



***Encyclopaedia Britannica's 1911 Article on The Bazaar of Heraclides: Nestorius's Polemic to Cyril & Ephesus; Theotokos & Subsequent Marian Heresies***

49. Although Nestorius was long assumed to be the founder of Nestorianism and its false doctrine of the hypostatic union, later discoveries discredit this. The dénouement of this important controversy is provided by the 1911 edition of:

**Black, John S. and Alexander J. Grieve. *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*. 13th ed. (New York: The Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1911, 1926), 19:411-12:**

*The Nestorian Heresy.* As Monophysitism is the doctrine that the God-man has only one nature, so Nestorianism is the doctrine that He was two complete persons. So far as Nestorius himself is concerned, however, it is certain that he never formulated any such doctrine; nor does any recorded utterance of his, however casual, come so near the heresy called by his name as Cyril's deliberately framed anathema. It must be remembered that Nestorius was orthodox on the subject of the incarnation, and sincerely, even fanatically, held every article of the Nicene creed. (Karl J. von) Hefele \hā' fa-la\ [(1809-1893) a church historian famous for his history of the church councils], one of the most learned and acute of Cyril's partisans, is compelled to admit that Nestorius accurately held the duality of the two natures and the integrity of each ... and was perfectly correct in his assertion that the Godhead can neither be born nor suffer. Nestorius did not refuse to speak of Mary as being the mother of Christ ... but he thought it improper to speak of her as the mother of God. The secret of the enthusiasm of the masses for the analogous expression of Theotokos is to be sought not so much in the Nicene doctrine of the incarnation as in the recent growth in the popular mind of notions as to the dignity of the Virgin Mary, which were entirely unheard of (except in heretical circles) for nearly three centuries of the Christian era. That the Virgin should be given a title that was quasi-divine mattered little. The danger was that under cover of such a title an unhistorical conception of the facts of the Gospel should grow up, and a false doctrine of the relations between the human and the Divine be encouraged, and this was to Nestorius a double danger that needed to be exposed. He was thus forced into the position of one who brings technical objections against a popular term.

The fact that Nestorius was trained at Antioch and inherited the Antiochene zeal for exact biblical exegesis and insistence upon the recognition of the full manhood of Christ, is of the first importance in understanding his position. From the first days of Ignatius (of Antioch, d. c. 110 A.D.), down through the 5th century ... the theologians of Antioch started from the one sure fact, that Christ lived on earth the life of man, and without questioning the equally genuine Divine element laid stress on this genuine human consciousness. There is no reason to suppose that Nestorius intended to introduce any innovations in doctrine. That a man of such conspicuous ability, who impressed himself at the outset on the people of Constantinople as an uncompromising opponent of heresy should within a few short years be an excommunicated fugitive, sacrificed to save the face of Cyril and the Alexandrians, is indeed a tragedy.



It is only within recent years that an attempt has been made to judge Nestorius from some other evidence than that afforded by the accusations of Cyril and the inferences drawn therefrom. Since the helpful collection of *Nestoriana* published by Dr. (Friedrich) Loofs in 1905 there has also come to our knowledge the most valuable evidence of all, Nestorius's own account of the whole difficulty, namely, *The Bazaar of Heraclides of Damascus*. This pseudonym served to protect the book against the fate that overtook the writings of heretics, and in a Syriac version it was preserved in the Euphrates valley where the followers of Nestorius settled. The discovery of *The Bazaar* was made public by Dr. H. Goussen (c. 1895). A representative selection of extracts has been given to English readers in J. F. Bethune-Baker's *Nestorius and His Teachings* (Cambridge, 1908), of which describes the manuscript and its accounts. Much of the argument is thrown into the form of a dialogue between (1) Nestorius and an imaginary opponent Superianus, (2) Nestorius and Cyril. The book reveals a strong personality and helps us to know the man and his teaching, even though we have to gather his own views largely from his criticism of his antagonists. He is throughout more concerned for the wrong done to the faith at Ephesus than to himself, saying that if he held the views attributed to him by Cyril he would be the first to condemn himself without mercy. In his (Nestorius's) letters to Celestine he had laid stress on the point that the teaching he attacked was derogatory to the Godhead. "If the Godhead of the Son had its origin in the womb of the Virgin it was not Godhead as the Father's, and He who was born could not be *homoousios* [ὁμοούσιος; dwelling together] with God." It is thus increasingly difficult to believe that Nestorius was a "Nestorian." Personal rather than doctrinal reasons had by far the larger part in determining the fate of Nestorius. This view is confirmed by the evidence of the collection of the canons of the Nestorian Councils and Synods, which shows that the Great Syriac Church built up by the adherents of Nestorius and ever memorable for its zeal in carrying the Gospel into Central Asia, China, and India cannot, from its inception, be rightly described as anything other than orthodox. The un-Nestorian form which some historians have noted in the early centuries of Persian Nestorianism was really there from the beginning. The Nestorian Church, following its leader, formally recognizes the decrees of the Council of Chalcedon.

Said Nestorius in *The Bazaar of Heraclides*, "When I came upon that exposition and read it, I gave thanks to God that the Church of Rome was rightly and blamelessly making confession, even though they happened to be against me personally." His aim, he tells us, had been to maintain the distinct continuance of the two natures of Christ when united through the Incarnation into one Person.

50. This article reveals from Nestorius's own writings that although he was branded a heretic, he was not although his chief critic, Cyril of Alexandria, in fact was a heretic.
51. We find that even in the fifth century serious mistranslations of Scripture were being developed at Alexandria and the ripple effect has continued even down to the twentieth century.
52. The erroneous idea that Mary is the "mother of God" has continued an even greater involvement in heresy since, by making this claim, some doctrines must be compromised and still others invented.
53. The accumulation of false doctrines associated with this single idea is summarized for us by:

***Encyclopaedia Britannica: Macropaedia, 15th ed., s.v. "Mary":***



*Virgin mother.* By far the most voluminous narratives about Mary in the New Testament are the infancy stories in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. In their present form, both accounts make a point of asserting that Jesus was conceived in the womb of Mary without any human agency (Matt. 1:18 ff.; Luke 1:34 ff.). On the basis of the New Testament, it was the unanimous teaching of all the orthodox Fathers of the Church that Mary conceived Jesus with her virginity unimpaired, a teaching enshrined in the early Christian Creeds and concurred in by the 16th-century Reformers as well as by most Protestant churches and believers since the Reformation. Only with the rise of rationalism in the 18th century and then of Protestant Liberalism in the 19th century did the teaching begin to lose the universal support it had enjoyed. One of the major points in the antiliberal reaction of Fundamentalism in the early 20th century was its insistence upon the literal accuracy of all the miracle stories in the Bible, including and especially those dealing with the miraculous conception and with the Resurrection of Jesus, without which his status as Son of God and Saviour was thought to be in jeopardy.

*Mother of God.* The first widespread theological controversy over Mary had to do with the propriety of applying to her the title of Theotokos, “God-bearer” or “mother of God.” The title seems to have arisen in devotional usage, probably in Alexandria, Egypt, sometime in 4th century; it was a logical deduction from the doctrine of the full deity of Christ, which was established as a dogma during the 4th century, and those who defended that dogma were also the ones who drew the inference. By the end of the 4th century, the Theotokos had successfully established itself in various sections of the church. Because it seemed to him that supporters of the title were blurring the distinction between the divine and the human in Christ, Nestorius, the patriarch of Constantinople, objected to its use, preferring the less explicit title Christotokos, “Christ-bearer” or “mother of Christ.” Along with other aspects of his teaching, Nestorius’ objections were condemned at the Council of Ephesus in 431, and Theotokos was unconditionally approved.

Through its incorporation in the prayer Ave Maria (“Hail, Mary”), the title mother of God has been circulated throughout Western Catholicism. By the approval it received in both Lutheran and Reformed confessions during the period of the Reformation, the title assured itself a place in the official theology of orthodox Protestantism. It is as mother of God that Mary is also termed Mediatrix by the Roman Catholics. The official teaching of the Catholic Church has sought to make clear that this latter term is intended not to detract from the glory of Christ as sole mediator but to signify that Mary mediates between Christ and mankind.

*Ever virgin.* Various corollaries could be deduced from the New Testament’s assertion of Mary’s virginity in the conception of Jesus, including the doctrine that she remained a virgin after his birth and until the end of her life.

The doctrine posed problems of biblical interpretation ... that of the “brothers” of Jesus referred to in Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3; 1 Corinthians 9:5; and Galatians 1:19. If they really were his brothers, it was obvious that Mary had given birth to other children after the birth of Jesus. Partly because of these biblical problems, the doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary has not been supported as unanimously as has the doctrine of the virginal conception or the title mother of God. It achieved dogmatic status, however, at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 and is therefore binding upon Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic believers.

*Immaculate.* As the doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary implied an integral purity of body and soul, so, in the opinion of many theologians, she was also free of other sins. Attempting to prove the universality of sin ... Augustine (354-430), the bishop from northern Africa, spoke for the Western Church when he wrote:

We must except the holy Virgin Mary. Out of respect for the Lord, I do not intend to raise a single question on the subject of sin. After all, how do we know what abundance of grace was granted to her who had the merit to conceive and bring forth him who was unquestionably without sin?



It was, however, the distinction between original sin and actual sin, that eventually compelled a further clarification of what the sinlessness of Mary meant. Most theologians in both East and West came to accept the view that she never did anything sinful, a view that found expression even among the 16th-century Reformers. But was she free of original sin as well? And if so, how? Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274), the most important medieval theologian in the West, took a representative position when he taught that her conception was tarnished, as was that of all men, but that God suppressed and ultimately extinguished original sin in her, apparently before she was born. This position, however, was opposed by the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, systematized by (John) Duns Scotus (1266-1308), a 13th-century British Scholastic theologian, and finally defined as Roman Catholic dogma by Pope Pius IX in 1854. According to this dogma, Mary was not only pure in her life and in her birth, but:

... at the first instant of her conception was preserved immaculate from all stain of original sin, by the singular grace and privilege granted her by Almighty God, through the merits of Christ Jesus, Saviour of mankind.

*Assumed into heaven.* When the Immaculate Conception was promulgated, petitions began coming to the Vatican for a definition regarding the Assumption of the Virgin into heaven. During the century that followed, more than 8,000,000 persons signed such petitions; yet Rome hesitated, because the doctrine was difficult to define on the basis of Scripture and early witnesses to the Christian tradition. No account of the place and circumstances of Mary's death was universally accepted in the church; no burial place was acknowledged; and no miracles were credited to the relics of her body.

Such arguments from silence, however, did not suffice to establish a dogma, and on the positive side even the earliest doctrinal and liturgical testimony in support of the idea has appeared relatively late in history. Finally, in 1950 Pope Pius XII made the dogma official, declaring that "the Immaculate Mother of God, the Virgin Mary, when the course of her earthly life was run, was assumed in body and soul to heavenly glory." As it was formulated, the doctrine left open to speculation the question whether, as most theologians have held, Mary had in fact died or whether she had been taken up into heaven, as had the patriarch Enoch (Genesis 5:24) and the prophet Elijah (II Kings 2:11), without first passing through physical death.

54. The ramifications that came from the Nestorian controversy not only confirmed the Marian heresy, this tragedy has been consistently compounded for over 1500 years of a dispensation that has lasted less than 2000.
55. And the underlying conspiracy which energized this deviation into idolatry, false doctrine, and blasphemy was obviously conceived, conducted and managed by the father of lies himself, Lucifer, the master deceiver.