

(2) Modalistic Monarchianism

In this view the Father and the Son were identical in that the Father simply disguised himself like a man and took the name Jesus. This view was propagated largely by Noetus (ca 190) and further developed in the teachings of Sabellius (ca 215). In essence the Father, Son and Spirit are all the same. From this form of thinking comes the "patropassionist philosophy" that speaks of the Father dying on the cross. The most recent expression I have seen on this view comes in some of the works of Witness Lee...don't seem to be able to put my finger on it at the moment.

While you can see the error in monarchianism rather clearly (I hope!), you can sympathetically see how it came to be. Some in the community feared that the god-logos ideology endangered God's solidarity and the person of the Logos had to be accounted for in some scheme of divine substitution. Had they just followed the simple Scripture (I am saying that with a smile and with much hindsight) it would have saved a lot of time and space in this syllabus.

c. Montanism

Of a different character, Montanism was a growth against worldliness and carnality in the professing church about 130-150 AD. Montanus, so far as we know, began a movement against coldness and spiritual apathy. To war against these fallacies he championed the apocalyptic, the charismatic expressions, and the continuing direct revelation through fresh light by the Spirit of God through gifted men...like himself. The movement pushed ascetic practices, resisted systematizing and organization, and spoke in terms of experience more than knowledge. Its best defender was Tertullian and in some ways it was an early age pietistic-Pentecostalism although in time it degenerated badly as some of Montanus' followers spoke of themselves as being the Holy Spirit, not just having contact with Him.

6. Some random influences:

a. Pagan critics

(1) Celsus...His writing, the True Word was a bitter attack on Christianity. He was opposed forcefully by Origen, et al. A good discussion of his work and influence may be seen in James Orr: The Progress of Dogma, p. 41 ff.

(2) Rival Messiahs

b. Alternate Religious systems:

(1) Manicheanism

(2) Mithraism

A number of others might be mentioned but this will have to do it for now.