- h) Uncreated Light Encompassed in Christ's Body, the Darkness beyond Light
- i) The Manifestation of the Holy Trinity
- j) Moses and Elijah on Tabor
- k) Why These Two Prophets Appeared
- l) The Three Disciples on Tabor
- m) Christ, the Centre of the Old and New Testaments
- n) Christ's Body Is Identically God
- o) Different Ways of Participating in the Glory of God
- p) What the Church Is and What Her Purpose Is
- q) Personal Participation in Deification

8. The Raising of Lazarus and the Entrance of Christ into Jerusalem

- a) The Raising of Lazarus as a Type of the General Resurrection
- b) Christ's Friends and Death
- c) The Two Natures of Christ in the Event of the Death and Resurrection of Lazarus
- d) Why Lazarus Was Raised Four Days after his Death
- e) The Resurrection of Lazarus
- f) Man's Dead Nous and its Resurrection
- g) Bethlehem, Bethany, Jerusalem
- h) Christ's Entry into Jerusalem with Humility
- i) The Significance of the Colt and the Donkey
- j) Christ's Rational Animals
- k) The Apostles' Garments
- l) The People's Acclamation: "Hosanna! Blessed is He Who Comes..."
- m) The Children's Hymn

- n) The Significance of the Palms
- o) True Celebration

9. Christ's Passion and Cross

- a) Historical Events and Mystery
- b) Christ's Voluntary Passion
- c) Healing the Mortality and Passibility of Human Nature
- d) The Passion and the Cross Express God's Love
- e) Sorrow and Fear before the Passion
- f) The Prayer in Gethsemane
- g) The Two Natures of Christ during the Passion
- h) Through the Ways in which He Suffered Christ Cured Man's Passions
- i) Golgotha and Crosses
- j) The Cross of Christ as a Sign of Triumph and Glory
- k) The Mystery of Reconciliation
- l) Christ's First Saying on the Cross: Prayer to the Father for the Crucifiers
- m) The Second Saying: Concern for His Mother
- n) The Third Saying: Assurance to the Thief of his Salvation
- o) The Fourth Saying: Prayer to the Father about Being Forsaken
- p) The Fifth Saying: about Thirst
- q) The Sixth Saying: about His Death
- r) The Seventh Saying, when He Cried Out with a Loud Voice and Gave Up the Spirit
- s) Separation of the Soul from the Body, but the Divinity Is Undivided
- t) The Body Did Not Decompose in the Tomb
- u) The Deeper Meaning of Christ's Side

Pierced by a Spear

- v) Taking Christ Down from the Cross and Placing Him in the Tomb
- w) The Bridegroom of the Church
- x) Participation in the Mystery of the Cross

10. The Resurrection of Christ

- a) Why Christ's Resurrection is Represented on Icons by His Descent into Hades
- b) What Hades Is
- c) The Teaching of the Church about Christ's Descent into Hades
- d) Why Christ Descended to Hades
- e) How Hades Recognised Christ, and Which Captives Were Saved
- f) The Importance of Great Saturday
- g) The Resurrection of Christ after Three Days
- h) The Value of Sunday
- i) Christ Raised Himself as God
- j) Why Christ Did Not Appear to Everyone after His Resurrection
- k) The Eleven Appearances of the Risen Christ
- l) The Appearance of Christ to the Myrrh-Bearing Women
- m) The Appearance of Christ to the Panagia
- n) The Appearance of Christ to the Disciples and the Bestowing of the Holy Spirit
- o) The Risen Christ and the Apostle Thomas
- p) The Appearance of Christ at the Sea of Tiberias
- q) How the Consumption of Food by the Risen Christ Is to Be Understood
- r) Christ's Risen Body

- s) The Resurrection of Christ also Brought Benefit to the Angels
- t) The Meaning of Pascha
- u) The Passover of the Law, the Pascha of Divine Grace, the Pascha of the Age to Come
- v) Personal Participation in the Mystery of the Resurrection

11. The Divine Ascension

- a) Holy Scripture on the Ascension of Christ
- b) Why Christ Ascended after Forty Days
- c) The Importance of Christ's Ascension in Relation to Other Feasts of the Lord
- d) The Feast of the Enthronement of Human Nature on God's Throne
- e) Christ is the Only One Who Ascended into Heaven
- f) Christ Ascended with His Body
- g) "He Has Gone Up with a Shout"
- h) Christ Ascended While Blessing His Disciples
- i) The Disciples Gaze up to Heaven and Are Assured that He Will Come Again
- j) The Angelic World at Christ's Ascension
- k) "Lift Up the Gates"
- l) The Angels' Admiration
- m) Christ Offers the Lost Sheep to His Father
- n) Christ's Promise to the Disciples of the Gift of the Holy Spirit
- o) Personal Participation in Christ's Ascension
- p) Preconditions for Participation in the Feast of the Ascension

12. Pentecost

- a) Jewish and Christian Pentecost
- b) Pentecost, the Feast of the Holy Trinity
- c) The Work of Christ and the Holy Spirit is Common
- d) The Two Comforters
- e) The Holy Spirit Reveals the Unincarnate Word to the Prophets
- f) The Energy of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament
- g) The Holy Spirit and the Church
- h) The Meaning of the Descent of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost
- i) The Presence of the Holy Spirit as a Mighty Wind
- j) The Theological Significance of the Tongues of Fire
- k) The Clothing of the Disciples with the Holy Spirit
- l) Sober Intoxication
- m) Through the Holy Spirit We Know Christ, and through Christ We Know the Holy Spirit
- n) The Energies of the Holy Spirit and the Spiritual Gifts that He Gives to Members of the Church

Part 2

Christological Issues

1. The Exceedingly Wonderful Feast

- a) The Mystery of Kenosis
- b) Christ's Conception in the Womb of the Theotokos
- c) Salvation – Re-creation
- d) The Mystery of the Theotokos

2. The Incarnation of the Son and Word of God, according to St Athanasios the Great

- a) The Incarnation as an Expression of God's Love for Mankind
- b) Changing the Corruptible and Mortal Body
- c) Man's Renewal by Christ Who is the Prototype of his Creation
- d) The Mystery of the Incarnation

3. The Divine Incarnation as Independent of the Fall

- a) General Teaching of the Fathers of the Church
- b) The Teaching of St Nicodemus the Hagiorite about the Incarnation as Independent of the Fall
- c) The Divine Economy as the Prior Will of God
- d) Conclusions

4. The Tree of Knowledge and the Tree of Life

- a) The Two Trees in the Original Paradise
- b) The Patristic Interpretation of the Two Trees
- c) The Godman Christ as the Tree of Life
- d) The Tree of Life in the Book of Revelation
- e) Eating from the Tree of Knowledge
- f) The Christmas Tree

5. The Lamb of God

- a) The Purpose of the Revelation of St John
- b) The Lamb in Glory Looking as if It Had Been Slain
- c) The Glorification of the Lamb
- d) Beast and Lamb

Icons of the Feasts