

THE SERMONS
OF
NESTORIUS

*Translated into English
from the texts of F. Loofs
and F. Nau*

by

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Nestorius, Sermon 27

PITTSBURGH

1971

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who is joined to God, the man who is honored above man because of God who is joined to him

.....

I say: "the Son" and I acknowledge the two short [words]: the created nature and the uncreated. [336] The very same [nature] is the power of our Lord and [that] of his divinity: the very same nature is the veneration of the one who is made visible [= tou phainomenou] and of the one who is not made visible.

.....
Both [fem plur: divinity and humanity] have one and the same power. The angels see namely him who is made visible and revere him the same as that one, who is concealed in being made visible with honor [= "the one appearing with glory," that is, at the Parousia] [cf. Mt 16:27; 24:30, &c.] except the peculiarity of his nature alone.

SERMON 26: On John 12:49*

"I have not spoken of myself"

The Son may not be called God the Word in a separate way and on the other hand may not be called humanity in a separate way. That is nothing different from setting forth two Sons. But the name "sonship" is a conjoining of the two natures. I say "Son"; I

*Cf Sev. Ant., *Contra Gramm.*, 3.2.29 (CSCO 102. 64f)

teach two natures. I say "Christ" and do not separate any of the natures in sonship.

SERMON 27: In Memory of Holy Blessed Mary. Against Proclus*

[337] It is not to be wondered at that the people who love Christ have applauded those who devote themselves to the office of speaking on behalf of the blessed Mary. For the very fact that a temple was made of that flesh of the Lord, exceeds everything most worthy of praise. But Your Love ought to look into this, lest, when we busy ourselves more than is proper or due, with honor and praise of the blessed [Virgin], we may seem to confuse the dignity of God the Word by making him twice begotten. And to employ similar language, lest what is said exceed the hearing of those who hear, let us use the plainest speaking to reach them all.

A person who simply says that God was born of Mary, first of all prostitutes the nobility of dogma to the heathen, and exposing it to view, sets it forth to be censured and laughed at. For immediately a pagan accepting with reprehension the fact that God was born of Mary, attacks Christianity. For of necessity he who says simply that God was born of

*For Proclus' Sermon, preached in Nestorius' presence on Annunciation Day (25 March) AD 429, to which this sermon is an answer, see Appendix A, pp. 173-184, below. Greek text of this sermon may be found in Schwartz, *ACO*, 1.1, p. 103,

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Mary and will not consider that he is by the conjunction of the two natures, that is the divine and the human, will hear [this objection]: "I [338] cannot worship a God born and dead and buried." Now there is a clear division of this dogma: he who was born and through the phases of growth was subject to time and was carried in [the Virgin's] womb for the appointed months, had a human nature, but one obviously joined to God. It is one thing to say that God had been joined to the one born of Mary, the one who is the Father's Word, most clear and firm and blameless to the heathen, and another [thing to say] that the divinity stood in need of months when the nativity was coming to its completion. For God the Word is the creator of times, not fashioned in time.

Therefore I marvel very much at the division [based] upon this preceding ruling saying, because it is not fitting to speak of God merely, and, as it were, born (for no one gives birth to one older than himself), nor is one to confess that there is mere humanity, but that the humanity was born conjoined to God. Moreover, I wish you who are keen examiners of religion to attend to this--for I have the same opinion of you as I have of

the Antiochenes--I wish, as I said, for you to attend to this: I cannot bear that God should become a high priest. For if God is creator and high priest, to whom is the embassy to be sent? These matters [339] I am discussing with Your Love, and I would say more, but for the fact that the thought had crossed my mind that I seem to the doctors of the Church to be arguing the opposite. I therefore wish you to be sharp-sighted in examining dogmas, and neither to confuse with God the Word the humanity taken on nor to say that he who was born is a mere man, but also not to say that God the Word, combined or mixed, has lost his own essence. Accordingly, when at the time [our Lord] was taken up the disciples were overcome with wonder [cf. Acts 1:11] and pondered among themselves how much they must think--do you think: has human nature been set free? Do you think: does it remain in heaven in the same essence? And to those astonished at this vision, the angels approaching said: "This Jesus"--who is seen, who needed time to grow in the Virgin's womb,* who died, who bore the cross--"will come in the same way as you saw him go into

* Literally: "needed increase of months."

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heaven" [Acts 1:11]. And again, the blessed Paul in the Acts of the Apostles: "in a man in whom God has decreed He will judge the world, giving assurance to all men, raising him from the dead" [Acts 17:31]. Now if the Quickener has been killed, who will there be to grant life?

For besides this, we are on this account very reprehensible to the Arians. If we simply speak of God the Word as born, see, what is produced out of this! You simply say: "It is God who was born of Mary." Immediately the heretic snaps back: "Then among you also this [340] is your confession: "God the Word is he who was born of Mary." Hear what things God the Word testifies concerning himself: "Go to my brethren and say to them: I am going to my Father and your Father, my God and your God" [Jn 20:17]. But when he who was born of the blessed Mary said this, he was consubstantial in humanity with us; but in being conjoined with God he was far from our substance, because God is of better substance.

Then you will be freed of their blasphemy and readily and quickly speak of the mystery of religion in this manner: God the Word is one thing, who was in the temple

which the Spirit animated; and the temple apart from the indwelling God is another thing. It is the character of the temple to be dissolved; but for that temple to be raised up, was proper to him who indwelt it. This is not my statement, but I am reading the Lord's word: "Destroy this temple, and in three days will I raise it up" [Jn 2:19].

Therefore let us confess one dignity of conjunction, but two substances of natures. Otherwise God the Word will be found to be a creation of the Holy Spirit. What does the Evangelist say of him who was created in the womb? "He who was born in her is of the Holy Spirit" [Mt 1:20]. But if God the Word was bare and alone, who was born, was created, the Evangelist is saying that the Spirit created that temple in the blessed Mary and God the Word will be found to be a creation of the Holy Spirit. Let there therefore [341] avoid the error of this confusion. Let us speak of our Lord Christ according to nature as twofold, but according as he is Son, one.

Now I have quite often happily laughed at certain ones who told me this, since, they say, the bishop savors of the things which are of Photinus, not knowing what they are saying or what they are declaring. For what I am actually saying is the overthrowing of

Photinus' dogma. For the sense of Photinus gives a beginning to God the Word from Mary's childbirth, but I say that God the Word always existed before all ages. Let that proverbial saying suffice for them: "Answer not a fool according to his folly" [Prov. 26: 4]. I wish you to be keen investigators of dogmas, not as it were to be drawn to applause by the allurements of language, nor to think anything of dogmas or examined reason [to be] presumption of newness, but rather to judge that glory of truth.

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SERMON 28

HOMILY ON THE FIRST TEMPTATION

Matthew 4:3

[N. 338] As the sun, having bent over the earth and riding toward us from the east, dispels the night, wakes up the sleepers and sends them to [their] work, so the light of the knowledge of God wakes the soul out of sleep, illumines the thoughts and arouses to virtues; and it is this light that we should wish to shine upon us rather than the sun. For even if one does not see the sun, one will be

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able to survive as, for example, a blind man who knows the sun by hearing of it; whereas the souls which are without the sun of the knowledge of God are dead, even if they suppose that they are alive; of them the Lord says: "Let the dead bury their own dead" [Mt. 8:22]. But he who has fought against the cause of death has ended his life escaping both mortalities, for death for us [men] is twofold. One is attached to our mortal nature [N. 339]. The other results from rejection of knowledge; for the lack of knowledge of God is the same as the lack of sensation. Of both kinds of death the workman is the devil. It is he whom Christ had cast down, raising up nature from both types of mortality: on the one hand by restoring the soul with life-giving doctrines and on the other hand by regaining the mortal nature with resurrection. For when the one who pushes falls, the one pushed will be made to stand.

The record of the wrestling match has been handed down for our lives so that nature by looking at it may gain strength. Where is the record? Turn your eyes to the desert, for there grace has set it up in the image of the one who slays tyrants, thus terrifying the tyrant in the desert. For we should see the desert as a wrestling ring and the devil causing the Lord