

Plato, he conceived of universal concepts and argued forcefully that the physical could not be the real as it is in a constant flux, subject to change and defilement and most unpredictable. The universal is subject to none of this and so is the very real thing in essence.

Anselm is well known in theology as the best early propounder of the Vicarious Atonement explanation of Christ's death. The famous work on the subject by him is entitled CUR DEUS HOMO..Why the God Man. He rejected other ideas of the atonement and particularly the one of which Christ was thought to be a ransom paid to the devil. Needless to say he was a strong adherent to the Trinitarian doctrines of the councils. A much fuller treatment is needed for Anselm...but this is a survey course!

Abelard

Abelard, (d. 1142) was a moderating nominalist (to show you how confusing the terms get to be) and is usually called a "conceptualist." He represents a synthesis of ideas and was generally unpopular with realists and regarded as a heretic in the church. There is much present day work being done on Abelard (some new works of his were discovered as recent as 1976) and a better interpretation of him may be forthcoming. For the moment let us say that he has not been thought of as orthodox in the long annals of church history. If this changes in the future it will be due to better insight and more information than we have had in the past. His work centered in and around Paris and when he was banned from teaching in the universities he established a wandering "coffee-house" ministry that went under the title of the "paraclete."

Abelard shows the dialectic method at its best and worst, as you may judge, in his book SIC ET NON--yes and no. He is better at raising questions than he is in giving answers and so he propounds a matter and asks in a quizzical fashion..is it yes, or is it no? He pits the fathers against one another and ultimately leaves everything unanswered and this is really a modified endorsement of nominalist ideas. His skill in this sort of thing is immense and it gave the church the disquieting feeling that he was on the verge of saying something really bad...but he was not going to say it himself. The reader would have to frame the exact expression