

Week 3: Monday, February 8, 2021
THE ANCIENT CHURCH (AD 100–600) Cont'd.
Lecture 2

Topic: The Apologists [finish]
Due: Gonzalez, 1.69–1.04

(5) The Alexandrians.
(a) **Clement of Alexandria (ca 150–211/16).**

Clement was a converted pagan, who came to Alexandria in AD 180. Clement was head of the catechetical school at Alexandria, a theological school which was devoted to propagating the Christian faith among the cultured classes. He wrote *The Instructor of Children*, *Exhortation to the Greeks*, and *The Stromatais* (Miscellanies).

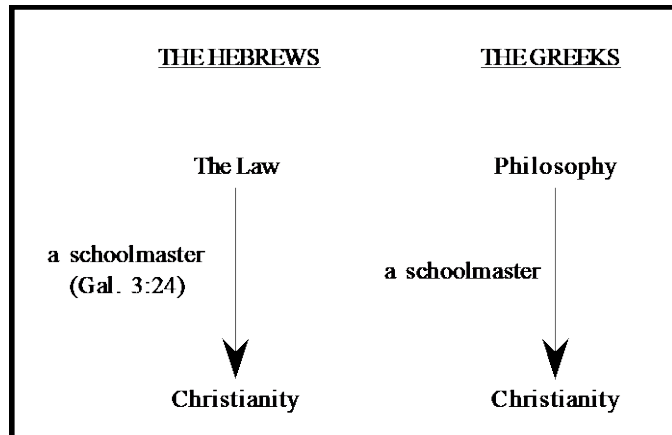
i) *The Use of philosophy.*

Christians “fear Greek philosophy as children fear ogres—they are frightened of being carried off by them. If our faith (I will not say, our gnosis) is such that if it is destroyed by force of argument, then let it be destroyed; for it will have been proved that we do not possess the truth.”

“...the same God that furnished both Covenants [that of the Law and that of Philosophy] was the giver of Greek philosophy to the Greeks, by which the Almighty is glorified among the Greeks.”

“Before the advent of the Lord philosophy was necessary to the Greeks for righteousness. And now it becomes useful to piety, being a kind of preparatory training to those who attain to faith through demonstration.....For God is the cause of all good things; but of some primarily, as of the Old and the New Testament, and of others by consequence, as philosophy. Perchance, too, philosophy was given to the Greeks directly till the Lord should call the Greeks

also. For this was a schoolmaster to bring the Hellenic mind to Christ, as was the law to bring the Hebrews. Philosophy, therefore, was a preparation, paving the way for him who is perfected in Christ.”



ii) Allegorical method in exegesis.

Wallace Anderson [*Work of Jonathan Edwards*, Yale Edition, 11:4] notes of the early churches use of this method of interpretation:

“Allegory recommended itself to Christian apologists when challenged by difficult passages of Scripture. It also afforded a way of exploiting the rich descriptive details of the biblical record by reading them as signifying hidden moral or spiritual meanings”.

“For many reasons, then, the Scriptures hide the sense. First, that we may become inquisitive, and be ever on the watch for the discovery of the words of salvation. Then it was not suitable for all to understand, so that they might not receive harm in consequence of taking on another sense the things declared for salvation by the Holy Spirit. Wherefore the holy mysteries of the prophecies are veiled in the parables preserved for chosen men, selected to knowledge in consequence of their faith; for

the style of the Scriptures is parabolic
[*Stromata*, 6.15]

iii) *The Sacrament of Baptism.*

Clement of Alexandria understands that it imparts regeneration (*Instructor*. I, 6): “The same also takes place in our case, whose exemplar Christ became. Being baptized, we are illuminated; illuminated, we become sons; being made sons, we are made perfect; being made perfect, we are made immortal. ‘I,’ says He, ‘have said that ye are gods, and all sons of the Highest.’ This work is variously called grace, and illumination, and perfection, and washing: washing, by which we cleanse away our sins; grace, by which the penalties accruing to transgressions are remitted; and illumination, by which that holy light of salvation is beheld, that is, by which we see God clearly. Now we call that perfect which wants nothing. For what is yet wanting to him who knows God? For it were truly monstrous that that which is not complete should be called a gift (or act) of God’s grace. Being perfect, He consequently bestows perfect gifts.”

(b) **Origen (ca 185–253/54).**

Origen studied under Clement and became head of the Catechetical School. Following a period of conflict with the Bishop of Alexandria, he moved to Caesarea in Palestine where he set up another school. He was imprisoned in 250 and tortured. He died ca 254. His writings are numerous: *The Fundamental Doctrines (The First Principles)*, *Against Celsus*, and several commentaries.

i) *The threefold meaning of Scripture.*

“One must therefore portray the meaning of the sacred writings in a threefold way upon one’s own soul, so that the simple man may be edified by what we may call the flesh of the Scripture, this name being given to the obvious interpretation; while the man who

has made some progress may be edified by its soul, as it were; and the man who is perfect and like those mentioned by the apostle:...this man may be edified by the spiritual law, which has ‘a shadow of the good things to come’. For just as man consists of body, soul and spirit, so in the same way does the Scripture, which has been prepared by God to be given for man’s salvation (*The Fundamental Doctrines*, 4, 2.4).

ii) *The subordination of the Son.*

“Therefore I think that we should be right in saying of the Saviour that he is the image of the goodness of God, but not that goodness itself. And perhaps we may say that the Son is good, but not absolutely good. And as he is the image of the invisible God he is by that token God, but not the God of whom Christ himself says ‘That they may know thee, the only true God’. Thus he is the image of goodness but not unconditionally good, as is the Father” (*The Fundamental Doctrines*, 1, 2.13).

iii) *On grace and redemption.*

“The human will is not enough for the obtaining of the end; nor is the running of those who are, as it were, athletes, enough for the receiving of the prize of God’s high calling in Christ Jesus (25). For these things are accomplished by God’s assistance. . . . We could not in piety assert that the production of full crops is the work of the farmer or of him who watered; it is, rather, the work of God (26). Thus our own perfection is accomplished neither by our doing nothing, nor yet is it completed by us; but God does the greater part of it” (*The Fundamental Doctrines*, 3).

Parenthesis: The Antiochene School of Biblical Interpretation.

In contrast to the Alexandrian pendant for nonliteralism the Antiochene tradition of

exegesis, represented by Theodore of Mopsuestia, recognized that Paul used the word “allegory”, but denied that he approved of the practice of allegorical exegesis as the Alexandrian tradition would understand it.

“There are people who take great pains to twist the senses of the divine Scriptures and make everything written therein serve their own ends. They dream up some silly fables in their own heads and give their folly the name of allegory. They (mis)use the apostle’s term as a blank authorization to abolish all meanings of divine Scripture. They make it a point to use the same expression as the apostle, “by way of allegory,” but fail to understand the great difference between that which they say and what the apostle says here. For the apostle neither does away with history nor elaborates on events that happened long ago” (“Commentary on Galatians 4:22–31” in *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, 96).

2. The Apologists: Why their necessity?

a) *The threat of persecution.*

<https://danutm.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/st-perpetuas-diary.pdf>

(1) Why were Christians persecuted?

Roman emperors claimed divine honors. It was impossible for a Christian to conscientiously pay homage to anyone except Christ.

Christians served as convenient scapegoats in times of trouble. When calamity struck it could be interpreted as the punishment of an angry god whose worship was being neglected. A North African proverb: “If God does not send rain, lay it to the Christians.”

Polytheistic people considered belief in only one god to be little better than atheism. Those who did not sacrifice to and worship the emperor were considered atheists.

Christians were suspected of practicing all kinds of immorality at their religious meetings (cannibalism).

Christianity was hurting certain people economically. Pagan priests and some merchants made money from idolatrous worship.

Other charges included that Christianity was the religion of the poor and lower classes, that it was novel, that Christians were self righteous, that they lacked patriotism, and that they were a danger because they could bring the wrath of the gods.

(2) The chronology of the persecution.

1) Local persecutions (A.D. 33-249)

Tiberius (14-37) Stephen martyred.

Caligula (37-41)

Claudius (41-54) James martyred

Nero (54-69 A.D.) Peter, Paul martyred

Vespasian (69-79)

Titus (79-81)

Domitian (81-98) John is persecuted

Trajan (98-117) Ignatius martyred

Hadrian (117-138) Aristedes martyred

Antoninus Pius (138-161) Polycarp, Justin M
martyred

Marcus Aurelius (161-180) Athenagoras martyred

Septimus

Severus (193-212) Iraneus, Origen's Father
martyred

2) Worldwide persecution (249-251) Decius was the Emperor

a) The cause

Rome was celebrating their millennial empire anniversary. Rome was starting to crackup and he blamed the Christians for Rome's demise. He attempted to liquidate Christians.

b) The aim

Decius wanted to force believers to worship idols. Imprisonment, persecution was prominent.

c) The Novatians (Cathari)

They were led by Novator. The Novatians did not want the disloyal people of Christianity to recant and then decide to return to the church when the persecution ended. Cyprian (Bishop of Carthage) wanted leniency for Christians that defected and wanted to return to the church. Cyprian prevailed. He is one of the foundations of Roman Catholicism.

3) Local persecutions (251-303)

4) Worldwide persecutions (303-311)

(a) The reign of Diocletian (245-313)

A strong monarchy can save Rome, anything opposed to the accepted is destroyed. He put Christians to death, burned Scriptures, persecuted church, put Christians in forced labor camps.

(b) The Edict of Toleration (313)

Constantine succeeded Diocletian and suspended persecution. He issued this edict and Christianity became the state religion. His mother was a Christian.

33–249	local and sporadic persecution.
249–51	EMPIRE WIDE PERSECUTION (Emperor Decius).
251–303	local and sporadic persecution.
303–11	EMPIRE WIDE PERSECUTION (Emperor Diocletian).
313	Edict of Toleration (Emperor Constantine).

(3) The results of the persecution.

(a) Growth - “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.”—Tertullian

(b) Bitter disputes arose within the church about what to do with those who betrayed Christ in time of persecution.

i) *Novatianism* was a strict, theologically orthodox schism within the western church over the issue of its laxity in dealing with those who had compromised with paganism during the Decian persecution.

ii) *Donatism*, a very popular North African movement, led to schism when it refused to accept a bishop of Carthage who had been consecrated to office by a *traditor* during the Diocletian persecution (a *traditor* was one who surrendered the Scriptures to the authorities or sacrificed to false gods to avoid persecution).

- (c) Christian martyrs were so idealized that a cult of martyrs arose.

Phillip Schaff wrote: “The church paid to the martyrs, and even to their mortal remains, a veneration, which was in itself well-deserved and altogether natural, but which early exceeded the scriptural limit, and afterwards degenerated into the worship of saints and relics. The heathen hero-worship silently continued in the church and was baptized with Christian names.”

- b) The theological threat to the church (*External*).

- (1) Gnosticism: from the Greek word *gnosis* meaning “knowledge.” (**T-2, 3, 4, 5)

- (a) Introduction:

Primary concern was to defend against pagan philosophy on the one side, and against Judaism on the other. Remember Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho, and Apology addressed to the Roman Emperor.

Church in the 2nd century found itself in a battle of a different kind

Proliferation of many different sects, schools, philosophies, that claimed to be the only true Christianity. But denied the most basic premises of Christianity and theology. It was called Gnosticism.

Halfway,

A variety of syncretistic religious movements in the early period of the church’s history that sought to answer

the question “what must I do to be saved?”

The answer: You must receive a secret “knowledge.”

“They claim that the inner spiritual man is redeemed through knowledge, that they possess the knowledge of the entire cosmos, and that this is the true redemption” (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*).

- (b) Who were they key leaders?

Saturninus - from Antioch, maybe some of the anti-

gnostic writings of Ignatius' were against him. He believed 7 angels created the universe. He also rejected marriage, and meat eating. He was a vegetarian. Why did he reject these? Because they tie you down and attach you to the physical, material earth.

Basillides - believed in emanations from god, Christ wasn't actually, physically crucified, Docetism

Valentinus - Roman teacher; We know most about him, it was his library discovered at Nag Hammadi. He taught in Alexandria around 135, went to Rome for about 30 years then back to Egypt and NH.

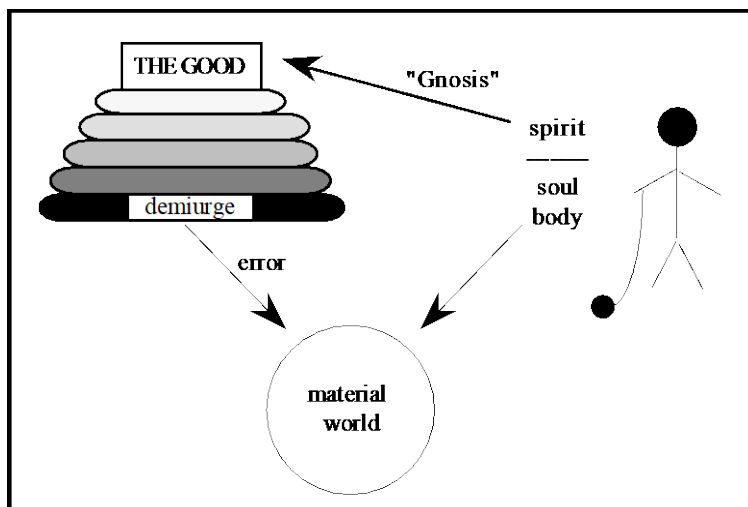
(c) The Gnostic System. What did they believe?

Gnosticism is an influence on Manichaeism, Neoplatonism, and numerous other isms and spasms.

Gnosis, meaning, knowledge. Lit. someone who knows, a gnostic is someone who knows, who is in the know, because they have received a special revelation, it is a religion of revelation, a mystical revelation.

Valentinus system. This is what was found at the Egyptian town of Nag Hammadi in 1945. At the ancient Chenoboskion monastery, founded by Pachomius the founder of monasticism, some 40 gnostic works were discovered. Edited and translated and is available at any bookstore, and even in Logos you have the *Nag Hammadi Library* ed by James M Robinson.

Many of these texts make reference to Judaism, rejecting the Jewish God. Gershom Scholem once described Gnosticism as "the greatest case of metaphysical anti-Semitism."



(i) God and Creation.

Dualism - matter and spirit

Emanations - God gives off sparks that take up physical form, they are called the *archons* a term also used in Scripture to identify a level of authorities in the angelic (or demonic) realm.

Dokeo (to seem) - Christ didn't come to earth physically with a mortal body, he was a spirit that seemed to be real.

Everything begins with a single, eternal, spiritual principle from which all other principles (mediators, emanations) are produced in a declining (or degenerating) process until the material world is produced (usually through an error of one of the lower principles called the *demiurge*). The material world is understood to be evil.

Radical dualism: God is absolutely transcendent, His nature alien to that of the universe which he neither created nor governs he is completely alienated. Humans are totally alienated in this universe. God is hidden from all creatures and unknowable by natural processes.

(ii) Man.

Man's body is evil (like the rest of the material world). The soul is also evil, for it

gives the body its life and desires. The spirit, however, does not belong to this world. It is related to the original divine substance. It is a spark of divinity imprisoned in the flesh.

Alienated, Human beings are totally alone and alienated in this world. Life is a journey from one place to another, that is a pilgrimage, but in Gn there is no home, no pilgrimage, just in a dry desert barren alone and lost until the light of the knowledge comes. Only lostness, no shrine to find, no home, no place to go. Very dark and depressing. Alone, lost, alienated forever, this is what draws people to it. T

(iii) Salvation.

The spirit is enslaved by its union with matter in such a way that it is unable to know eternal truth on its own. It is only able to be freed through a secret knowledge. This knowledge consists in an understanding of what we once were and what we should become.

Trapped in the prison of matter, we have a spark of divinity in each human. This is the basis for salvation, to be released from the tragedy of existence. Not a natural theology, not looking out on the word. It is based on revelation. The sense of alienation realizes a place within them a spark of divinity where the possibility of salvation exists. The spark needs to be lit to awake us and impart the secret darkness to leave aside this world and go forward.

To do this there must a redeemer who appears to enter into our existence. He really doesn't, only appears to, Docetism, appears to and communicates this secret knowledge.

(iii) Christ (*docetic* - "to seem" or "to appear to be.")

It is necessary that a messenger be sent from the transcendent spiritual world. This messenger is Christ (not a truly human

Christ, for then he would be part of the evil material world). Christ gave non-written teachings to certain of his followers which are preserved and passed on by the Gnostic teachers.

(d) Origins of Gnosticism.

4 Sources of Gnosticism (all debated): The system of thought going back to the early to mid 2nd century that has these five sources, like tributaries feeding into this system of thought that claimed to be the Truth, in competition with the Bible.

1. Iranian Dualism, Zoroastrian Dualism. From ancient Persia, two great opposing forces in the universe: good and evil, light and darkness, relied heavily on Babylonian astrology.

A lot of astrological terms, planets, stars, orbs, etc.

2. Jewish apocalypticism: Following 70 AD a revival of Jewish apocalypticism. Related to the coming of Messiah, but apocalyptic is different from biblical genre of prophecy. Focus on end of days, end of history.
3. Hellenistic philosophy. Justin Martyr interacted with Hellenism. Discussion of logos, platonic forms, etc. Harnock said Gnosticism was the acute Hellenization of Christianity. That's an overstatement, can't be reduced to only Hellenism.
4. Christianity, the writings of John and Paul. The earliest commentary we have on the gospel of John is a man named Harathany? Paul's letters were loved by the gnostics. Elaine Pagels The Gnostic Paul, goes through commentaries on Paul's writings written by gnostics.

(2) *Manichaeism* (or *Manichaeism*)

- a. Named after its Persian founder, Mani AD 216-276.

- b. A variant of Gnosticism that assimilated it to various Jewish and Christian ideas.
- c. This Manichaean *gnosis* myth was dualistic, espousing a primeval battle between light and darkness. Darkness first attacked Light, then Light feigned a counter-attack in order to trick the Darkness into swallowing particles of light. The universe was created to release this captive light and punish the archons of darkness.
- d. Satan had stolen particles of light from the world of Light which were imprisoned in man's brain. Various religious leaders—Buddha, Jesus, the Prophets, Mani—were sent to aid in realizing these imprisoned particles of life. This was a Gnostic myth on a grand scale.
- e. Emphasized an extreme vegetarian asceticism.

(3) *Neoplatonism.*

- (a) Platonic philosophy emphasized the Ideal as more real or significant than the physical and material. In this view, matter is often seen as unimportant to something that is inherently bad or evil. In Platonism, there is a metaphysical mysticism, in that the ultimate goal is to move from the physical to the ideal, to free oneself from matter (evil) to be totally absorbed into the Ideal (ultimate Being).
- (b) Neo-Platonism is the revival of Platonic Idealism in the third century. The major founder was Plotinus, an intellectual mystic and monist. Ultimate reality was a unity, a oneness that developed into the all-soul and then as a physical reality.

Augustine's first influence for determinism was Manichaeism, and the second was Neoplatonism. In its Christian form, matter wasn't evil, just unimportant. And knowledge is possible from the illumination of God. But this made knowing grounded on a form of mysticism.

Terms found in Scripture were developed in Neo-Platonism which exported distinctive nuances into Christianity, terms like substantial realities

(*Hypostaseis*), being (*ousia*), and an emphasis on the mind (*nous*) and soul (*psyche*). But each of these terms had their own nuance in Neo-Platonism. Often these nuanced terms become issues in the discussions on the understanding of the relationship of humanity to deity in Christ. Neo-Platonism was a major factor in the thinking of many early medieval church fathers such as Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and the Cappadocians, Augustine and Boethius exerted strong Neo-Platonism influence on the early middle ages. Neo-Platonism and experienced something of a rebirth in the thinking of nineteenth century theologians.

Points made by Wilson:

1. On sin: "Evil does not come directly from being physical matter (as it does in Gnosticism/Manichaeism) but the combination of matter, soul, and body introduces evil. Freedom for a person's soul cannot occur without direct association with the Intellect or One Soul"

In this view, man has voluntarily chosen to be in a physical body, instead of being in a purely spiritual form, and this free choice destroys the possibility of subsequent free choices.

Further, he held that everyone makes involuntary choices to sin, but they are morally capable for that sin.¹

2. On free will and determinism: Nevertheless modern scholars will explain that neo platonism was not deterministic, because in that system only astrology, the movement of the planets was truly deterministic. This was a view dependent on a Stoic metaphysic: the idea that by putting determinism in the sphere of the stars, would preserve human autonomy.

Wilson writes, "The All-Soul must give the gift of love to individuals' souls. This comes by the Spirit who implants the desired love (Enn.3.5.4; cf., 1.7.9). This divine infusion is required because 'the will' (Stoic "willer") [23] has been bound by innate universal wickedness (Enn.3.2.10). Evil produced a totally incapacitating fall, imprisoning us against our wills and creating an

¹ Wilson, Ken. *The Foundation of Augustinian-Calvinism* (p. 9). Regula Fidei Press, LLC. Kindle Edition.

"evil willer" (Enn.1.8.5)²

1. On the nature of man: "Plotinus rejected the Jewish and Christian view that humanity retained the imago Dei (divine image) after the first human's fall into sin. That divine image was totally lost when the immaterial soul became connected with physical matter and that divine image could only return at death when physical matter (the body) is removed (Enn.1.1.12; 4.3.12).[17]

2, The goal of life is "bringing back the god in oneself to the divine in the all" by reabsorption into the One (Enn.1.4; 3.7.34.19, similar to "the Force" in Star Wars that does not possess a personality).³ Plotinus borrowed Aristotle's distinction that only the soul freed from the body could be free to reason correctly; and therefore, a person in a body cannot have free will (De provid.3.1.8).

c) The theological threat to the church (Internal).

(1) *Ebionitism* (Judaizing Christianity).

- (a) Some taught that all true Christians are required to obey the Old Testament law.
- (b) Some opposed orthodox Christian teaching on almost every point.
 - i) It is necessary to obey the Old Testament Law.
 - ii) Paul was an apostate from the true faith.
 - iii) Jesus was not the eternal Son of God.

(2) *Marcionism*.

Marcion was active in the Roman church around the middle of the 2nd century. Following his excommunication, he organized rival churches throughout the empire. The churches were influential for about two centuries.

- (a) His thought:
 - i) The God of the Old Testament: He is an inferior, creator God (demiurge). He is a God of wrath and justice.

² Ibid, 10

³ Ibid, 8-9.

- ii) The God of the New Testament: He is the Father of Jesus Christ and is far more perfect than the Old Testament God. He is loving, peaceful, and infinitely good. He was unknown until he revealed himself in Jesus Christ.
- iii) Jesus Christ: He is not like any other man except in appearance. He was not born of a woman. He suddenly appeared in the synagogue in Capernaum in A.D. 29. His life and crucifixion were necessary for salvation, but his sufferings were not real. He was not raised bodily from the dead.
- iv) Salvation: Salvation is by grace though Marcion taught that the New Testament God was merciful to the exclusion of wrath and judgment (a least hues of universalism in his teaching).
- v) Scripture: Marcion rejected the Old Testament entirely. Irenaeus wrote of his views (*Against Heresies*, 1.27.2):
 “[Marcion], moreover, mutilated the Gospel according to Luke, removing all that is written about the generation of the Lord; and he removed much of the teaching of the Lord’s utterances, in which the Lord is recorded as confessing most clearly that His Father is the Maker of the universe. He also persuaded his followers that he himself was more truthful than those Apostles who have handed down the Gospel; and he furnished them not with the Gospel but with a small part of the Gospel.”

He rejected those New Testament writings that seemed to favor Jewish readers (Matthew, Mark, Acts, and Hebrews).

He eliminated whatever else seemed to contradict his views.

He retained a mutilated version of Luke’s gospel and ten letters of Paul.

(b) Marcion's Significance:

By pushing the idea of one standard set of authoritative writings he pushes the leaders of Christianity to determine which books were authoritative.

(3) *Montanism.*

(a) Montanus—a second century leader of a pietistic movement in Asia Minor.

(b) Montanism as a movement.

—a stress on primitive restoration.

—an emphasis on purity and holiness.

—a stress on prophecy and continuing revelation.

—perhaps an emphasis on the gift of motoric speech (tongue).

(c) Montanism and its most noted advocate: Tertullian.

3. The Apologists: Significant Theological developments.

a) The rise of the bishop's office, a confederation of equals.

This is important for establishing an authority within the church against rising heresies.

b) The creation of the earliest creeds.

THE OLD ROMAN SYMBOL

I believe in God the Father Almighty and in Christ Jesus His only-begotten Son, our Lord, who was born of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary, who under Pontius Pilate was crucified and buried, on the third day rose from the dead, ascended unto the heavens, and sat at the right of the Father, from whence he shall come to judge the living and the dead; and in the Holy Spirit, the holy church, the remission of sins, and the resurrection of the flesh.

c) The recognition of a canon of books.

(1) The tests for canonicity.

(a) Primarily—the witness of the books to Christ and His salvation.

(b) Secondly—

i) apostolic authorship or sanction.

ii) church usage.

iii) accuracy of detail.

- (2) The course of the canon's collection.
- (a) Period of Separate Circulation (70–170 A.D.).
 - (b) Period of Separation (170–303 A.D.).
Men in widely separated areas agreed in the main on a canon, the only question was the extent of a canon. By 303: (1) rejected books were so because they were unknown, (2) apocryphal books were almost non-extant.)
 - i) Tertullian (Hebrews, James, 2 Peter and 2 & 3 John—he did not know).
 - ii) Origen (disputed books—Hebrews, 2 Peter, 2 & 3 John, James, Jude, Epistle of Barnabas, Hermas, Didaché, and the Gospel of Hebrews).
 - iii) Muratorian Canon (*ca* 155/200) is worth quoting at length.
“ at which, however, he was present; and so he wrote. The third book of the Gospel is that according to Luke the well-known physician, which, after the ascension of Christ, Luke wrote in his own name from what he had learned when Paul associated him with himself as a companion of his journey. Nor did he himself see the Lord in the flesh; but inasmuch as he was thus enabled to proceed, he began his account with the birth of John. The fourth Gospel is by John, one of the disciples. When his fellow disciples and bishops were urging him, he said, “Fast with me for the three days beginning today, and whatever will have been revealed to us, let us recount it with each other.” On that very night it was revealed to the Apostle Andrew that all the things they had recalled to mind, John should write them all in his own name. And therefore while various points are taught in the different books of the Gospels, there is no difference to the faith of believers; for in all of them all things are spoken under the one guiding Spirit, whether concerning the nativity, the passion, the resurrection,

conversation with His disciples, or His two advents, the first of which was in the humiliation of rejection and is already past, and the second in the glory of royal power, which is yet to be. It is no wonder, then, that John constantly returns to these things even in his Epistles, saying of himself, "What we have seen with our eyes and have heard with our ears and what our hands have touched, these things have we written to you (1)." And thus he professes that he is not only the eye-witness but also the hearer, and moreover, also the writer of all the marvels of the Lord as they happened (2). The Acts of the Apostles, however, were written by Luke in one book addressed to the most excellent Theophilus; and he makes it clear that these events took place in his presence, for he omits the passion of Peter, as also the journey of Paul when he went from the city to Spain. The Epistles of Paul, however, for those who wish to understand the matter, indicate of themselves from what place (4) and for what cause they were sent. First of all he wrote to the Corinthians, to check schismatic opinions, then afterwards a second; to the Galatians about circumcision; to the Romans, however, at some length, about the order of Scriptures, and also to show that Christ is foremost in them (5). It is [not] necessary for us to discuss them separately, since the blessed Apostle Paul himself followed the order of his predecessor, John, and wrote to only seven Churches by name. They are, in this order: first, to the Corinthians; second to the Ephesians; third, to the Philippians; fourth, to the Colossians; fifth to the Galatians; sixth, to the Thessalonians, seventh, to the Romans. And indeed, although he writes again to the Corinthians and to the Thessalonians for their correction, nevertheless it is shown that there is one Church spread abroad through the whole world; for John, too, in the Apocalypse though he writes to only seven Churches, yet

speaks to all. Besides these, there is one to Philemon, and one to Titus, and two to Timothy, in affection and love, but nevertheless regarded as holy in the Catholic Church, in the ordering of churchly discipline (6). There is also circulated one to the Laodiceans and another to the Alexandrians, forged under the name of Paul, in regard to the heresy of Marcion; and there are several others which cannot be received by the Church, for it is not suitable that gall be mixed with honey. The Epistle of Jude, indeed, and the two ascribed to John, are received by the Catholic Church (7). Both the Wisdom written by the friends of Solomon in his honor, and the Apocalypse of John and that of Peter we receive, which last, however, some of us do not wish to read in church. *The Shepherd*, moreover, was written by Hermas quite recently in our time, in the city of Rome, while his brother, Bishop Pius (8), sat in the chair of the Church of the city of Rome; and, therefore, it too should certainly be read. But it cannot be read publicly to the people in church, for it is neither among the Prophets, whose number is complete to the end of time, nor among the Apostles. Of Arsinous, also called Valentine, and of Miltiades, we receive nothing at all. Those also who wrote the new book of psalms for Marcion, together with Basilides, the founder of the Asian Cataphrygians.”

iv) **Irenaeus**—(did not know Philemon, James, 2 Peter, 2 & 3 John, and Revelation).

v) **Clement of Alexandria**—(not James, 2 Peter, and 3 John).

(c) **Period of Completion (303–397 A.D.).**

i) **Eusebius (263–340)** wrote of the emerging recognition of the canon (*Ecclesiastical History*, 3, 3, 1): There is but one Epistle of Peter agreed upon, that called his first; and the ancient presbyters used it as

unquestioned in their own writings. We have determined, indeed, that the alleged second is not canonical; but nevertheless, since it has appeared useful to many, it is studied with the other Scriptures. [2] On the other hand, as for the Acts attributed to him, and the Gospel bearing his name, and the Preaching said to be his, and the so-called Apocalypse, we know nothing at all of their having been handed down among Catholics, for no ecclesiastical author among the ancients nor of our own time has made use of their testimonies . . . [4] So much, then, for the works attributed to Peter, of which I recognize only one Epistle as genuine and agreed upon by the ancient presbyters. [5] The fourteen of Paul are obvious and certain; but wait, it is not right to ignore that some have disputed the Epistle to the Hebrews, saying that it was rejected by the Church at Rome as not being by Paul.”

(*Ecclesiastical History*, 3, 25, 1): “At the present point it seems reasonable to recapitulate the writings of the New Testament which have been mentioned. The holy quaternion of the Gospels should be put in the first place; and following them, that writing called the Acts of the Apostles. [2] After this must be reckoned the Epistles of Paul. Following these, there is the Epistle of John, called the first; and likewise to be acknowledged is the Epistle of Peter. Placed after these, if it seems desirable, is the Apocalypse of John, the arguments concerning which we will examine at the proper time. These, then, are the recognized books. [3] Among the disputed books, which are nevertheless known to most, there are extant the Epistles said to be of James, and of Jude, and the second of Peter; and the second and third attributed to John, whether they happen to be by the Evangelist, or by someone else having that same name. [4] Among the spurious writings must be reckoned the Acts of Paul, the writing called *The Shepherd*, the

Apocalypse of Peter, and in addition to these, the Epistle attributed to Barnabas, and the so-called *Teachings of the Apostles* (9); and too, as I said, the Apocalypse of John, if it so be judged. For, as I said, some reject it, while others include it among the recognized books.”

- ii) **Council of Laodicea (363).** Canon 60 reads as follows: These are the books of the Old Testament which ought to be read: 1. Genesis of the World; 2. Exodus from Egypt; 3. Leviticus; 4. Numbers; 5. Deuteronomy; 6. Jesus of Nave; 7. Judges, Ruth; 8. Esther; 9. First and Second of Kingdoms; 10. Third and Fourth of Kingdoms; 11. First and Second of Paralipomenon; 12. First and Second Esdras; 13. Book of One Hundred and Fifty Psalms; 14. Proverbs of Solomon; 15. Ecclesiastes; 16. Song of Songs; 17. Job; 18. Twelve Prophets; 19. Isaías; 20. Jeremias and Baruch, Lamentations and Letters (22); 21. Ezechiel; 22. Daniel.

These are the books of the New Testament: the four Gospels, according to Matthew, according to Mark, according to Luke, and according to John. The Acts of the Apostles. The seven Catholic Epistles, as follows: one of James, two of Peter, three of John, one of Jude. The fourteen Epistles of Paul: one to the Romans, two to the Corinthians, one to the Galatians, one to the Ephesians, one to the Philippians, one to the Colossians, two to the Thessalonians, one to the Hebrews, two to Timothy, one to Titus, one to Philemon (23).”

- iii) **Easter Letter of Athanasius (367).** “The Old Testament, then, consists of all together twenty-two books in number, — which also, I have heard, is traditionally the number of written characters used by the Hebrews, — the order of which, and the name of each, being as follows: first, there is

Genesis; then Exodus; then Leviticus; and after this is Numbers; and then Deuteronomy; and following these is Jesus son of Nave; and Judges; and after this is Ruth; and again, following after these are four books of Kingdoms, of which the first and second are counted as one, and the third and fourth likewise as one; and after these there is a first and second of Paralipomenon, likewise counted as one; then Esdras (1), a first and second in one; and after this is a book of Psalms; and then one of Proverbs; then Ecclesiastes; and Song of Songs; and besides these, there is Job; and then the Prophets, the twelve counted as one book; then Isaias; Jeremias, and along with it, Baruch, Lamentations, and the Letter; and after these, Ezechiel; and Daniel. It is of these so far enumerated that the Old Testament consists (2).

Again, it is not tiresome to speak of the New (3). There are the four Gospels: according to Matthew; according to Mark; according to Luke; and according to John; and then, after these, the Acts of the Apostles; and the seven Epistles of the Apostles, called Catholic, which are: one of James, two of Peter; then three of John; and after these, one of Jude; in addition to these the fourteen Epistles of the Apostle Paul, written in this order: first, to the Romans; then two to the Corinthians; and after these, to the Galatians; and then to the Ephesians; then to the Philippians; and then to the Colossians; and two to the Thessalonians; and the one to the Hebrews (4); and then two to Timothy; and one to Titus; and the last, the one to Philemon; and then there is the Apocalypse of John.

These are the fountains of salvation at which they who thirst may be satisfied with the words they contain. Only in these is the teaching of piety proclaimed (5). Let no man add to these, nor take away from them. It

was in respect to these that the Lord shamed the Sadducees when He said, “You err, because you do not know the Scriptures (6).” And He spoke in reproof of the Jews, saying, “Search the Scriptures, for it is they that bear witness to Me (7).”

For the sake of greater clarity, I must necessarily add this remark also: there are other books besides the aforementioned, which, however, are not canonical. Yet, they have been designated by the Fathers to be read by those who join us and who wish to be instructed in the word of piety: the Wisdom of Solomon; and the Wisdom of Sirach (8); and Esther; and Judith; and Tobias; and the Teaching attributed to the Apostles (9); and the Shepherd (10). Those which I mentioned earlier, beloved, are included in the canon, while these latter are but recommended for reading. No mention whatever need be made of the Apocrypha (11), which are the inventions of heretics who write them as they choose, decorating them with a freely bestowed antiquity, so that they may offer them as ancient writings, and thus have occasion, through the use of them, to cheat guileless people.”

iv) The decree of Damasus I, Bishop of Rome (382).

Canon 2: “It is likewise decreed: Now, indeed, we must treat of the divine Scriptures: what the universal Catholic (15) Church accepts and what she must shun.

The list of the Old Testament begins: Genesis, one book; Exodus, one book; Leviticus, one book; Numbers, one book; Deuteronomy, one book; Jesus nave, one book; of Judges, one book; Ruth, one book; of Kings, four books; Paralipomenon, two books; One Hundred and Fifty Psalms, one book; of Solomon, three books: Proverbs, one book; Ecclesiastes, one book; Canticle

of Canticles, one book; likewise, Wisdom, one book; Ecclesiasticus, one book.

Likewise, the list of the Prophets: Isaias, one book; Jeremias, one book, along with Cinoth, that is, his Lamentations; Ezechiel, one book; Daniel, one book; Osee, one book; Amos, one book; Micheas, one book; Joel, one book; Abdias, one book; Jonas, one book; Nahum, one book; Habacuc, one book; Sophonias, one book; Aggeus, one book; Zacharias, one book; Malachias, one book.

Likewise, the list of histories: Job, one book; Tomas, one book; Esdras, two books; Esther, one book; Judith, one book; of Maccabees, two books.

Likewise, the list of the Scriptures of the New and Eternal Testament, which the holy and Catholic Church receives: of the Gospels, one book according to Matthew, one book according to Mark, one book according to Luke; one book according to John. The Epistles of the Apostle Paul, fourteen in number: one to the Romans, two to the Corinthians, one to the Ephesians, two to the Thessalonians, one to the Galatians, one to the Philippians, one to the Colossians, two to Timothy, one to Titus, one to Philemon, one to the Hebrews.

Likewise, the book of the Apocalypse of John. And the Acts of the Apostles, one book.

Likewise, the canonical Epistles, seven in number: of the Apostle Peter, two Epistles; of the Apostle James, one Epistle; of the Apostle John, one Epistle; of the other John, a Presbyter, two Epistles; of the Apostle Jude the Zealot, one Epistle. Thus concludes the canon of the New Testament.”

v) Council of Carthage (397).

Simply approved what was already an accomplished reality.

vi) Council of Hippo (419).

Accepted previous determinations of the canon.