



Church History, Heresies Facing the Church

Legalistic heresies: mainly the Ebionite Heresy, 132-135

Emphasized the unity of God. Emphasized the creatorship of God. Jewish law was binding upon man. Jesus was not God.

Philosophical heresies:

Gnosticism: up to 150 AD.

Provided the explanation of the origin of evil, that being in matter. Sought to synthesize Christianity and Hellenistic philosophy. Sought by human wisdom to understand the ways of God with man. Gnosticism is dualistic, one material world separate from one spiritual world.

Bridged the gap by Demirurage. This was the concept that at certain intervals there would be a new emanation from God who originally began as true spirit. Each time He would be more material, less spirit. Finally getting down to the God of the Old Testament who created a material world, then down to Christ who even had a human body. This was the problem in the Colossian church.

They were Docetic. This means that they believed that Christ came upon the human body of Jesus only for a short time, between His baptism and the beginnings of His sufferings on the cross. Salvation to them was only for the soul of man. His body has nothing to do with it. It catered to anti-Semitism. It rejected the fact that Christ was both human and divine.

Manicheanism: 216-276 AD by Manichaeus.

Kingdom of Light is traced to mother of the earth, to pure primitive man. Kingdom of Darkness: The King of Darkness tricked primitive man and man became a mixture of light and matter. Man's soul linked him with the Kingdom of Light; man's body linked him with the Kingdom of Darkness. Salvation was then the matter of freeing the "light" from the body, by exposure to Christ. Emphasized asceticism, rites, the unmarried state, a priestly class.

Neo-Platonism: of Ammonius Saccas

Spirit of man is absorbed mystically into the divine being on occasional experiences here and now. This is the one large beginning for ecstasies. All created by process of overflow of the Absolute Being. All men come from God idea. Experience of ecstasy is the highest state one could enjoy in life.

Theological Heresies:

Montanism: 135-160 Phrygia

Inspiration was immediate and continual. Montanus was a paraclete through whom the Holy Spirit spoke to the church. Kingdom of Christ, heavenly, would be set up at Pepuza, Phrygia, and he would have prominent place in the kingdom.

Practiced strict asceticism, no second marriage, fasted, and dry foods were eaten. This heresy was rejected and condemned by the Council of Constantinople in 381. So the heresy lasted longer than the man.

Monarchianism:

Emphasized the unity of God completely apart from the three personalities. Denied the real deity of



Christ. Sabellius originated another type of Monarchianism to avoid the tri-theism in 200. Trinity of manifestations of forms rather than essence. God was father in the Old Testament, Son to redeem man and Holy Spirit after the resurrection. Denied a separate personality of Christ, in other words, the God-man concept.

Ecclesiastical schisms:

The Easter controversy (in two views):

View #1: Easter should be held on the 14th day of Nisan no matter when it occurred (April 14th).

View #2: Easter should be held on the Sunday closest to the 14th day of Nisan. The western church came up with this and this was adopted at the Council of Nicea in 325 AD.

Donatism: 300 AD.

He believed that failure to remain true under persecutions invalidated power of Felix to ordain to the ministry. Felix was one of the heads of authority. Donatus wanted to exclude Caecilian from his office as bishop of Carthage because he and Felix were accused of being “traditores.” Felix had ordained Caecilian.

Results of controversies and heresies:

Brought about the adopting of the Canon of Scriptures. Resulted in the formation of a Creed of Faith. Strengthened the position of the bishop. Stimulated the Christian theology. Organizational development within local church resulted.