

3. The Geneva Problem

At Geneva, following 1645, there developed the strongest of Christian educational centers. It became the center for the reformed expression of evangelical doctrine and its students would fan throughout the known world. The great teacher was Calvin and his successor Beza was no less eminent in Christian academics.

The older question of Sabellianism arose in Geneva with the coming of the French physician, Servetus (Michael Villaneuve). Condemned as a heretic at Lyons and under a death sentence in that place, Servetus escaped and came to Geneva. He and Calvin had known each other in Paris years before and had exchanged correspondence in which Calvin rejected his views. Servetus was warned against coming to Geneva but he did come, was imprisoned, found to be a heretic and rebel, and was burned at the stake. His view was just about the same as that of classical 'unitarianism. In terms of our study it simply certified how keenly the protestant church continued to feel the importance of the Trinity.

4. Socinianism

Named after Sozzini (d. 1562), this is the reformation age of an older monarchianism that is the groundwork for classical unitarianism. A strong emphasis was placed on rationalism...Jesus was not God at all but did reveal something of God...and ultimately resurrection was limited to only a few who faithfully did Jesus commands. The academic challenge raised to trinitarianism by the Socinian system has been pronounced and shown effect in most of the major European churches, particular as a lack of the preaching of Gospel truth has haunted the older bodies.

5. Theological Liberalism

In the last few centuries (19th-20th) the great waves of theological liberalism have been "hard" on the Divine character. The incomprehensibility of the Trinity has been assailed and the unity of the God-party of the Old Testament and New Testament has been denied. Christ has been relegated to the role of a revolutionary rabbinical teacher and not necessarily a good one at that. We do not attempt to treat all the ramifications of theological liberalism at this point but we are aware of the influence of such in the church. Our confessional point is made to speak against such and to regard them outside the pale of orthodoxy and so subject to the disciplines and rejection of the Christian church.