

essential deity or ministry but with the matter of progression. The question was an old one centering on the use of the Latin term "filioque!" Did the Spirit come from the Father alone or did it come from the Father and the Son? During the scholastic period the western church accepted the "father and son" phraseology but the eastern church dissented and would speak of the Spirit coming from the Father only. The argument was one of the causes of the division between the Greek and Latin churches and it is amazing how big a fire a little spark kindles.

c. The character of the Trinity

Among the Scholastics there were three attempts to "explain" the Trinity and all were doomed for failure. These are as follow:

(1) The ideas of Roscellinus (d. 1125) who, as a nominalist, propounded that the trinity consisted of "three essentially different persons." While different the three parties had one power and one will. This was known as tri-theism and really presented three gods of equal force. Roscellinus was forced to recant of this view on at least two occasions in life but he returned to it...when in a safe place.

(2) In the thinking of Abelard (d. 1142) the godhead was seen as one essentially represented in goodness, power and wisdom. The attributes represented the personality factors in the Godhead (Father-power, Son-wisdom, Spirit-goodness) and it seems that what Abelard was trying to do was to put the godhead into the perspective of human experience. He was judged heretical in that it appeared he was questioning the reality of the persons. As his was one of the sad lives in the scholastic period we are left with some doubt as to what his intention was. TWT knows less of Abelard than he should...and Abelard knew nothing of TWT. So there!

(3) At Poitiers (France) there grew for a short period a school of tetratheists. They thought of each member of the godhead as being a separate person and the three forming a fourth person for four gods. It did not gain much of a following and fell into disuse.

I have often said that attempts to explain the trinity were generally fruitless. In recent years I have been challenged on that by new triad explanations "matter, energy, space", etc. Some of these things I can hardly comprehend so I have adopted a softer, wait-and-see attitude. But so far as what I can understand, the godhead is a credible picture presented in Scripture and belief is the key word. I do not think faith and reason incompatible but I do think that if one relies on reason as a means of unlocking all that one does not understand the potential for error is enormous while the potential for more light is insignificant. Free opinions in the middle of the syllabus.