# From Monophysitism to Nestorianism

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## *AD 431-681*

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# PREFACE

In this book we will suggest that the Third, Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Ecumenical Councils, when the most important Christological controversies were waged, can all be characterized, with only the slightest exaggeration, by the labels Nestorian, Monophysite, or proto-Monophysite. In the Third and Fourth Councils a Nestorian, or at least an Antiochene, victory followed a Monophysite one, and the pattern was repeated identically with the Fifth and Sixth Councils. If this seems to damage the religious interpretation of the councils as the slow hammering out of orthodoxy, or to gainsay the current interpretation of the councils as Cyrillian, Theodoretian, conciliatory, and anti-Monothelite, it is not meant to. This study finds itself at odds with R. V. Sellers for whom there was no real divide between the Alexandrian and Antiochene approaches to Christology. Sellers' contention that the Christology of Cyril was not essentially different from that of Theodore is given some discredit when one observes his attempts to exonerate Apollinarius and Paul of Samosata. Sellers does admit the failure of the Antiochenes to adequately convey the unity of Christ and states that none of them was as theologically astute as Cyril, a fact that must be taken to heart in light of recent attempts to proclaim Theodoret of Cyrrhus the greatest theologian of his age.

Sellers' main thesis, however, is flawed. I believe the distinctions between the Alexandrian and Antiochene approaches to Christology, even if they are sometimes slight, should be maintained and that each council should be labeled as coming down on one or the other of the two sides. The book's weakest point may be the scant attention it gives to the Nestorians' passing out of the orthodox compass after the Council of Ephesus; but it must be remembered that Patriarch Sergius' *Psephos* was written with their occasional monothelitism in mind and that, regardless, we are concerned more with Nestorian and Antiochene trends of thought than with the

Assyrian Church per se.

The first chapter is largely introductory and deals with the figure of Apollinarius who was, in a real sense, the first proto-Monophysite, albeit more radical than any of his mainstream successors. Chapters Two through Nine form the heart of the essay and are devoted to the two Councils of Ephesus, the Council of Chalcedon, and the Second and Third Councils of Constantinople. The ninth chapter shows that the defeat of Monothelitism represented the defeat of Monophysitism in its most overt aspects, but the last chapter reveals that Monophysitism left a permanent mark on Eastern Orthodoxy even after it had been permanently defeated by the council convened by the empress Irene.

The theological conflict between the two Christological trends in the early church will unavoidably be presented in terms of individuals: Apollinarius versus Gregory of Nazianzus, Cyril versus Nestorius, Eutyches versus Flavian, Dioscorus versus Theodoret, Justinian versus Pope Vigilius, Constans II versus Maximus the Confessor, Constantine Copronymus versus John of Damascus. More attention will be given to the earliest phases of the controversy, when the main battle lines were drawn, than to the later phases. This will involve us in a discussion of the writings of Cyril, Theodoret, and Leo. The study's title reflects a half-truth: orthodox Christology, at least until the outbreak of the Iconoclastic crisis, was characterized by a progression from the deifying and unifying impulse of the Alexandrian school in favor of the humanizing and dichotomizing tendency of the Antiochene. In the figure of Pope Leo the West firmly joined the side of the Antiochenes, not that it was not to a degree already on their side. (The case of John Cassian was an anomaly based on his sojourn with Egyptian and Palestinian monks.) The book's approach is only slightly more overt than McGuckin's in that it tends to lump the Antiochenes and the Latins into one camp and Cyril and the Monophysites into another.

Yet nothing in the following pages is meant to affirm anything other than that early orthodoxy, for all its shortcomings, successfully navigated the often narrow strait between Nestorianism and Monophysitism. By continually changing sides, and by declaring the decrees of all previous councils binding, it found itself outwitting

both the Monophysites and the Nestorians.

I have employed three new terms throughout: Neo-Nestorian for Chalcedonian; Monophysitic Chalcedonian for Neo-Chalcedonian; and Apollinarian, Cyrillian, and Eutychian proto-Monophysitism for three varieties of pre-Chalcedonian Alexandrian theology. When I speak only of proto-Monophysitism I generally refer to Cyrillian proto-Monophysitism. I have, in addition, called Nestorius' early Constantinopolitan opponents Theotokosians. For the purposes of this study Monophysitism will be viewed as nonexistent until the close of the Council of Chalcedon, and Patriarch Dioscorus will be viewed as its first codifier, especially in his letters written from exile. Neo-Nestorianism will likewise be viewed as emerging after Chalcedon. Because of the new terms I have avoided the current designation Miaphysite which seems to me to take the sting out of the tail of the Monophysite slogan *mia physis tou Theou Logou sesarkōmenē*. One should no more call a Monophysite a Miaphysite than to designate a Monothelite by the more accurate but less pithy Henothelite.

This book was originally my Master of Ministry thesis and aims to reach both academic and general readers. For the historical background, though not for my main argument, I have relied especially on *The Church in Ancient Society* by Henry Chadwick, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon* by Frances Young, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement* by W. H. C. Frend, and *Byzantium in the Seventh Century* by J. F. Haldon. For their help with my revision I would like to thank Mark Edwards, Brenda Llewellyn Ihssen, Roger Schlesinger, and Svetla Slaveva-Griffin. The egregious errors that remain are my own.

2017

# CHAPTER ONE

# APOLLINARIUS, A PROTO-MONOPHYSITE

Arius was the first to get the church to think seriously about Christology. It is true that there were the heresies of Modal and Adoptionist Monarchianism which exercised Dionysius of Alexandria as they had his teacher Origen, but Arius almost single-handedly ushered in an era in which the church was well-nigh intoxicated with Christology, though he did so from a Trinitarian perspective and did not waste much time on the articulation between Christ's disparate natures. For Arius Christ was a creature, generated by the Father from nothing, but a creature who acted as a mediator between God and the sensible world, the latter of which He was the fashioner. Arius went so far as to imitate the Platonists by calling the Father Monad and the Son Dyad. He equated the Son with the anthropomorphic Wisdom of Proverbs who aids God in His creation of the world but who is clearly inferior to Him.[1] Christ was capable of change and even sin, but God, foreknowing His goodness, gave Him grace so that He would not sin. Arius called Christ the created Logos, and he distinguished this from the Logos proper, the reason immanent in God. The incarnate Christ had a human body, but in place of the rational human soul was the created Logos.

While Arius denied that Jesus Christ was God, the orthodox, the Monophysites, and the Nestorians were all agreed that He was both God and man. The only question was whether His deity or His humanity was to be emphasized, and how separate these two entities were to be kept. Apollinarius of Syrian Laodicea, with whom we begin our study, favored Christ's deity. Apollinarius was a staunch opponent of Arianism so it is unfair to deduce his thought, as some have, from that of Arius which it was in many ways the exact

[1] Proverbs 8:22-31.

opposite of. Much has been made in recent years of his relationship with Antioch as over against Egypt, but this only serves to muddy the waters as to his true theological affiliations. There was undeniably something Antiochene and semi-Jewish about him. He knew Hebrew, as was rare among Christians in those days, and wanted to restore the Old Testament practices, including circumcision, the Sabbath, the abstinence from prohibited meats, the sacrificial ceremony, cleansing for leprosy, tests for unfaithful wives, showbread, and the burning of lamps.[2]

Apollinarius was both intellectual and aristocratic; he had studied in Athens alongside Julian the Apostate and was an ally of Athanasius. He wrote against Julian and against the Neoplatonist Porphyry. Though little of what he wrote has survived he was a prolific writer, so much so that Basil the Great saw him as violating the scriptural mandate against the making of many books. Apollinarius' father, who shared his name, was the author of a well-known grammar, and together the two published a version of the Bible in classical forms after Julian banned the teaching of pagan literature by Christians. The production seems to have set a trend, and something similar to it would be indulged in by the empress Eudocia. Apollinarius also wrote hymns which men sang at their work and women at their loom. The church historian Sozomen is our source for this, and although he is anti-Apollinarian he is unable to disguise his delight in these hymns which "were all alike to the praise and glory of God."[3]

Apollinarius the Elder had come from Alexandria and once entertained Athanasius when he stopped in Laodicea. Later, when the father was a priest and the son a lector, the Homoean bishop of Laodicea reprimanded the Apollinarii for attending the recital of a hymn to Dionysus, apparently as a token of their friendship for the pagan sophist Epiphanius. The two would later be excommunicated, with undue harshness, by the bishop George. The son eventually became the Homoousian bishop of Laodicea, opposed to Pelagius the Homoean bishop, but he spent more time in Antioch than in

[2] Basil the Great, *Eps*. 263, 265; Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, II,8:302, 304.
[3] *Hist. Eccl*. 6.25; ibid, II,2:362.

Laodicea. There Jerome studied under him and concluded that his writings, like Origen's, should be read with caution.

Eventually Apollinarius left the catholic church and organized his own. One of his earliest followers was the priest Vitalius who was admired for the sanctity of his life and who gave the sect its name for a time. Theodoret of Cyrrhus would maintain that Apollinarius assumed a mask of piety and appeared to defend apostolic doctrines while being an open foe. It was perhaps this mask that later impelled Theodotus of Antioch, otherwise "the pearl of purity," to allow the Apollinarians back into the orthodox fold.[4]

Sozomen tells us that Apollinarius developed his Christological views in later life, but some scholars allege that he always held them. He stated that the Son, while He had a human body and a lower soul, did not have a rational soul. Rather, the Logos functioned in the capacity of a rational soul, merging Christ's human and divine natures into a new nature, more divine than human. Following Plato, Apollinarius taught that a man was essentially only his soul, and in Jesus' case this was the divine Logos. Therefore Jesus, even more than most men, did not suffer, only His body did. It was untrue that Apollinarius viewed Christ's body as being derived from heaven; this was a misconception of Gregory of Nyssa's that would be embraced by some of his own followers. Pope Leo grouped the Apollinarians into three parties (*Apollinaristarum tres partes*) which sometimes overlapped: those who denied Christ a soul, those who granted Him a soul in the form of the Logos but no rational mind, and those who insisted that a portion of the Logos had divinized Christ's human flesh. Thereby, according to Leo, "not only the nature of the flesh and of the soul but also the essence of the Word Itself is dissolved."[5]

Apollinarius probably thought of Christ as preexisting in a spiritual form of His later physical form, a not unorthodox concept. His Christology depended on a trichotomous view of man which he believed was held by the apostle Paul who had written to the Thessalonians, "I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be

[4] Theodoret, *Hist. Eccl*. 5.37; ibid, II,3:157.
[5] *Ep*. 59; *Serm*. 28; ibid, II,12:60, 143.

preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."[6] This approach was not only Pauline but Platonic. Plato's view of man is sometimes described as dichotomous, with man having a body and a soul, but his division of the soul into a higher and lower level, the higher level amounting to a spirit, proves otherwise. Origen also held to the trichotomous nature of man. It perplexed him, as much it did the Middle Platonists, how the higher soul could have been prevailed upon to adopt a fleshly existence; regardless, the lower soul acted as a mediator between it and the body.[7]

Apollinarius' belief in trichotomy would be vigorously attacked in the next century by Theodoret whose main problem with him, however, was that he denied that Christ had a rational soul. Arius had also denied Christ's soul, but he did so only to establish His creatureliness and changeableness (*treptotēs*) as intermediary between God and man, not His surpassing divinity. Apollinarius, on the contrary, emphasized that Christ was changeless (*atreptōs*). According to him, Christ was not strictly speaking a man though He was very much like a man. Did not Paul speak of God sending His Son "in the likeness of sinful flesh"?[8]

In his *Epistle to Jovian* Apollinarius pioneered in the use of a phrase that would be much used by Cyril of Alexandria: *mia physis tou Theou Logou sesarkōmenē*, "one nature of God the Word incarnate." By that Cyril would mean that the Logos took on a new existence, but Apollinarius meant that Christ became a mixture (*mixis* or *synkrasis*) of God and man. Cyril appears to have picked up on another element of Apollinarius' thought, namely that Christ, far from being merely a particular man, represented the human race. This, at least, can be inferred from his talk of Christ showing men what it was to be truly human.

We can see from all this that Apollinarius set the stage for many of the same issues the Monophysites would be obsessed with, although in their case it was with a less extreme emphasis on Christ's deity. He was not a Docetic, but his critics could be excused for thinking him so, and for charging him with creating a monstrous

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[6] 1 Thessalonians 5:23.
[7] Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, II,5:18.
[8] Romans 8:3.

being, neither God nor man. Apollinarius' solution to the Christological problem was, according to Quasten, an easy answer to a difficult question, which is precisely why it was to prove so unsatisfactory.[9] His overly divine Son did not square with the Gospels' portrait of Jesus growing in knowledge, praying in the Garden, and crying out on the cross. He appears to have been motivated by nothing so much as the impossibility of a Savior possessing a mind "prey to filthy thoughts."[10] Here again we find hints of Platonism and even Gnosticism.

Yet Apollinarius' critics were equally motivated by the question of salvation: if the rational soul of man was to be saved the Savior must possess just such an entity. "What has not been assumed cannot be restored; it is what is united with God that is saved," Gregory of Nazianzus wrote in his *Letter to Cledonius* which has become a locus classicus in the orthodox fight against Apollinarianism.[11] Gregory was vexed that the Apollinarians called Christ the Lordly Man and that they hoped for the restoration of the Jerusalem Temple.[12] In a subsequent letter to Cledonius he discerns in Apollinarius tendencies towards both Judaism and Docetism, a similar phenomenon to what one encounters in the earliest Gnostics.[13] Gregory wanted the secular authorities to mildly punish the Apollinarians and obviously thought Theodosius I was the ideal man for this.[14]

The *Letter to Cledonius* was received in part at the Council of Ephesus and in full at the Council of Chalcedon. Both it and Athanasius' *Letter to Epictetus* anticipated the Christological controversies of the fifth century. It is of some question whether Athanasius' letter was directed against Apollinarius since he is not alluded to; Apollinarius, sincerely or as a smokescreen, praised it to Serapion of Thmuis. It takes a middle ground between the positions of Apollinarius and his opponent Diodore of Tarsus and thinks in terms of Christ's two natures though without using such an

[9] Quasten, *Patrology*, 3:382.
[10] *Ep. ad Diocaes*. 2; Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 293.
[11] *Ep*. 101; ibid, 297.
[12] *Ep*. 101; Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, II,7:439, 442.
[13] *Ep*. 102; ibid, 444.
[14] *Ep*. 102; ibid, 445.

expression. Pope Leo would see it as taking the middle ground between Eutychianism and Nestorianism.[15]

At any rate the battle against the Apollinarians was waged more by the Cappadocians than by Athanasius. Basil of Caesarea was ashamed of having been Apollinarius' friend and correspondent, and Gregory of Nyssa wrote his imposing *Antirrheticus* against him. In speaking of the Cappadocian opposition to Apollinarius, Brown well observes that orthodoxy, for the first time in two centuries, was forced to defend Christ's full humanity.[16] At a council in Rome in 377 Pope Damasus condemned Apollinarian proto-Monophysitism, and he was followed by various other councils, culminating in the First Council of Constantinople which denounced Apollinarianism in company with Anomoeanism, Homoeanism, and Macedonianism.

[15] *Ep*. 109; ibid, II,12:81.
[16] Brown, *Heresies*, 164-165.

# CHAPTER TWO

# THE SCHOOL OF ANTIOCH

The second phase of the Christological conflict was inaugurated by the patriarch Nestorius. It is not difficult to understand why his enemies the Theotokosians found him, and the whole Antiochene milieu, suspect. Nestorius, together with his masters Diodore of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia, uttered statements that, regardless of their protestations of orthodoxy, could easily be caricatured as Adoptionist. In other words, they could be accused of beginning their Christology with a man being made God. Christ might seem possessed by God in the same way in which Judas was said to be temporarily possessed by Satan.

The relationships between Judaism, Arianism, and Antiochene theology cannot here be explored. Suffice it to say that Arius' teacher Lucian, the editor of what would become the basis for the Byzantine Text of the New Testament, was from Antioch and that Antiochene theology was heavily indebted to Judaism. This was not, of course, a complete antidote for anti-Jewish feeling. The sermons of John Chrysostom and Theodoret's exultation that the Jewish temple was in ruins in response to Christ's prophecy are evidence to the contrary. Antioch's Jewishness can also be overplayed. Despite its Ancient Near Eastern feel it was still a sophisticated city, so much so that in the fourth century its slaves wore gold and slept on beds of ivory inlaid with silver and gold.[1] It was also a Greek city and as such was imbued with ideologies like Middle and Neoplatonism, a fact that should be kept in mind even when dealing with so biblical a thinker as Theodore of Mopsuestia. There was also the not minor influence of Aristotle. The school of Antioch had a liking for the Stagirite's analyses and distinctions, the dictum of no nature without

[1] Neander, *The Life of St. Chrysostom*, 2.

personhood looming particularly large in its consciousness.

Fundamentally, however, the Antiochenes breathed the same theological atmosphere as the Jews around them. For them the God of Israel had, with the coming of the New Testament, been made known in three persons. It is not insignificant, in connection with this, to observe that the Third Council of Constantinople would refer to Nestorius as Nestorius the Judaizer.[2] We also know that the Nestorians allied with the Jews against the Monophysites in the sixth century. In the *Book of the Himyarites* the Monophysite heroine Habsa tells the Jews, and presumably the Nestorians, that she believes that Christ is God, not a man, the latter being an oversimplification of the Antiochene view.[3] Sellers traces the thought of the Antiochenes to Theophilus of Antioch and Paul of Samosata, the latter of whom was essentially a Jew but for the unique prominence he gave to Jesus Christ. Paul and Theophilus were encouraged in their Adoptionism by such Logos passages as Psalm 45:1 and Wisdom 18:15.

Eustathius of Antioch has, perhaps fancifully, been seen as a link between Paul of Samosata and Diodore of Tarsus. He was a confessor of the Diocletian persecution and a determined opponent of Arianism. He wrote a work on the title verses of the Psalms. His only completely extant treatise, *On the Witch of Endor Against Origen*, stressed, in common with Lucian of Antioch, the literal interpretation of Scripture. Eustathius believed the apparition of Samuel was a deception by the demon indwelling the witch of Endor. In this he took issue with Origen who held it to be a true appearance of Samuel and who was, in this one irritating way, a literalist in his interpretation of Scripture. Elsewhere Eustathius criticized Arius for denying that Christ had a human soul. He believed the inference of a human soul in Christ could explain the weakness apparently experienced by the Logos; the human soul was to be thought of as the meeting place between the Son's divine and human natures. Eustathius spoke of the Logos dwelling in Christ's humanity as in a temple and called Him an *anthrōpos Theophoros*, a God-bearing man. In his mind the speaker of Proverbs 8:22—"The Lord

[2] Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, II,14:344.
[3] Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 137.

possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old"—was Christ's human body.

Eustathius' mantle was taken up by Diodore of Tarsus. It is unfortunate that more of Diodore's writings have not survived since he appears to have had a nonpareil education. He first studied under Silvanus of Tarsus and Eusebius, the Homoean bishop of Emesa whose learning was so great he was rumored to be a sorcerer. He then went to Athens, which was still a philosophical mecca, and studied Plato, Aristotle, and Neoplatonism. Lastly, in harmony with both Christianity and Neoplatonism, he embraced the life of a lay ascetic in Antioch. This he did with his friend Flavian who, together with him, made things hot for the Homoean bishop of Antioch. Both men had a formidable influence on the young Chrysostom.

Diodore was ordained a priest by the Homoiousian bishop Melitius and followed him into his second exile in Armenia. After the death of the Homoean emperor Valens, Melitius returned to Antioch and ordained Diodore bishop of Tarsus. Diodore was known for his opposition to the pagan reforms of Julian the Apostate and earned the latter's reproach that his emaciated appearance was not the result of asceticism but judgment from the gods. Cyril of Alexandria would accuse Diodore of having once been a Macedonian, that is a denier of the divinity of the Holy Spirit, but that is unlikely. Diodore wrote against the Manichaeans and especially Mani's disciple Adda. This work was entitled *Bushel*, referring to Christ's words in the Gospel of Mark that no one keeps a candle hidden under a bushel.[4] Diodore was an expert in astronomy and a foe of astrology, a fact which may explain his dislike of the Syrian Gnostic Bardaisan, author of the *Laws of the Countries*. Diodore believed it was permissible to use *theōria* but not allegory in the exposition of Scripture. *Theōria* was the contemplation of Scripture's deeper meaning, as when Chrysostom said that the five foolish virgins of Christ's parable sinned by lacking the oil of charity and almsgiving. For Diodore *allēgoria* was a dismissal of the literal whereas *theōria* went beyond the literal without rejecting it.

Diodore distinguished between the divine and human natures of Christ with the phrases Son of God and Son of David. The

[4] Mark 4:21.

relationship between the former and the latter was similar to that between God and the prophets except that it was a permanent and complete union. He found proof of the separateness of the man Jesus from the Trinity by remembering that it was permissible to blaspheme the Son but not the Holy Spirit. Worst of all, he averred that the Son of David shared in the devotion offered to the Son of God just as a monarch's robe shares in the devotion offered to the monarch. Between the two Sons, for all his wishing, he had a mechanical and artificial union that would be inherited by Nestorius.

Drobner, unlike Cyril of Alexandria, maintains that it is unfair to judge Diodore and his successor Theodore by the more sophisticated Christological understanding of a later time. He therefore praises the Second Council of Constantinople for refusing to condemn Diodore.[5] One might plausibly argue, against Drobner, that Diodore's opponent Apollinarius had already made it imperative to think in sophisticated terms about Christology.

The Jewish heritage of the Antiochenes is nowhere more evident than in Theodore of Mopsuestia who built his theology on the Shema Yishrael. He probably grew up in a religious home since both he and his brother Polychronius became bishops. Polychronius was a mass of contradictions who objected to allegorical interpretation, had a higher opinion of the book of Job than Theodore, and in his biblical interpretation approached the extreme rationalism of the Neoplatonist and onetime Christian Porphyry. According to Theodoret of Cyrrhus, Polychronius was eloquent and illustrious, but he is almost completely sidelined today in favor of his more famous brother.

Theodore of Mopsuestia was a student, with John Chrysostom, of the pagan sophist Libanius and Diodore of Tarsus. Chrysostom was, of all the Antiochenes, the furthest from the heart and soul of Antiochene Christology, except for his avoidance of the word *Theotokos*, his dislike of the Virgin Mary's pushiness towards her Son, and his comparison of the two natures joining in Christ to a man stretching out both of his hands to join two people on either side of him.

Theodore had spent three months at Diodore's *askētērion* or ascetic school when he decided to become a lawyer and marry the

[5] Drobner, *The Fathers of the Church*, 320.

young Hermione; Chrysostom attempted to dissuade him in two letters. A sample will do to illustrate both their intemperance and their reflection of Theodore's past life in asceticism: "Do not be deceived by anyone's saying, 'God has not forbidden marriage.' I know that as well as you. He has not forbidden marriage; but He has forbidden adultery, which is what you are contemplating." [6] Hermione must have contributed to Theodore's literal interpretation of Scripture, at least of the Song of Solomon which he viewed as a love paean between Solomon and his Egyptian princess, an interpretation that would be vilified by Theodoret of Cyrrhus as unfit even for the mouth of a crazy woman. But Chrysostom's letters were successful, and Theodore was ordained a priest and later a bishop.

The Assyrian Church has preserved two catalogs of Theodore's writings. All of them were consigned to burning by the emperor Justinian and therefore survive more in Syriac and Latin translations than in the original Greek; an exception is his commentary on the Minor Prophets. Augustine's enemy Julian of Eclanum translated Theodore's commentary on the Psalms, written when he was twenty, into Latin, and until the twentieth century it was thought that this commentary was the work of Julian. At one time Theodore received Julian and some of his Pelagian friends, but he later had them condemned by a synod in Cilicia, proving that he was more cautious about the heretics than Nestorius would be.

As a commentator Theodore did not believe that the apostle Paul's allegory about Sarah and Hagar justified approaching the Old Testament as though it were fiction that needed to be demythologized. His rejection of allegory was typically Jewish, as was his refusal to find Christ everywhere in the Old Testament as all the Christians since Justin and Irenaeus had done. [7] His most blatantly literal commentary was his commentary on the Psalms. There he found only one unmistakable reference to Christ: "for thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." [8] Theodore was moved not so much by his Jewish milieu as by an attempt to emphasize the distinction between the Old

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[6] *Ep. ad Theod*. 2.3; Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, 2:87.
[7] Irenaeus of Lyons, *On the Apostolic Preaching*, 8-14.
[8] Psalm 16:10.

and New Testaments, specifically the oldness of the Old Testament and the newness of the New Testament; he spoke, like the psalmist, of singing unto the Lord a new song.[9]

For Theodore not all the Psalms were written by David, and their prophetic horizon generally stretched no further than the time of the Maccabees. Yet he admitted to four messianic psalms, one more than his master Diodore had admitted, and his view of the prophetic scope of the Minor Prophets was even broader. He recognized in the career of Jonah, and in the blood sprinkled in the Passover, prefigurements of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection.[10] Typology—the interpretation of Old Testament persons and events as types of or as pointing to Christ—was all-important in early Christian exegesis. One finds it pervading theological pronouncements like the Chalcedonian Definition: "even as the prophets from of old taught us about Him" (*kathaper anōthen hoi prophētai peri autou*). It was more restrained than allegorism, but, as Christopher Hall points out, there was no early Christian literalist who was not sometimes allegorical or allegorist who was not sometimes literal.[11]

Theodore wrote an almost Pauline commentary on the Gospel of John. It was dedicated to Porphyrius of Antioch, a fellow student with him and Chrysostom at Diodore's *askētērion*, and stressed both the humanity and deity of Christ, the former of which was alone recognized by the Jews in the Gospel. In harmony with what we have noted about Antioch's Jewishness, he points out that the Jews began the day at sundown. Somewhat at odds with his time he alleges that the prophecy of the death of John at the end of the Gospel was not written by John himself.[12]

Theodore was never enthusiastic in his commentaries, but the same could not be said of his writings on the Eucharist which view the rite as a reenactment of events in heaven, specifically the Son's sacrifice to the Father. In Theodore's liturgy the two elements become the body and blood of the Lord. This had before been hinted by both Cyril of Jerusalem and the *Apostolic Constitutions*, and as it

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[9] Young, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon*, 199.
[10] Ibid, 206.
[11] Hall, *Reading Scripture with the Church Fathers*, 157.
[12] Elowsky, *John 11-21*, 397.

caught on it led to awe and sometimes reluctance on the part of the communicants.[13]

In addition to his commentaries and his works on the liturgy Theodore wrote against Eunomius, Apollinarius, and the Macedonians. There remains a transcript of a dispute he conducted in Syriac with Macedonian heretics in Anazarbus, something like Origen had done with the Monarchian Heraclides. He was impelled to write against Julian the Apostate by Julian's criticisms of Diodore. It makes sense that the first Christian to write against Julian's *Against the Galileans* was from Antioch, considering the emperor's tumultuous relationship with that city. Theodore's work, like Cyril of Alexandria's after him, was a continuation of the acrimonious pagan-Christian dialogue represented by Celsus and Origen. Julian had produced some of the most salient anti-Christian literature since Porphyry and wrote from a more religious perspective than Celsus did. He particularly delighted in the contradictions in the Gospels, but Theodore countered that these were only minor details and that if the overall story had been fictitious the compilers would have purposely avoided all contradiction.[14]

Theodore emerges more suspect as a theologian than as an apologist, although there are parallels between his treatise on the Incarnation and Augustine's theology. According to Photius, for whom Theodore vomited up Nestorianism by anticipation, Theodore rejected the doctrine of original sin and believed in the final forgiveness of all men, hence his initially lenient attitude toward the Pelagians. He avoided the dual Sonship language of Diodore but stated that the Son's humanity was of a different hypostasis than His divinity because only a divine hypostasis could be of the same substance as the Father. He also seemed to suggest that the Logos took up an already existing human being, an entity which he called "the man assumed" (*analēphthenta*). The man assumed was like a temple or a garment indwelt by the Logos, but the relationship between the Logos and the man assumed was different from that between God and the prophets because the Logos dwelled in Him as

[13] Chadwick, *The Church in Ancient Society*, 522.
[14] Moreschini and Norelli, *Early Christian Greek and Latin Literature*, 2:145.

in a son (*hōs en huiō*). Theodore further covered his Adoptionist tracks by saying that the Logos and the man assumed shared one person (*prosōpon*) in a continuous and indissoluble union. Like Nestorius he used *prosōpon* for each of Christ's natures and for the union itself.

Theodore's protestations that he was not an Adoptionist are often merely puzzling and his attempts at emphasizing the unity of Christ fall disquietingly flat: "We do not assert that the Sons are two . . . but one Son is rightly confessed since there is one Son according to essence (*eis huios kat' ousian*), God the Word, the only begotten Son of the Father to whom is conjoined he who participates in the Godhead, and shares the common name and honour of the Son."[15] As for the Virgin Mary, she was the mother of God only in the sense that God was in the man who was born to her. Cyril of Alexandria's outburst to the long-dead Theodore—"Sodom has been more justified than you"—was not as groundless as it at first appeared.[16]

Theodore died the same year Nestorius was installed as patriarch of Constantinople. The appointment was suggested by John of Antioch, Nestorius' childhood friend, and got Theodosius II's religious policy off on the wrong footing. Theodosius was a saintly emperor who wore a hair shirt next to his skin but whose goodwill was not up to the challenge of tackling the increasingly complex nature of Christological disputes. Theodosius' saintliness is not to be mistaken for the spinelessness that used to be attributed to him; his delegation of his imperial responsibilities seems to have been dictated by a sincere political aloofness, and Frend has shown that he was not incapable of decisive action. Theodosius studied the classics, theology, and the natural sciences but more often painted and carved or copied out religious manuscripts in his fine hand. He was fond of hunting and the Persian game of polo which he is thought to have introduced to Byzantium.

The decision to install Nestorius as patriarch of Constantinople was a bad one, but it was complicated by the growing bellicosity of the Alexandrian see, already illustrated by Theophilus' destruction of John Chrysostom and Cyril's indirect role in the murder of the

[15] Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 128.
[16] Ibid, 135.

lady philosopher Hypatia. Nestorius may not have been as uneducated as the church historian Socrates made it out, but his speech was more bombastic than Cyril's and he refused to ponder Cyril's writings as thoroughly as Cyril, with some concern for the unity of Christ and as much malice, pondered his. Nestorius was born in Germanicia in Syrian Euphratensis of Persian descent and studied under Theodore of Mopsuestia. He entered the monastery of St. Euprepius and eventually became presbyter of the church of Antioch. He shared Chrysostom's zeal and rhetorical skill but little of his compassion for the downtrodden. At his installation ceremony in Constantinople he addressed the emperor with these words, famous even when Socrates wrote: "Give me the earth purified of heretics, and I will give you heaven for it; help me to fight the heretics, and I will help you fight the Persians."[17]

Socrates said that John Chrysostom was unbendingly rigid, like a man without knees, but the statement was even more apt about Nestorius. The new patriarch persuaded Theodosius to restrict the number of races and dancing girls at the hippodrome and so earned the hatred of the crowds. He earned the enmity of the monks by criticizing their habit of living in the city and dabbling in politics. Asceticism in his homeland of Syria, it would not be too much to say, was more authentic than it was in Constantinople. Monkish opposition to Nestorius may have commenced even before his criticism of the monks, if one can believe the testimony of Hypatius who dreamed that he saw Nestorius being consecrated by laymen. Nestorius also passed severe measures against the Novatians, the Quartodecimans, and the Macedonians, and ordered that the last surviving chapel of the Arians be shut down, a foolish act since the German soldiers who helped defend the city were Arians. Equally imprudently he alienated the imperial sister Pulcheria, the real power behind the Constantinopolitan throne.

The emperor was the only layman who was allowed to enter the sanctuary for the Eucharist, but Pulcheria had done so under previous patriarchs. Nestorius now refused her admittance, and when Pulcheria assured him that she was a virgin he asked her what kind of

[17] *Hist. Eccl*. 7.29; Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, 3:716.

virginity she practiced.[18] Pulcheria was not the only woman the patriarch alienated by trying to impose inapposite Syrian customs on the capital. He attempted to stop women from going to night vespers in the cathedral. In the *Book of Heraclides*, written long afterwards, he seems to defend himself against the charge of misogyny by saying that what he objected to about Pulcheria was not that she was a woman but rather an aggressive woman, and that the ladies who went to night vespers could not have been, by virtue of the case, anything but indecent women.[19] If he were alive today he would claim not to dislike women, only feminists. It is fair to deduce that not every woman of Constantinople was affronted by him, only a certain type of woman, as for instance the senator's wife who shouted at him while he took part in a church procession. The empress Eudocia was said to be one of the patriarch's admirers.

Nestorius further antagonized Pulcheria by removing a robe she had donated as an altar covering; he thought of it less as the gift of a virgin than as the gift of a political woman.[20] Nestorius' dislike of the imperial sister was unwise but forgivable since she had already aided monks who were rebelling against his predecessor Sisinnius. He also wanted the emperor to think for himself rather than for him to let Pulcheria, or even himself, do his thinking for him. In other words this forthright but essentially unlikable man aspired to be the young emperor's mentor.

In view of the Chalcedonian aftermath of the Nestorian and Eutychian controversies it cannot be stated forcefully enough that Pulcheria's reasons for disliking Nestorius were personal and political rather than theological. It is nonetheless ironic that she became Jezebel to the Assyrian Church and a saint to the Neo-Nestorians. Nestorius' relationship with her probably seemed to him a repeat of Chrysostom's troubled relationship with the empress Eudoxia. But, as in the case of Chrysostom, his end was to come not through politics but theology.

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[18] McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria and the Christological Controversy*, 25.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid, 26.

Nestorius' presbyters preached Antiochene theology as represented by Diodore and Theodore who did not possess the international reputation of the Cappadocians. One of the presbyters, Anastasius, attacked the use of the word *Theotokos* and was defended by Nestorius. The patriarch disliked *Theotokos*, "God-bearing," when used to describe the Virgin Mary, or at least exclusive of *Anthrōpotokos*, "man-bearing." He was, according to Socrates, afraid of the word as though it were a hobgoblin (*mormolykion*).[21] A sounder word to him was *Christotokos*, "Christ-bearing," or even *Theodochos*, "God-receiving." He argued that we should not call Mary the mother of God any more than we call James the brother of God.[22] He did not deny either Christ's deity or humanity but separated His two natures so rigorously that he was able to make the dangerous claim that the two or three-month-old Jesus could not be called God, meaning merely that human qualities could not properly be applied to the divinity of Christ.

Nestorius viewed the Theotokosians as heretics who merged Christ's deity and humanity in an Apollinarian manner. Yet it would be a mistake to think of the Nestorians, as they would become known as in Syria and Persia, as having a low opinion of the Virgin Mary. Sebastian Brock remarks that in practice the orthodox, the Monophysites, and the Nestorians had an equally deferential attitude towards her.[23] Nonetheless Nestorius felt that some of the veneration paid her was excessive. The bishop Proclus played only a minor role in the Theotokosian controversy, but he preached a sermon in Nestorius' presence which should be partly quoted as it contains some of the enthusiastic spirit against which the patriarch was fighting: "The holy Mary has called us here together, the stainless jewel of virginity, the rational paradise of the second Adam, the workshop of the unity of the natures, the festival of the saving covenant, the bridal chamber in which the Word espoused the flesh, the living bush which the fire of the divine birth did not burn . . . slave and mother, virgin and heaven, the only bridge between God

[21] *Hist. Eccl*. 7.32; Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, II,2:171.
[22] Price and Gaddis, *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, 1:333.
[23] Jacob of Serug, *On the Mother of God*, 2.

and man."[24]

Nestorius followed Proclus' sermon with a homily urging restraint in describing the Virgin. In some ways he had a point against the Theotokosians, but in other ways he did not. In the Gospel of Luke Elizabeth had called Mary "the mother of my Lord" (*hē mētēr tou kyriou mou*) which meant essentially the same thing as *Theotokos*.[25] Pope Leo seems to have been one of the few ancients to have noticed this passage with reference to the Nestorian controversy. *Theotokos* had been prized among the Alexandrians since the time of Origen, and Athanasius' predecessor Alexander had spoken of "Mary the Mother of God" (*tēs Theotokou Marias*) in a letter from the Alexandrian synod of 320 that condemned Arius;[26] even Eustathius of Antioch employed the word. Cyril of Alexandria, who used both *Theotokos* and its synonym *Mater Theou*, did not hesitate to side with Nestorius' enemies and accused him of heresy. He began an in-depth study of patristic Christology, something that would not bode well for Nestorius, and addressed a circular letter to the Egyptian monks. These were not naturally inclined to honor the Virgin so it was with some effort that Cyril argued for the validity of the *Theotokos* title. Firstly, Athanasius, a folk hero to the monks, used it in his anti-Arian writings. Secondly, it was possible for certain Christian women to be mothers of Christ, but only one could be the mother of God.[27]

It could be said that the Antiochene theologians who influenced Nestorius were unnecessarily pedantic; their rigorous two-natures Christology at least suggests this; but none was more pedantic than Nestorius himself. One of his favorite words (*akribōs*) could be translated by the English phrase "strictly speaking." In 429, in a public display against Nestorius in Constantinople, the protestors mocked his theology and manner of speech. If Mary was not, strictly speaking, the mother of God, they alleged, then her Son was not, strictly speaking, God.[28] The lawyer Eusebius, later of Dorylaeum, arranged for a

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[24] Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 91.
[25] Luke 1:43.
[26] Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, II,14:208.
[27] *Ep*. 1; McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria and the Christological Controversy*, 247, 251.
[28] Cyril of Alexandria, *On the Unity of Christ*, 19.

placard to be carried through the city which accused Nestorius of being a follower of the Adoptionism of Paul of Samosata.

It was not so much the patriarch's Christology that the Constantinopolitans objected to as his callous attitude toward a popular epithet. A Theotokosian monk forbade him from approaching his altar, and we get some measure of the nature of the man when we learn that Nestorius gave orders for him to be flogged.[29] Other monks continually disrupted his sermons. He was able to pacify at least one group of them by inviting them to his episcopal palace the next day for a talk. They took him at his word and received a beating instead.[30]

Nestorius' Christology owed much to Diodore and Theodore. Like the former he believed that God dwelled in the Son in a similar way that He dwelled in the prophets, and like the latter he stressed that the union was continuous. In one of his sermons he spoke about the Logos and His relationship to the Christ child thusly: "the same was Infant and Inhabitant of the Infant."[31] He shared the whole Antiochene revulsion to any talk of God suffering in the life of Christ. The Logos suffered when Jesus suffered only in the sense that an emperor suffers when his statue is dishonored. The Antiochene war against the passibility of the Logos was a reaction to the Arians' attempt to make Him similar to God rather than equal with Him.

Nestorius attacked Apollinarianism as almost Docetic, and like Gregory of Nazianzus he noted that its tendency to minimize the humanity of Christ had grave soteriological implications. He could not have been accused of doing the same. He wanted Christ to be fully human in every sense of the term with the exception of sin, and he took the Savior's ignorance of the coming of the day of the Lord more seriously than Cyril did. Cyril went so far, in his emphasis on Christ's single subjectivity, as to say that He prayed only to give us an example. Something similar would be maintained, regarding Christ's will, by the Monothelite pope Honorius. Monothelitism, of course, was cut out of the same philosophical cloth as Cyrillian

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[29] McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria and the Christological Controversy*, 32.
[30] Ibid, 33.
[31] *Serm*. 15; Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, 3:204.

proto-Monophysitism.

For Nestorius the Son possessed two natures (*physeis*) and two persons (*prosōpa*), but by persons he did not mean their separate entity, only their objective reality. He was crippled by the Aristotelian notion that there can be no nature without personhood. Nestorius was something of a stickler regarding Christological titles: he wanted Jesus used only when describing His human actions; Logos only when describing His divine actions; and Christ, Son, or Lord when speaking of the whole union.[32]

Yet union (*henōsis*) was not the word Nestorius used to define the relationship between Christ's two natures. He preferred conjunction (*synapheia*), association (*koinōnia*), appropriation (*oikeōsis*), indwelling (*kat' enoikesin*), or habituated possession (*schesis*).[33] *Synapheia* was the term he most commonly employed. It was far less strong than *henōsis*, but he chose it to avoid the Apollinarian admixture of the two natures and attempted to buttress it with such adjectives as perfect, exact, continuous, inseparable, and interrelated (*akra*, *akribēs*, *diēnekēs*, *achōristē*, *schetikē*).[34]

Nestorius' two natures were less prosopic than those of Theodore and can be considered an improvement on the latter's Christology. He used the analogy of the burning bush, in typically rhetorical manner, to describe their relationship: "The fire was in the bush and the bush was fire and the fire bush, each of them was bush and fire," but there "were not two bushes nor two fires."[35] Yet he could not resist the temptation to think of the two natures in prosopic terms.

The Logos' association with Jesus was for Nestorius an association of grace (*synapheia kat' eudokian*). This is related to Origen's idea, in his exposition of Christ's words on marriage in Mark 10, that because of love the soul of Jesus becomes "as it were" one with the Logos.[36] This is the reverse of the love felt for the Nous

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[32] McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria and the Christological Controversy*, 156.
[33] Ibid, 161.
[34] Ibid, 162.
[35] Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 131.
[36] *De Prin*. 2.6; McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria and the Christological Controversy*, 163.