

bishopric is waning. I do not know how far this may be pressed as a violent issue of the time, but it has some force and meaning to it.

b. The Theological Foundations

(1) The Nestorian Problem

The mere pronouncements of Constantinople did not put to rest all of the interest in the natures of Christ. An attempt to correct this situation was offered by several and the one before us now is that which was given by Nestorius, a Persian of extraction and bishop of Constantinople in 428 (the office is now popularly referred to as "patriarch").

Nestorius enjoyed the popularity of Theodosius II and the court. He seems to have been able and in this corner we make no deprecatory remarks about what he hoped to achieve. He reacted against Alexandrian thinking in Christology on the assumption that it deprived Christ of real humanity. He was, so to speak, on the opposite point from Appolinaris. It is not easy to understand his position in the attempt to solve the two natures question, so I quote from the article by Peter Toon in the New International Dictionary of the Christian Church.

Ephesus:

The Theological  
Problems  
Posed  
by  
Nestorius.

*First of all, he taught that the human and divine natures remained unaltered and distinct in their union within Jesus of Nazareth. He could not conceive of the Divine Logos being involved in human suffering or change, and so he wanted to hold the natures apart. Secondly, he emphasized that Jesus Christ live a human life which involved growth, temptation and suffering. This would have been impossible, he argued, if the human nature had been fused and overcome with the Divine nature. To solve the problem...Nestorius explained that Jesus Christ, the person described in the Gospels, was the "common prosopon", the "prosopon" of union.*

*While the strong point of Nestorianism is its attempt to do full justice to the manhood of Christ (a true Savior of men), its weak point is that it places the two natures alongside each other with little more than a moral and sympathetic union between them." (p. 700).*

Key to the problem of understanding of this matter was the understanding of some disputed terminology. The term "theotokos" (God-bearer in the sense of birth...not simple carrying as theopheros) had been used by Athanasius and others to describe the Virgin Mary. Nestorius could not accept this use (to describe Mary as the "Mother of God", unless it