

8. The Nestorians

Nestorius was a presbyter (elder) of the Church of Antioch who became bishop of the Church of Constantinople in A.D. 428. He was influenced by Theodore of Mopsuestia, who held to the complete humanity of Christ, and stressed the reality of Christ's struggles with temptation and His complete victory over it. Theodore felt that in order to reserve Christ's true humanity, the Logos must be viewed as indwelling the man Jesus. However, the union between the Logos and the man was so close that the two could be spoken of as one person, in the way a man and his wife are said to be one flesh.

Nestorius held to the true deity and the true humanity of the God-man, but said that Christ was a man, and not God. He held that the Logos was fully divine, and Christ was fully human. When Mary brought forth Jesus, she did not bring forth the God-man, but a man who bore the Logos. Nestorius vigorously rejected the concept that Mary was the "Mother of God" or the "God bearer" (θεοτόκος). Christ, not Mary was God-bearer!

To his critics, this formulation appeared to reject the personal union of the two natures in one Person, and seemed to make it a moral and sympathetic union. Christ was to be worshipped, not because He was God, but because God was in Him. This appeared to yield a Logos Christ who not only had two distinct natures, but also was two distinct persons!

Recently some attempts have been undertaken to rehabilitate Nestorius by those who have argued that he did not really hold this view, or that he did not draw such a conclusion from his tenets. Be that as it may, any view which affirms both the true deity and the true humanity of Christ, but denies (or virtually denies) the personal union of the these two natures in such a way as to yield two distinct persons, is called Nestorian.

NESTORIAN VIEW

