

NESTORIUS: THE PARTIAL REHABILITATION OF A HERETIC

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Nestorianism arose in the fifth century and is usually regarded as the heresy associated with Nestorius, which split Jesus Christ, the God-man, into two distinct persons, one human and one divine. Nestorianism distinguished between the deity and humanity of Christ, treating them as separate personal existences as though a man and God were joined together, so that Jesus Christ was not one person but two persons and that no real union of God and humanity was effected in him. Nestorianism, as it was understood, held the Word to be a person distinct from Jesus, and the Son of God distinct from the Son of Man. Therefore the adherents of Nestorianism avoided expressions pertaining to the real union of both the deity and humanity of Christ and preferred to speak of a conjunction between them. The Council of Ephesus (431) anathematized Nestorius, the bishop of Constantinople, and pronounced Nestorianism a Christological heresy. The Fourth (451) and Fifth (553) Ecumenical Councils reaffirmed the decisions of the Council of Ephesus.¹

Nestorius was judged on the basis of these doctrines, which he was accused of holding. He was thus condemned and exiled as a heretic. From the moment of his excommunication until the present time, many expressions of uncertainty have arisen as to whether he really taught and believed what was defined and condemned as Nestorianism. In particular, modern scholars have been asking whether Nestorius himself was a Nestorian. Did he hold to what is traditionally defined as Nestorianism? Was his doctrine such that it denied certain basic principles of the Christian faith?

The Nestorian controversy arose amidst heated political and personal conflicts. Moreover Nestorius' opponent, Cyril of Alexandria, was a man of considerable political ability, while Nestorius himself lacked tact and prudence.² More specifically, as Henry Chadwick points out, the religious

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¹ This description of Nestorianism can be found in several places. The following citations do not imply that these sources necessarily accuse Nestorius of maintaining such views. Rather, these scholars acknowledge that such views are traditionally associated with Nestorianism. See J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (New York: Harper, 1960) 311-312; J. W. C. Wand, *The Four Great Heresies* (London: A. R. Mowbray, 1955) 91, 98-99; F. Loofs, *Nestorius and His Place in the History of Christian Doctrine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1914) 2.

² J. F. Bethune-Baker, *Nestorius and His Teaching* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1908) 44-45; C. E. Braaten, "Modern Interpretations of Nestorius," *CH* 32/3 (1963) 251.

motives behind the conflict were varied, with dogmatic differences not playing the role once believed. Nestorius in his sermons had put forward no innovations but proclaimed the doctrine that had been taught by Diodore of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia for almost two generations without becoming suspected of heresy. Instead, the occasion of the Nestorian controversy was the fact that four Alexandrians had gone to Theodosius II and complained of the way in which their bishop was treating them. The emperor commissioned Nestorius to examine the charges, which apparently were of a serious nature, and this action aroused Cyril to attack. In Constantinople, Cyril's agents diverted the proceedings with the emperor from the charges against himself to a doctrinal controversy over the word *theotokos*. Nestorius stupidly played into Cyril's hands by accepting the challenge to do battle on the question of Christology.³ Was Nestorius condemned for his blunders and Cyril's ambition and political ability? Did those who condemned Nestorius understand his doctrine correctly? Or did they condemn rather a caricature of his thought? At the time of the controversy, did he articulate Nestorian views and then modify his position at the end of his life? These are questions on which modern scholars are not in agreement.

Nestorius' place in Christology has undergone a reevaluation in the twentieth century largely because of the new texts published. The Church of the ancient Roman empire did not punish its heretics merely by deposition, condemnation and banishment. Rather, the ancient Church, with the purpose of shielding its believers against poisonous influence, destroyed all heretical writings. For example, no work of Arius, Marcellus and Aetius has been preserved in more than fragments consisting of quotations by their opponents. An edict of Emperor Theodosius II in 435 purposed a like fate for the writings of Nestorius. Therefore only a few fragments of Nestorius' writings have survived, and Friedrich Loofs collected and edited these materials into a 1905 volume entitled *Nestoriana*.⁴ Good fortune, however, opened the door to further Nestorian scholarship and to a more favorable attitude toward the ill-fated heretic (if such a word is appropriate). Late in his life (c. 451 or 452), after his condemnation, Nestorius completed a book elaborating on his mature Christological position. A Syriac translation of this *Book of Heraclides* or *Bazaar of Heraclides*, as it is often called, was made in 540 and preserved. The book was rediscovered and made known to western scholars in 1897.⁵

³ H. Chadwick, "Eucharist and Christology in the Nestorian Controversy," *JTS* 2 (1951) 145-146.

⁴ These fragments number over one hundred. Most important are fragments from *Tragedy*, *Book of Letters*, and *Book of Homilies and Sermons*. Among the notable hostile works containing fragments are the writings of Nestorius' chief opponent, Cyril of Alexandria; the proceedings of the Council of Ephesus; the works of Marius Mercator (who translated some of Nestorius' works); and the Church history of Evagrius (c. 590). See Loofs, *Nestorius* 4 ff.

⁵ G. R. Driver and L. Hodgson, *Nestorius: The Bazaar of Heracleides* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1925) ix-xii. Henceforth this work will be cited as *Bazaar*. Cf. Loofs, *Nestorius* 11-12.

The *Bazaar*, though of great importance, presents two problems. First, beginning in the 1960s scholars have both contested and defended the authenticity of the Dialogue, the first 125 pages of the *Bazaar*, a section that is hardly minor in terms of its length and content. Nevertheless the longer section of the *Bazaar*, generally known as the Apology, has not been called into question. Though the first 125 pages are of significance, the Apology contains many of Nestorius' theological convictions and his own account of his controversy with Cyril. In addition, considerable support can be gathered for the view that the Dialogue, though perhaps a separate writing from the Apology, came from the pen of Nestorius.⁶

Second, Nestorius wrote the *Bazaar* during the twenty years after his condemnation in 431, and the ideas found therein are not always in agreement with the information derived from the fragments preserved of his writings, particularly those found in the works of his opponents. Those scholars who attempt to defend the unfortunate patriarch affirm that his true thought is found in the *Bazaar* and that the fragments of his writings have been twisted out of context with the intent of justifying his condemnation. But others claim that the divergence between the fragments and the *Bazaar* is due to a change in the historical situation: The fragments were written by a powerful patriarch attacking what he regarded as heresy, while the *Bazaar* was penned by a defeated man who had repented of his mistakes. Still others argue that Nestorius' Christological development between his earlier and later writings was minimal and that his Christology was deficient even in the *Bazaar*.⁷ Some elements of truth, it would seem, can be found in each of these interpretations. Nevertheless the approach taken by this study is that the early views of Nestorius cannot be known with any degree of certainty, and thus he deserves to be judged on the basis of his mature and latest writings, even if they represent some modification from his earlier thoughts. Consequently it may not be possible to judge with certainty whether the earlier Nestorius was a Nestorian.

By 1908 scholars began to take note of the *Book of Heraclides*, and opinions of Nestorius underwent a positive modification in some quarters.⁸ Other scholars, however, have maintained the traditional negative view toward Nestorius and his Christological views. Thus careful examination of the new material present in the *Bazaar* has by no means produced a unified interpretation of Nestorius. Carl Braaten's survey of modern

⁶ For a summary of the scholarly arguments see R. C. Chestnut, "The Two Prosopa in Nestorius' Bazaar of Heracleides," *JTS* 29 (1978) 392-398. See also A. Grillmeier, *Christ in the Christian Tradition* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1975) 502-503.

⁷ M. V. Anastos, "Nestorius Was Orthodox," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 16 (1962) 121; Grillmeier, *Christ* 451.

⁸ Bethune-Baker, *Nestorius* vi-xviii; *An Introduction to the Early History of Christian Doctrine* (London: Methuen, 1903) 262. Bethune-Baker revised his position in regard to Nestorius from his 1903 publication to his 1908 work. This modification was prompted by the new information found in the *Bazaar*. See also Braaten, "Modern Interpretations" 253-254.

interpretations of Nestorius, published in 1963, shows that no consensus has been reached as to whether Nestorius was a Nestorian or whether he was orthodox.⁹ Since 1963 other scholars have registered, without widespread agreement, their opinions regarding Nestorius' Christological views.¹⁰

The Christological thought of Nestorius cannot be understood apart from the theological issues of his day. The fourth century witnessed the Arian controversy over the doctrine of the Trinity concerning Christ's relationship to God. During the greater part of the trinitarian conflict the specifically Christological issue was left aside. Nevertheless Christological doctrine speaking to the nature of Christ, specifically the relationship of his divinity to his humanity, naturally followed the development of trinitarian doctrine. Though Christological and trinitarian issues must be distinguished from one another, the Christological problems of the late fourth and early fifth centuries grew out of earlier trinitarian discussion.¹¹

During the fourth century two main types of Christology developed: the "Word-flesh" and "Word-man" types. The so-called "Word-flesh" model made no allowance for a human soul in Christ and viewed the incarnation as the union of the Word with human flesh. In rivalry with this position, however, the "Word-man" type of Christology contended that the Word united himself with a complete humanity, including a soul as well as a body.¹² These two types have been designated "Alexandrian" and "Antiochene" respectively. Though these labels are not strictly accurate, they point out the theological tensions existing between the two schools.

The interest of this study lies with the Antiochene school and specifically the thought of Nestorius, one of its members. Antiochene theology, however, is most easily comprehended when contrasted with that of Alexandria and Apollinarianism, a heresy exaggerating the tendencies of this school. Apollinarianism taught that a real incarnation and a real unity of the historical person of Christ was only intelligible if the *Logos* did not take on himself a perfect man (having a body, human soul and intellect) but joined himself with a human body and a human soul in such a

⁹ For an excellent summary of the interpretations of Nestorius' teaching prior to 1963 see Braaten, "Modern Interpretations" 253-266. Braaten surveys each scholar in respect to two critical topics: (1) What did Nestorius teach in respect to the two persons? (2) What did he teach in respect to the personal union?

¹⁰ The articles published since Braaten's 1963 survey register similar disagreements. Studies viewing Nestorius' Christology as Nestorian or as not meeting the standards of orthodoxy include V. Kesich, "Hypostatic and Prosopic Union in the Exegesis of Christ's Temptation," *St. Vladimir's Quarterly* 9/3 (1965) 118-137; J. S. Romanides, "St. Cyril's 'One Physis or Hypostasis of God The Logos Incarnate' and Chalcedon," *GOTR* 10/2 (1964-1965) 84-87; E. Tsonievsky, "The Union of the Two Natures in Christ According to the Non-Chalcedonian Churches and Orthodoxy," *GOTR* 13/2 (1968) 173-174. Studies viewing Nestorius' Christology as orthodox or differing from traditional Nestorianism include Chestnut, "Two Prosopa" 408-409; Anastos, "Nestorius" 119-140. See also Grillmeier, *Christ* 559-568.

¹¹ Kelly, *Doctrines* 280 ff.; J. Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*. Vol. 1, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1971) 228.

¹² Kelly, *Doctrines* 281, 310.

manner that he became the intellect in the new and united being. This idea of a substantial unity between the *Logos* and human nature, resulting in the new and composite nature of the incarnate *Logos*, seemed to the Antiochians to do away with the true humanity of Christ and with the possibility of his moral development. Therefore they taught that the divine and human natures of Christ were to be regarded as perfect each in itself. To maintain this position they laid stress on the assertion that the two natures in Christ were not altered by their union as substances chemically combined. Hence the Antiochians did not think the union to be a substantial one.¹³

Behind this disagreement lay two postulates accepted by the Church: Jesus Christ is truly God, and he is also truly man. The problem of orthodox Christology is to explain how these statements can be true of one person. The question can be posed in at least three ways: How could God and a human be united as one person? How could God, remaining God, also become human? How could a man, remaining human, become also God? The split in the development of Christological thought resulted from the adoption of the opposite lines of approach indicated by the second and third forms of the question. The Alexandrian school, ever mindful of Christ's deity, and the Antiochian school, never forgetful of Christ's humanity, approached the problem with their distinctive and contrasting attitudes of mind. The intellectual differences did not end here. The outlook of the Alexandrians was more philosophical: They started their theology from a trinitarian conception of God, and they tended to affirm a real communication of the attributes from one of Christ's natures to the other. The Antiochenes, with considerable debt to the OT, maintained a more moral outlook: They began their theology from the conception of God's unity, and they were wary of any true communication between the natures. These differences in approach and outlook, in addition to ecclesiastical and political rivalry, led to the clash between Cyril and Nestorius, a collision that resulted in victory for Cyril and defeat for Nestorius. Neither of these contestants doubted the two postulates that Jesus Christ is both truly God and truly man. Both of these men recognized Christ as embodying one person, but neither of them thought that the other party's views could fulfill all the accepted conditions.¹⁴

Though the background for the dispute goes back several generations, the opening shot of the Nestorian Christological debate occurred shortly after Theodosius II elevated Nestorius to the patriarchal see of Constantinople in 428. Soon after, he was called upon to pronounce on the suitability of *theotokos* ("God-bearing") as a title for the virgin Mary. Nestorius

¹³ Loofs, *Nestorius* 65, 67; G. L. Prestige, *Fathers and Heretics* (London: SPCK, 1954) 94-149; R. V. C. Sellers, *The Council of Chalcedon* (London: SPCK, 1953) 132-181; Wand, *Heresies* 89-90.

¹⁴ A. R. Vine, *An Approach to Christology* (London: Independent Press, 1948) 59; Sellers, *Council* 158-159. R. A. Greer argues that exegetical differences between these two schools, as commonly believed, did not play a major role in the Nestorian controversy; "The Use of Scripture in the Nestorian Controversy," *SJT* 20 (1967) 413-422.

ruled that the title should not be used unless it was balanced with *anthrō-potokos* ("man-bearing"), but he regarded *Christotokos* ("Christ-bearing") as the best title for the virgin.¹⁵ As Aloys Grillmeier notes, Nestorius entered the dispute as a mediator between two groups, one describing Mary as the Mother of God and the other merely as mother of man. On both sides Nestorius saw a mistake that he might eliminate. In particular he directed his remarks against the Arians and Apollinarians. Among the latter he included even Cyril of Alexandria. Nestorius rightly observed that in denying the soul of Christ the Arians and Apollinarians gave a special significance to the *theotokos* title.¹⁶ J. V. Bethune-Baker correctly states that the term *theotokos* was not the center of the dispute. Rather, the combatants focused attention on the doctrine of the person of Christ—that is, his deity and the relationship between the divine and human in him. Indeed Nestorius' great concern was to maintain a genuine humanity in the person of Christ.¹⁷

Unfortunately, in addressing the subject of *theotokos* Nestorius utilized intemperate language, inflaming those adhering to a position other than his own. God cannot have a mother, he said, and no creature could have engendered the Godhead. The Godhead cannot have been carried for nine months in a woman's womb, or have been wrapped in baby clothes, or have suffered and died.¹⁸ Nestorius perceived the description of Mary as *theotokos* to be a veil for the Arian belief that the Son was a created being or the Apollinarian notion that Christ's humanity was incomplete.

These outbursts had the result of playing Nestorius into the hands of his bitter rival, Cyril of Alexandria. Cyril claimed to see in Nestorius' statements a restoration of the theory, rejected in the fourth century, of two sons linked by a purely moral union. By skillful exploitation of this interpretation Cyril secured Nestorius' condemnation. Other churchmen, alarmed by the assertion that Mary bore a mere man, hastily concluded that Nestorius was reviving the adoptionism of Paul of Samosata. In a short time the traditional picture of Nestorianism as the heresy that split the God-man into two distinct persons formed itself.¹⁹

Did Nestorius teach what is commonly identified as Nestorianism? Was he a heretic or just the victim of a scheming politician named Cyril, who made use of doctrine to place others in the wrong? Or is the truth somewhere between these two extremes? It may be impossible to determine with any precision what Nestorius taught at the time of his condemna-

¹⁵ *Bazaar* 99 ff., 148 ff., 185, 193 ff., 293 ff., 387. Scholars differ on Nestorius' reaction to the term *theotokos*. According to Loofs, Nestorius never rejected outright the title *theotokos* as heretical. He preferred *Christotokos* but would tolerate *theotokos*. Pelikan points out that Nestorius eventually reconciled himself to the use of *theotokos*. See Loofs, *Nestorius* 28 ff.; Pelikan, *Catholic Tradition*, 241-242; J. S. MacArthur, *Chalcedon* (London: SPCK, 1931) 56 ff.

¹⁶ Grillmeier, *Christ* 451 ff.; see also Loofs, *Nestorius* 67.

¹⁷ Bethune-Baker, *Nestorius* 69 ff.

¹⁸ Kelly, *Doctrines* 311-312; Bethune-Baker, *Nestorius* 69-70.

¹⁹ Chadwick, "Eucharist" 145-150; Kelly, *Doctrines* 311-312.

tion, but an examination of his ideas found in the *Bazaar* can reflect some light on what he believed at the end of his life.

In respect to the key doctrines traditionally attributed to Nestorianism the deposed patriarch issued a series of denials and assertions, which are dispersed throughout his *Bazaar*. Nestorius' denials focus on the issue of dividing Jesus Christ into two persons, one human and one divine, with no real union between them. To the charge of creating an artificial fusion of the divine and human in Christ, Nestorius denied that the unity of Christ is a natural composition in which two elements are combined by the will of an eternal creator.²⁰ Furthermore he rejected the notion that the incarnation was effected by changing the Godhead into manhood or vice versa, or by forming a *tertium quid* from those two *ousiai* ("substances," "essences").²¹ In addition Nestorius denied that the incarnation involved any change in the Godhead or any suffering on the part of the divine *Logos*. Such alteration or pain is rendered impossible by the divine nature of the Godhead and *Logos*.²² Finally, he repudiated the idea that the union of two natures in one Christ involves any duality of sonship.²³ Rather, Nestorius asserted that the union of these natures is a voluntary fusion of the Godhead with humanity.²⁴ He argued that the principle of union between these two natures is to be found in the *prosōpa* ("external aspects") of the Godhead and manhood, and these two *prosōpa* are coalesced in one *prosōpon* ("external aspect," "person") of Christ incarnate.²⁵ Finally, Nestorius contends that this view, regarding the two *prosōpa* in one *prosōpon*, alone provides for a real incarnation and not only makes possible faith in a real atonement²⁶ but also provides a rationale for the sacramentalism of the Church.²⁷ These denials and assertions indicate that Nestorius, as an Antiochene, upheld the principle that the two natures of the incarnate Christ remained unaltered and distinct in the union. Though he regarded the two natures as apart, he visualized the Godhead as existing in the man Christ and the man in the Godhead without mixture or confusion.²⁸

Two factors stand behind this notion of union. First, as noted, Nestorius believed that the incarnation cannot have involved the impassible Word in any change or suffering. Hypostatic union is the union of the

²⁰ *Bazaar* 9, 36-43, 84-86, 161, 179, 294, 300-304, 314.

²¹ *Ibid.* 14-18, 24-27, 33-37, 80, 182.

²² *Ibid.* 39-41, 92-93, 178-179, 181, 184, 210-212.

²³ *Ibid.* 47-50, 146, 160, 189-191, 196, 209-210, 215, 225, 227, 237-238, 295-302, 314, 317.

²⁴ *Ibid.* 37, 179, 181-182.

²⁵ *Ibid.* 23, 53-62, 81, 89, 156-159, 163-164, 172, 182, 207, 218-219, 227, 231-233, 245-248, 260-261.

²⁶ *Ibid.* 62-76, 205, 212-214, 253.

²⁷ *Ibid.* 32, 55, 254-256.

²⁸ *Ibid.* 39-41, 92-93, 179, 184, 212. In Nestorius' Christology, L. Hodgson saw three types of unity between the human and divine in Christ: the unity of the persons in the Trinity, the unity of soul and body in humanity, and the unity of the Godhead and manhood in Christ; "The Metaphysics of Nestorius," *JTS* 19 (1918) 48. See also Kelly, *Doctrines* 312.

Logos with the flesh, which took place in the womb of the virgin Mary at the moment when Christ's human nature was conceived. Cyril's theory of hypostatic union, Nestorius believed, made the Word subject to the God-man's sufferings. Therefore he objected to the Alexandrian habit of speaking of God as being born and dying and of Mary bearing the divine Word.²⁹ Second, if the redemption was to be effected, Nestorius deemed it imperative that Christ should have lived a genuinely human life of growth, temptation and suffering. Yet a genuine human experience would have been impossible if Christ's humanity had been fused with or dominated by his divinity. Consequently the two, his divinity and humanity, must have existed side by side, each nature retaining its peculiar properties and operation unimpaired.³⁰ Christ's deity and humanity was a nature. Nestorius usually used the term "nature" with the adjective "complete," denoting the concrete character of a thing. Hence the divine-human union in Christ did not produce a new nature. Moreover Nestorius did not think of two natures except as each having its *prosōpon*.³¹

In the face of such statements it would seem clear that Nestorius, at least in his later years, avoids the major pitfalls of traditional Nestorianism. Even in his later writings, however, difficulties arise with Nestorius' terminology, which tends to be complex and confusing particularly in regard to his usage of *prosōpon*. On this crucial point—his usage of terminology and the interpretation given to his terms—Nestorius becomes vulnerable to attack. There was little precision in his use of the word *prosōpon*. Hence his interpreters have great difficulty in understanding what he meant by the term.³² The meaning of the word, however, is much broader than the modern usage conveyed by the term "person," for Nestorius applied *prosōpon* to both animate and inanimate objects.³³ Roberta Chestnut argues that the *prosōpon* of God meant to Nestorius the image of God, and to be the image of God is to have the will and purpose of God.³⁴ F. Loofs indicates that Nestorius' usage of *prosōpon* was common to his historical context, usually meaning the external undivided appearance, but on a few occasions the deposed patriarch gave it the modern application of "person."³⁵

²⁹ Bazaar 296; Chadwick, "Eucharist" 158; Hodgson, "Metaphysics" 48; Anastos, "Nestorius" 128.

³⁰ Bazaar 62-76, 205, 212-214; Bethune-Baker, *Nestorius* 62; Sellers, *Council* 166-167; A. R. Vine, *The Nestorian Churches* (London: Independent Press, 1937) 23.

³¹ Loofs, *Nestorius* 89-91.

³² "Nestorius never succeeded in giving a clear and concise statement of what he really meant by prosopic union, and it is not easy for us to do it for him"; Vine, *Approach* 195. Bethune-Baker indicates that Nestorius' use of *prosōpon* in certain passages is "undoubtedly puzzling"; *Nestorius* 97. See also Kesich, "Hypostatic" 189.

³³ Bazaar 15, 20-21. Here Nestorius refers to a soldier's uniform in the context of a *prosōpon*. The soldier's uniform is a *schēma* (i.e. the form of something at a given moment). *Prosōpon*, however, is the permanent element of a thing. Thus the *prosōpon* might be the unity of the successive *schēmata* of a thing.

³⁴ Chestnut, "Two Prosopa" 399-400.

³⁵ Loofs, *Nestorius* 74-94, esp. 76, 79.

Despite such diversity and confusion in regard to Nestorius' use of *prosōpon*, this dual application indicated by Loofs and shared by other scholars appears to be the best answer to the problem. Nestorius, it would seem, used *prosōpon* in two senses.³⁶ First, there is the external or natural usage. This *prosōpon* was the form of a nature, its external aspect, the totality of the properties and distinctions that make a nature complete, so that it may be called an *hypostasis*. Each complete nature is known and distinguished by its *prosōpon*. Therefore in the case of Christ, if humanity and divinity are to subsist as complete natures without being dissolved into a third, each of them must have its own *prosōpon*. Hence Nestorius taught that there are two *prosōpa* in Christ.³⁷ His second usage of *prosōpon* approximates the modern word "person" and occurs in the *Bazaar* as the designation for Jesus Christ, "the common *prosōpon* of the two natures."³⁸ In this usage of *prosōpon*, which refers to the second person of the Trinity, Nestorius meant there is only one *prosōpon* in the God-man.

Nevertheless the doctrine of the two *prosōpa*, as Nestorius apparently expressed it, left the impression that he upheld the doctrine of two persons artificially linked together. Consequently during the earlier Nestorian controversy his opponents attacked him because they thought that when he spoke of two natures he divided Christ into two and was accordingly making the monstrous error of introducing a fourth member into the Trinity. In his *Bazaar* Nestorius rejects this accusation, condemning the Samosatene heresy of two sons, which he considered incompatible with the prologue of John's gospel.³⁹ Repeatedly Nestorius asserts, with regular monotony, that he knows nothing of two Christs, or two Lords, but only one and the same Christ, who is seen in his created or increate natures.⁴⁰

What can be said about Nestorius? Was he a Nestorian and thus a heretic? Or did he meet the standards of the Chalcedonian formula and must therefore be numbered among the orthodox? Measured by what he said in his *Bazaar*—and there is no reason to doubt his sincerity at this point—Nestorius was not a Nestorian: He did not split Jesus Christ into two persons, the divine and the human, loosely connected. Rather, he insisted on the unity of divinity and humanity in Christ. Nevertheless Nestorius may have modified or rethought his views during the twenty or so years from his condemnation at Ephesus to the writing of his *Bazaar*. At the beginning of his episcopate, however, he appeared to be a moderate Antiochene. Thus it is probable that even at this time his beliefs were not

³⁶ In addition to Loofs, other sources speaking to Nestorius' dual usage of *prosōpon* include Grillmeier, *Christ* 459-460; J. L. González, *A History of Christian Thought* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1970), I. 371-372; Anastos, "Nestorius" 129-130. In particular, Anastos builds his defense of Nestorius on his dual usage of *prosōpon*.

³⁷ *Bazaar* 218-220, 246, 252, 261 ff., 302, 309, 414-416.

³⁸ *Ibid.* 58, 148, 166, 170ff., 220, 319.

³⁹ *Ibid.* 47-50, 146, 160, 189-191, 196, 209-210, 215, 225, 227, 237-238, 295-302, 314, 317.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 23, 53-62, 81, 89, 156-159, 163-164, 172, 182, 207, 218-219, 227, 231-233, 245-248, 260-261.

significantly different from those he maintained in his later years. Therefore it is unlikely that his views on Christ's nature were altered drastically during his years in exile. Yet because of the difficulty in determining with precision the nature of Nestorius' Christology during his early years he cannot be completely rehabilitated and exonerated from the taint of Nestorianism. It can only be said with certainty that he was not a Nestorian at the end of his life.

In his *Bazaar* did Nestorius' Christology meet the standards of Chalcedon? The view authorized at Chalcedon in 451 was that in Jesus Christ there were two natures, one divine and one human, which together formed one *hypostasis* or person (*prosōpon*).⁴¹ Nestorius granted that there were two natures in Christ. But he maintained that each nature (*physis*) implied an *ousia*, an *hypostasis*, and a *prosōpon*, so that there were in Christ two natures, two *ousiai*, two *hypostases*, and two *prosōpa*.⁴² By the time the *Bazaar* was completed Nestorius had read and welcomed the Tomb of Leo, thus indicating that he stood at the very gateway of Chalcedon, and except for a few problems in his speculative framework he could have entered the door.⁴³

Nestorius said that each of the essences (*ousiai*) in Christ has its *hypostasis* (i.e. its reality) and thus also its appearance (i.e. its natural *prosōpon*).⁴⁴ In addition each of the natures in Christ utilizes the natural *prosōpon* of the other nature. So there arises the one *prosōpon* that is the result of the union of God and man and not of itself the way or means to such a coalescence. This one *prosōpon*, and with it the unity of Christ, is achieved in a twofold way: (1) through the compensation of the *prosōpa*, and (2) through the mutual interpenetration of the *prosōpa*.⁴⁵

This idea of the compensation of *prosōpa* appears to be peculiar to Nestorius and is not prominent with the other Antiochenes. From this notion he derives his understanding of the incarnation, which is the weakest point of his Christology.⁴⁶ In Nestorius' view the incarnation takes place as follows: The divine *prosōpon* of the Son uses the *prosōpon* of the human being as its representation or form, whereas the *prosōpon* of the manhood obtains the divine form of glory (in the exaltation). This reciprocity is strictly limited to the *prosōpa*, which are exchanged, while the divine and human substances are untouched by the exchange.⁴⁷

The traditional objection to Nestorius' concept of the compensation of *prosōpa* is twofold: (1) The basis of compensation appears to be only external to the two natures; (2) the compensation itself apparently is to be achieved through a sort of moral attitude, so that the result is only a

⁴¹ Cf. "The Definition of Chalcedon" in *Documents of the Christian Church* (2d ed.; ed. H. Bettenson; Oxford: Oxford University, 1963) 51. See also Sellers, *Council* 207-253.

⁴² *Bazaar* 163, 208, 218 ff., 228, 170, 262. See also Anastos, "Nestorius" 124.

⁴³ Grillmeier, *Christ* 518.

⁴⁴ *Bazaar* 218-219.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 246.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 262; Bethune-Baker, *Nestorius* 152.

⁴⁷ *Bazaar* 251-253.

unity of attitude. These objections have been associated with the usual interpretation of Nestorian Christology.⁴⁸

As noted previously, Nestorius categorically rejected the charge that the unity of Christ is purely nominal, and he went to great lengths in his *Bazaar* to establish the substantial unity of the divine and human characteristics of Christ. He insists that the two *ousiai* in Christ must remain unconfused. Also, once Nestorius recognized that each of the two natures of Christ is to be taken concretely and in its individuality, he concluded quite logically from his standpoint that the unity in Christ can come about only by means of a compensation of *prosōpa*. Unfortunately he had no idea of going beyond the individuality of the concrete nature and asking for a deeper analysis of the interdependence of the actual spiritual being. In this sense he must be faulted for not having taken the tradition of the communication of attributes seriously enough and for not having thought it through sufficiently. His concern with the Apollinarian and Arian misuse of the communication of attributes, which he even saw in Cyril's formulae, plus his own philosophical inadequacy prevented him from giving full value to the tradition. And to compound these speculative problems Nestorius expressed his theology in confusing terms, thus conveying the impression of an artificial connection between Christ's deity and humanity.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Grillmeier, *Christ* 512.

⁴⁹ Ibid. 517-518.