

MODUL II – ISTORIA APOLOGETICII

Lectia 2 - PERIOADA PATRISTICA (AD 100-600)

Partenerii de dialog în apologetică: iudeii, gnosticii, imperiul și filosofia elenistă, ereziile

Personaje principale

Iustin Martirul și Irineu de Lyon – Filosofie și anti-gnosticism

Antenagora din Atena și Tertullian din Cartagina – Filosofie, creștinism și apologetică africană

Origen și Atanasie din Alexandria – Inovație, Logos și rațiunea credinței

Augustin de Hippo – Credință și rațiune

Dezvoltarea apologeticii și schimbările dinăuntru și dinafara Bisericii

Convertiți

Apărarea credinței, adică apologetica, a reflectat în primele secole ale Bisericii, schimbările dinăuntru și din afara bisericii. Pe deoparte, apăreau noi convertiți doritori să cunoască, să prezinte și să apere evanghelia. Unii dintre ei erau bine educați și cu multe conexiuni în lumea intelectuală. Ei erau plini de zel și la nivel intelectual, și practic. Iustin afirma, de exemplu: “Oricine poate să mărturisească adevărul, dar nu îl și practică, va fi condamnat de Dumnezeu.”¹

Scientifically educated men were entering the Church—men who felt the ability, the need, and the urge to come to grips with the pagan philosophy they had once espoused, to justify the radical change in their manner of life, to give a reason for the faith that was in them. This urge to speak out was admirably phrased by Justin: “Whoever can speak out the truth and fails to do so shall be condemned by God.”¹

Filosoși

Atacurile asupra creștinilor nu au mai venit din partea mulțimii întărâtate, ca în Faptele Apostolilor, ci din partea filosofilor educați care denigrău divinitatea lui Hristos și coerența, sau eficiența teologiei creștine.

Attacks on Christianity were no longer a mere matter of mob ignorance. Empty rumors of atheism, immorality, and Thyestean banquets began to yield to more serious and sophisticated charges. From the second through the fourth centuries the assault became increasingly intellectual, and Christians in response felt the need to give a more carefully reasoned justification for their faith.

Împărați

Motivați de filosofii și preoții păgâni, sau de administrație și military, unii împărați au încurajat persecutarea creștinilor, dar nu foarte hotărâți, deoarece baza legală sau filosofică era precară. A rămas celebră direcția dată de Traian, care îl sfătua pe Pliniu cel Tânăr, să îi pedepsească pe creștini dacă sunt prinși și dovediți, dar să nu se străduiască prea tare să îi urmărească și să-i identifice, și să îi prindă.

Under the Antonines, from Trajan to Commodus, the Church continued to experience severe persecutions the legal basis for which was not entirely clear. The emperors, who had ultimate responsibility for the treatment of Christians, were in some cases fair-minded persons, prepared to listen to rational argument. This gave the Christians reason to hope that by presenting their case in the best light they might win civil tolerance and perhaps even persuade their secular rulers to embrace the faith. Many of the apologies were therefore addressed to emperors and other civil magistrates.

Iudeii

Iudeii au continuat să îi acuze pe creștini, atâta vreme cât oamenii nu îi cunoșteau și nu erau lămuriți ce reprezintă. Iudaismul era o religie licită, recunoscută, în timp ce creștinii puteau fi orice: mistici, răzvrățiți, eretici, periculoși și violenți, etc.

Some of the Jews outside the Church were eager to slander Christians and to denounce them to the civil authorities. The Christians sought to refute these charges and in some cases to respond in kind. As in New Testament times, they wished to persuade the Jews that Jesus Christ was the fulfillment of the hopes of ancient Israel. To those Judeo-Christians who attempted to combine faith in Christ with observance of the Mosaic Law, including the Levitical worship in the Temple, the Christians sought to demonstrate that Christ had set His faithful free from the obligations of the Old Covenant.

Lucrările și demersurile apologetic au început să se adune mai ales în categorii principale: **apologii politice**, menite să câștige toleranță civilă și politică, și **apologii religioase**, menite să dezbată probleme teologice și să câștige noi convertiți.² Ultima categorie avea și ea două sub-categorii: apologetic religioase îndreptate spre păgâni și cele îndreptate spre iudei. Exista, bineînțeles, și o categorie mixtă, care îmbina caracteristicile anti-păgâne și anti-iudaice.

Din punct de vedere al stilului de dezbatere, creștinii au folosit tipurile de dezbatere găsite la discuțiile dintre școlile filosofice grecești, între adepții lui Platon și ai lui Aristotel, sau între filosofii stoici și cei epicurieni, sau cele anterioare dintre evrei și păgâni. Acestea din urmă au fost în mod deosebit folosite de creștinii pentru că aveau ca subiecte idolatria și închinarea la un singur Dumnezeu suprem și creator sau puneau în valoare principiile etice superioare ale Legii lui Moise.

Schematically, the works of the apologists can be divided into two main categories: political apologies, designed to win civil tolerance, and religious apologies, intended to win new converts to the faith.²

The religious apologies can in turn be divided into those aimed at paganism and those aimed at Judaism. While a few of the apologies fall clearly into one or another of these categories, many cut across all such schematic divisions.

From a literary point of view the controversial literature of the Christians naturally followed the patterns previously worked out on Hellenistic soil in encounters between Platonists and Aristotelians, between Stoics and Epicureans, and between Jews and pagans. Apologies and exhortations, dialogues and diatribes had been in use since the time of Plato and Aristotle.³ Of special value as models for Christian apologetic were the assaults by the philosophers on polytheism and idolatry, and the efforts by Hellenistic Jews to establish the superiority of the Mosaic revelation over pagan wisdom.

Bazele iudaice și grecești ale discuțiilor apologetice: greci și iudei, Atena și Alexandria, apoi Roma

Învățății greci care se opuneau superstițiilor idolatriei

Între învățății păgâni greci cu care s-a interacționat în această perioadă, se numără stoical Zeno (sec. 3 îH), Apollodor din Atena (sec. 2 îH), filosoful Carneades (sec. 2 îH) și filosoful epicurean Philodemus (sec. 1 îH). Cartea apocrifă Înțelepciunea lui Solomon, compusă probabil de un evreu din Alexandria în sec 2 îH, sau sec. 1 îH, și prezentă în edițiile mai târzii ale Septuagintei, a fost folosită în această privință prin argumentele ei împotriva nebulii idolatriei (mai ales cap. 14).

Among the pagan opponents of superstitious religion particular mention should be made of the Stoics Zeno (late third century B.C.) and Apollodorus of Athens (second century B.C.) the Academic philosopher Carneades (second century B.C.), and the Epicurean Philodemus (first century B.C.). The Wisdom of Solomon, composed by a Hellenistic Jew, probably in Alexandria during the second half of the first century B.C., takes over some of the same arguments to expose the folly of idolatry (see especially chap. 14).

Centrul teologic și filosofic din Alexandria

În acest context, un centru foarte important al dezvoltării apologeticii timpurii a fost Alexandria, pentru că aici deja acționa un grup puternic de apologeți iudei împotriva păgânismului. Biblioteca orașului era mare, cea mai mare din antichitate și a funcționat ca un centru major de cultură până când în secolul 7 a fost distrusă de musulmani (640 dH, califul Omar i-a dat foc). Aici s-a dezvoltat un patriarhat puternic care susținea că este continuatorul lucrării misionare a evanghelistului Marcu, și aici s-a dezvoltat școala alegorică (Chiril, Clement, Origene, etc). Școala complementară, de tip analiză istorică, se afla la Antiochia.

It was at Alexandria in the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C. that the Jews effected the richest synthesis between Mosaic religion and Hellenistic philosophy.

Philo, who wrote at Alexandria in the first half of the first century A.D., tried to show in his voluminous commentaries on the Pentateuch that Moses had received by divine revelation a wisdom more certain and sublime than the highest speculations of the philosophers. By allegorical methods of exegesis he sought to harmonize the Jewish Scriptures with the fruits of Hellenistic speculation.

The Alexandrian Jews, like the Christians of the next few centuries, had to face the problem how the pagan sages had achieved such high insights without apparent dependence on divine revelation. To this they gave, as Harry A. Wolfson⁴ has shown, three characteristic answers.

Sometimes they said that the Greek philosophers actually depended upon Moses. This contention, which seems to go back to the Jewish Peripatetic Aristobulus (second century B.C.) recurs in certain

passages in which Philo accuses Heraclitus of having snatched his theory of the opposites from Moses “like a thief” and maintains that the Greek legislators “copied” the laws of Moses. In a similar vein, the fourth book of Maccabees asserts that Eleazar and his brothers were fortified by the law of reason, which was derived from the Mosaic Law.

In other passages the Jewish apologists, without insisting on actual derivation, are content to argue that Hebrew wisdom is at least more ancient than that of the Gentiles.

Thus Philo, according to Wolfson⁵ sometimes says merely that Moses anticipated the discoveries of the Greek philosophers. Josephus, in his apologetic work *Against Apion* (about A.D. 93-95), insists strongly on the antiquity of the institutions of the Jews.

Third, the Jewish apologists occasionally argue that philosophy was a special gift of God to the Greeks, enabling them to discover by reason what was made known to the Jews by revelation. “It is heaven”, writes Philo, “which has showered philosophy upon us; it is the human mind which has received it, but it is sight which as guide has brought the two together.”⁶ Some Jewish apologists, such as Josephus, argued from prophecies allegedly uttered by pagan sibyls. These three solutions regarding the relation between revelation and philosophy will reappear in the apologetics of the Greek Fathers.

Apologeți din sec. 2

Apologeți din sec. 2: Quadratus, Aristides din Athena, și Aristo din Pella, Athenagoras din Atena, Justin Martirul, Irineu din Lyon.

Intro: Predicarea lui Petru și Quadratus

Two of the earliest Christian apologies are unfortunately known to scholars only from fragments quoted by other authors. One of these, the apocryphal *Preaching of Peter*, exalts biblical monotheism and ridicules idolatry in much the same style as do the pagan philosophers and the Jewish polemicists already mentioned.⁷ T

he other, the apology addressed by Quadratus to the Emperor Hadrian in A.D. 125, survives, it would appear, only in a single sentence quoted in Eusebius’s *History of the Church* (4.3.1-2).⁸ This fragment speaks of Jesus’s miracles and mentions that some of the persons cured by Him or raised by Him from the dead are still alive. This point is of interest because, generally speaking, the miracles of Jesus occupy a very subordinate place in the apologetics of the first three centuries. The Christians did not want their faith confused with pagan thaumaturgy.

Aristides din Atena

Înainte de Iustin, cel mai important filosof creștin a fost atenianul Aristides. A scris o Apologie, la cum a făcut și Quadratus, către împăratul Hadrian, 125 dH. Religie comparată : barbari, greci, egipteni, evrei și creștini.

The most important apologist prior to Justin is unquestionably the Athenian philosopher Aristides, whose brief *Apology*,⁹ like that of Quadratus, was addressed to the Emperor Hadrian about 125. An early excursion into comparative religion, this work divides all mankind into five categories: barbarians, Greeks, Egyptians, Jews, and Christians.

The barbarians, says the author, are in error because they adore the inanimate elements and images made in honor of these, even though it is evident to reason that the elements are moved by forces that rule over them and thus cannot be divine.

The Greeks introduce imaginary and fictitious gods, whose immoral conduct deprives them of any title to worship.

The Egyptians, being more stupid than other men, adore plants, herbs, reptiles, and quadrupeds. Some of them even worship dumb idols.

The Jews are superior to all previously mentioned because they adore the one God and imitate His magnanimity by practicing works of mercy, but their high principles are belied by their superstitious observances, which seem to rest on the assumption that God stands in need of gifts and sacrifices.

The Christians, finally, surpass all others because they worship the one true God in uprightness, as is attested by the purity and modesty of their lives. In conformity with their faith, Christians tell the truth, show mutual love, and have compassion even for their enemies.

Notwithstanding its brevity, Aristides's Apology deserves high respect for its clarity and firmness of argument. By placing primary emphasis on the good moral lives of Christians, including their purity and charity, rather than the biblical miracles, this work lays the basis for some of the most successful apologetics of the next few centuries.

Justin Martirul

The two Apologies¹⁰ composed at Rome by Justin Martyr, the first about A.D. 150, the other between 155 and 160, are primarily concerned with winning civil toleration for Christians.

The First Apology, addressed to the Emperors Antoninus Pius and Lucius Commodus, argues in the name of fair play that Christians should not be condemned on the basis of their name alone. Just as Hadrian in his Rescript to the Proconsul of Asia (about A.D. 125) had urged that the charges against Christians should be impartially investigated, so now, Justin argues, civil authorities should take pains to see whether in fact the Christian faith is destructive of civic loyalty. After setting forth in some detail the beliefs and practices of the Christians, Justin draws the conclusion that even if the Christians should be judged foolish and misguided, at least they have done nothing worthy of the death penalty.

In his **Second Apology** Justin takes up again many of the same themes, seeking to defend his fellow religionists against a new wave of unjust condemnations. In some important sections of this work Justin attempts to *relate Christianity to pagan philosophy*, arguing that the philosophers achieved by reason many valid insights that Christians believe on the strength of divine revelation; but the philosophers, having only partial knowledge, fell into many errors and contradictions.

In both Apologies Justin propounds his famous thesis that the philosophers, being enlightened by the divine Logos, were in some sense Christians without knowing it.¹¹

From Justin comes the only extant second-century apology addressed to the Jews.

His *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*¹² was composed some time after the First Apology, and perhaps after the second.

The first eight chapters of this Dialogue are precious for their account of Justin's own conversion from paganism to Christianity, largely as a result of his study of the Old Testament Prophets.

In later chapters Justin attempts to prove from numerous scriptural prophecies the messiahship and divinity of Jesus Christ. He also answers various Jewish objections against Christianity.

To the charge that the Christians are unfaithful to the Mosaic Law, Justin replies that the Old Law has been abrogated by the New Testament and that only the Christians are in a position to interpret the Hebrew Scriptures correctly.

In the final chapters of the Dialogue Justin develops the idea that the Church is the new Israel and urges the Jews to repent of their obstinacy. Notwithstanding the apparent harshness of some of his

statements, Justin avoids the rude anti-Semitism of some later apologists. At the end of the Dialogue he and Trypho take leave of each other with a friendly exchange of farewells.

If for no other reason than the sheer bulk of his achievement, Justin is the most important second-century apologist. A man of noble and sincere character, he commands respect for his frank and open esteem for pagan philosophers and Jewish theologians. His style of writing is unfortunately disorderly and prolix. Many of his historical and exegetical arguments, moreover, fail to stand up under critical scrutiny.

Sometimes included in the corpus of Justin's works are several apologetical pieces written by others. The most notable of these, the *Cohortatio ad graecos* (Exhortation to the Greeks)¹³ is an eloquent appeal for conversion, probably composed in the third century. Unlike Justin, the author finds nothing commendable in the religion or philosophy of the Greeks. After considering in outline the religious views of the philosophers, he concludes that their sole utility is to have pointed out one another's errors. Whatever traits of authentic monotheism are to be found in Plato and others should be attributed, according to this apologist, to the influence of Moses, whose revelations were transmitted to the Greeks through the Egyptians. For fear of hemlock, he contends, Plato did not dare admit the true source of his ideas.

Likewise immoderately hostile to Greek religion and philosophy is the pseudo-Justinian *Oratio ad graecos* (Discourse to the Greeks),¹⁴ a pamphlet written by some zealous convert probably in the period between 150 and 225.

Theophilus din Antiohia

More akin to Tatian in spirit, but less skillful in argument, was the Syrian bishop of Antioch, Theophilus, who composed shortly after 180 an appeal to his friend *Autolyucus* to become a Christian, called *Ad Autolycum*.¹⁹ Like many philosopher-converts of his time Theophilus was much impressed by the wisdom of Moses and especially by the Genesis account of the creation, which he takes to be the only reliable guide to the origins of the universe. His insistence on the extreme antiquity of the Mosaic revelation and on the supposedly prophetic oracles of the Sybils shows the extent to which he was a victim of the illusions of his day. If the *Ad Autolycum* has any value for the modern reader, this is to be found in its appeal to what a later age would call the logic of the heart. God, says Theophilus, is seen by those whose souls are open to the light of the Spirit; He is hidden to those who dwell in the darkness of sin. "Show me what manner of man you are, and I will show you my God" (chap. 2).

In the opinion of many critics, the pearl of early Christian apologetics is the brief *Letter to Diognetus*²⁰, a work of much debated authorship and date.

Today most scholars agree that it belongs to the period from 120 to 210. A few, influenced by Paulus Andriessen, identify it with the *lost apology of Quadratus* (about 125),²¹ but it seems hardly likely that Quadratus would address Hadrian under the pseudonym of Diognetus, nor does the sentence quoted by Eusebius appear in the extant text of the Letter to Diognetus. In his edition of this work²² Henri-Irenee Marrou suggests hesitantly that the author may have been Pantaenus, the Sicilian convert to Christianity who was head of the catechetical school of Alexandria from 180 to about 199. If so, the addressee might well be the equestrian procurator, Claudius Diognetus.

The letter aims to respond to three questions put to the author by Diognetus.

Q1: What sort of cult is Christianity to enable its adherents to spurn pagan gods and Jewish superstitions?

Q2: What is the secret of the Christians' affectionate love for one another?

Q3: And why did the new religion come into existence so late in the world's history?

After a somewhat stereotyped exposure of the folly of idol worship and the formalism of Jewish observance, the author presents a striking description of the Christians as a new race of men, everywhere at home and everywhere strangers. Christians are to the world, says the author, what the soul is to the body—a comparison he then develops in a justly famous paragraph. Next he considers the source of the exceptional serenity and courage of Christians, namely the surpassing goodness of God, who has given His own Son, the guiltless one, in order that the guilty might be freed from condemnation. The final two chapters (11-12) are somewhat different in thought and style. Presumably they come from another hand.

More the preacher than the apologist, the author of the Diognetus was a brilliant rhetorician who painted an appealing picture of Christian faith and life. His portrait, even if idealized, undoubtedly had a basis in the Church as he and his contemporaries experienced it. Although some modern critics look upon this epistle as showy and artificial, it remains one of the most stirring presentations of the Christian ideal.

Athenagora din Atena

Profesor la Alexandria, sub Hadrian și Antoninus. Clement a fost studentul său. A lucrat în mediu ostil față de creștini, un mediu dominat de scrierile lui Celsus. A fost platonist, ca orientare, și a încercat să găsească legături între creștini și autorii antici (Euripides, Platon, Aristotel, etc.).

Pledoarie pentru creștini, Despre învierea din morți.

Distrugeți-ne pe toți, rădăcini și ramuri, dacă ne facem vinovați de violență... (Pledoarie)

It is with relief that one turns from these narrow diatribes to the moderate and courteous work of Athenagoras of Athens, whom Johannes Quasten calls "unquestionably the most eloquent of the early Christian apologists".¹⁶

His *Embassy (or Supplication - Cerere - Pledoarie) for the Christians*¹⁷, *Pledoarie pentru creștini*, dedicated to the two Emperors Lucius Aurelius **Commodus** (reigned 161—180) and **Marcus Aurelius** (reigned 180—192), is essentially a plea for civil toleration. After an introduction pointing out the great variety of religious doctrines tolerated within the Empire, and appealing to the emperors' sense of justice, Athenagoras takes up, first, the charge that the Christians are atheists and, next, the accusation that they practice immorality.

Athenagoras demonstrates that Christians are not atheists by showing that their idea of God is more exalted and consequently more divine than anything to which the pagans are able to attain. Even the polytheists, he adds, are atheists with regard to one another's gods.

On philosophical grounds, moreover, it is evident that there cannot be a plurality of gods.

As regards the charges of cannibalism and promiscuity that have been malignantly laid at the door of Christians, he replies that Christians are bound by their religion to very strict standards of chastity and to a respect for human life that extends even to unborn infants, thus forbidding abortion.

It is quite evident, he concludes, that Christians obey the laws of the Empire and pray for its peace and prosperity.

Also of apologetical interest is Athenagoras's *On the Resurrection of the Dead*,¹⁸ but since it deals with only this one doctrine rather than with Christianity in general it may be omitted from this survey.

Concluzii la secolul 2

The work of the second-century apologists, surveyed in the preceding pages, reflects the vigor and the inconsistencies of youth. The writers, none of them fully master of his subject, are alternately defensive and aggressive toward adversaries. In most cases they make a strong case for religious tolerance. This they do, in the first place, by showing that

Christians, far from being atheists, propose a more exalted notion of God than the other religions tolerated in the Empire.

Second, they convincingly refute the charges that Christians are guilty of cannibalism and sexual promiscuity. Finally, they are on solid ground in contending that, even though one might insist that Christian teaching is absurd, the new religion contains nothing criminal or detrimental to the State.

As arguments for conversion from paganism, these authors generally show the weaknesses in pagan mythological theology and tellingly expose the immoralities fostered by paganism. They go on to demonstrate how the more elevated concept of God in the Bible inspires remarkable continence, charity, and courage on the part of the faithful. They are able to point triumphantly to the unity of Christians as a living sign of the cohesive power of the gospel. In autobiographical passages authors such as Justin and Tatian movingly indicate the motives that led to their own conversion. These personal testimonies are still impressive.

When these authors seek to demonstrate the authenticity of the biblical revelation, they fall into certain excesses, which are scarcely surprising since they wrote before the dawn of critical history. Relying too blindly on the claims of late Jewish apologetic, as found, for example, in Philo and Josephus, they exaggerate the antiquity of the Bible. When they insist on the perfect accord among the biblical authors, they gloss over important differences between mutually opposed traditions. They speak of Scripture as though it were totally written by Prophets and interpret prophetic inspiration too much on the model of mantic possession, as described, for example, in the *Meno* of Plato.

These early apologists, moreover, lack any consistent view of the value of classical culture, as found at its best in their favorite author, Plato.²³ Too often they approach this question with the tactics of debaters. Their first wall of defense is to ridicule the Greek heritage, but their second wall is to claim for biblical religion all the genuine value that is to be found in

classicism. This they do by gratuitously postulating—again under influence of the Jewish apologists—that the Greeks had secretly pillaged from the writings of Moses. Another convenient device is to allege that God has raised up prophets among the Gentiles—a hypothesis that seemed to be confirmed by the supposed prophecies of the Sibyls (although subsequent scholarship has made it clear that the Sibylline oracles on which Jewish and Christian apologists depended were in fact interpolations).

Finally, they sometimes have recourse, as does Justin, to the idea that even the pagan philosophers were enlightened by the divine Logos. This allows Justin, for instance, to claim the authentic wisdom in these writers for Christianity, while he attributes their errors to the lack of a full presence of the Logos in their midst.

Justin's doctrine of the universal Logos was to have an important future in helping theologians from Clement and Origen to Paul Tillich and Karl Rahner to relate Christianity to the other religions, but in Justin's hands it is as yet little more than a defensive apologetical maneuver. – Plus mănăstiri în Bucovina, Sucevița, Voroneț

In their arguments against the Jews the apologists rely chiefly on the alleged Old Testament prophecies of Christ. The modern reader, accustomed to more rigorous norms of exegesis, is likely to be put off by the apologists' neglect of the primary literal meaning of these texts. Sometimes their argument hinges on translations such as the Septuagint. When the Hebrew text does not agree, they accuse the rabbis of having mutilated the text out of hostility toward Christians.

In contending that the Jews are superstitious in their observance of the works of the Law, the apologists may have a valid point. But they move too rapidly from this to a rejection of Judaism, without sufficiently considering whether the Hebrew faith might be capable of being corrected.

The contemporary Christian can scarcely avoid surprise at the extent to which the second-century apologists rely on Moses and the Prophets as sources of their own faith. This is perhaps due to their indebtedness to Jewish apologetics against the pagans. From a modern point of view, it seems that these authors make too little of the personal character of Jesus. The moral ideals of the Sermon on the Mount are occasionally mentioned, but otherwise there is little emphasis on the doctrine, miracles, and sanctity of Jesus, or even on His Resurrection.

As might be expected at this early period, the apologists do not have any clear theory of the relations between reason and revelation, or between Christianity and the other religions. They compare religions with a view to ascertaining which is better than the others, but they do not seek to prove the validity of religion itself or ask to what extent the diverse religions might all be bearers of divine truth. But to expect an adequate treatment of such subtle and profound questions at a time when the Church has not yet emerged from the catacombs would show a lack of historical sense. One should rather be grateful that writers such as Aristides and Justin move as far as they do toward the threshold of these questions.

Apologeții greci alexandrini din sec. 2-3

Just as Alexandria was the city where Judaism became at home in the Hellenistic world, so it was providentially destined to be the place where Christian theology achieved maturity by entering into full communion with the heritage of Greek philosophy. The first head of the catechetical school, according to some scholars, was Athenagoras of Athens, whose irenic apologetics have already been mentioned. Pantaenus the Sicilian, who has been mentioned also, added prestige to the school. With his successors, Clement and Origen, it became the most brilliant theological center of the Christian world in the third century.

Clement din Alexandria (c. 150—c. 214)

Clement of Alexandria (c. 150—c. 214), probably an Athenian by birth, was converted to Christianity and traveled to many lands in search of religious instruction.²⁴ At length he settled at Alexandria, where he put himself at the feet of Pantaenus, whom he succeeded as head of the school about 200.

His principal works comprise the trilogy: the *Protrepticus* (**Converter**), the *Paedagogus* (**Tutor**), and the *Stromata* (**Miscellanies, or, literally, Carpets – Diverse, Popouri, Varia, Strânse – culese – colecție**). The last of these probably consists of fragments of a projected work, the *Didascalus* (**Instructor**)=**Stromata**. These works deal with Christ in His threefold relationship to the believer.

First Christ converts, then He disciplines, and finally He imparts wisdom.

Protrepticus

For Clement's apologetic one must look mainly to the *Protrepticus*, his exhortation to conversion.²⁵ Its literary form resembles that of Aristotle's *Protrepticus* and of other Greek and Roman productions, including the lost *Hortensius* of Cicero—a work that Clement himself would probably not have known. While his arguments do not greatly differ from those of Justin and other second-century apologists, Clement writes in a far more polished and graceful style, calculated to attract his readers and make them enthusiastic for the following of Christ. Having himself experienced the appeal of Greek mythology, philosophy, and mystery cults, Clement is able to show how all these values are surpassingly fulfilled in Christ, the true mystagogue and the supreme master of wisdom.

In an introductory chapter Clement, capitalizing on the high regard for music in the Greek tradition, praises the wonderful power of music to give peace and strength to the human spirit. Christ, he maintains, is the minstrel who imparts harmony to the universe and makes music to God. As the new Orpheus He tames the souls of men, far more savage than those of the wildest beasts. He is the new song, which, like the canticles of David before Saul, drives out evil spirits and restores health to those disturbed in mind.

In several entertaining chapters Clement then describes the various mystery cults of the Hellenistic world, the mythical stories of the gods, and the excesses of idol worship. From this he concludes that **the true atheists are not the Christians, as charged, but rather pagans**, who worship under the name of God objects that are not divine. Let those in quest of truth learn not to deify the universe but to search for its Creator.

Turning then to Hellenic philosophy and poetry, Clement shows that, while the Greeks were involved in numerous errors, they did receive some glimmerings of truth, which are to be attributed to divine inspiration. But he adds, as Justin did, that not knowing the Word Himself, the Greeks had no sure foothold and were therefore unable to follow through on their best insights.

In two brief chapters Clement goes on to summarize the witness of the Old and New Testaments. These chapters are happily free from the wearisome and unconvincing arguments from fulfilled prophecy that encumber so many of the apologetical treatises so far examined. Clement's Old Testament quotations emphasize the majesty of God and His love for mankind. In his references to the New Testament he makes fruitful use of Paul and the Epistle to the Hebrews to illustrate the transcendent power of the divine Word as it comes to man in Christ. This Word, according to Clement, speaks to all without exception:

The Word was not hidden from any; He is a universal light; He shines upon all men. No one is a Cimmerian in respect to the Word [cf. Odyssey 11.13-16]. Let us hasten to salvation, to the new birth. Let us, who are many, hasten to be gathered together into one love corresponding to the union of the One Being.²⁶

At this point Clement interjects some reflections on the claims of custom and shows how a false conservatism often holds people captive and prevents them from adopting what is new and better. To pass from custom to truth, he argues, is like passing from childhood to maturity. These observations were obviously relevant at a time when the most powerful opposition to Christianity, as shall be seen, was coming from the advocates of antiquity and tradition.

In a climactic chapter Clement then portrays the divine Word as the Sun of Righteousness (Mal 4:2 [=Vg Mal 3:20]) enlightening the whole world. This chapter introduces a final exhortation in which the sincere inquirer is bidden to resist the siren call of pleasure: "Only resolve, and thou hast vanquished destruction; bound to the wood of the cross [cf. Odyssey 12.178], thou shalt live freed of all corruption."²⁷ In a passage replete with echoes from the Dionysiac rites Clement then depicts the Logos as the true hierophant inviting mankind to share in His mysteries.

With Clement, Christian apologetics finds the first of its great masters. No longer does one feel obliged to make allowance for the inevitable crudities and blunders of an uncouth childhood. Clement is at home with his materials and by his genius infuses fresh life into the dry bones of arguments already trite. His work is well ordered, yet not wooden; he combines variety with symmetry. For the modern taste his work may be overloaded with literary allusions and rhetorical conceits, but Clement's discretion and sincerity prevent him from degenerating into aimless artificiality.

He is above all a Christian humanist who moves easily amid the arts and letters of classical civilization, combining Christian piety with the highest values of ancient culture.

If his formal argumentation adds little to what has already been seen in the second-century apologists, Clement contributes a new and better technique of persuasion. By means of a clearer presentation of the Christian fact, viewed in relation to the Hellenistic and Hebrew background, he

illustrates how Christianity is able to fulfill and at the same time correct the religious aspirations and insights at work in human history. Unlike many of his second-century predecessors, Clement focuses on Christ the Incarnate Word, whom he sees at work in the depths of all human souls, leading each and all toward the moment when they can encounter His personal presence and benefit to the full from His divinizing influence.

Origen din Alexandria

The Alexandrian school of apologetics, brought to such great heights by Clement, was to reach its climax with Origen, who succeeded Clement as head of the catechetical school.

Origen was born in Alexandria about 184. While he was still a boy he lost his father to martyrdom. His chief work in life was the study and exposition of Holy Scripture—an occupation that took him deep into textual criticism and exegesis, both literal and spiritual. To equip himself yet better he studied philosophy under Ammonius Saccas, the father of Neoplatonism. About 246, about seven years before his death, he wrote, at the request of a friend and benefactor, a detailed reply to the anti-Christian polemic of Celsus, which had been written about 178.

Before examining Origen's reply, we should briefly consider the **work of Celsus. Entitled the True Doctrine (Alethes Logos)**, it was the most important tract against the Christian faith prior to the time of Porphyry and continued to furnish materials for tracts against Christianity until the nineteenth century.²⁸

Celsus himself was not a deep thinker but rather **an ardent champion of Hellenistic culture** in all its aspects as an ideal to be kept alive. An eclectic Platonist, **Celsus believed in one supreme god and a multitude of local deities as his subordinates.** This belief enabled him to accept all the rituals of national religion without repudiating the monotheism of the philosophers.

By the true doctrine he meant that ancient tradition on which the institutions of Hellenistic society had been built. The Jews, and even more, in his opinion, the Christians, were corrupting the venerable traditions and thereby undermining the structures of society.

From the abundant quotations in Origen's reply one can reconstruct a good portion of Celsus's work, which has unfortunately perished. The book falls into two main parts, in the first of which Celsus objects to Christianity in the person of an imaginary Jew. He alleges that Jesus was born of an adulterous union, that He learned magical arts in Egypt, and that He invented the story of His own virginal conception. The Resurrection of Jesus is held to be either an imposture or a delusion suffered by the Apostles. The fact that Jesus was betrayed by one of His own disciples and suffered death is taken as proof that He could not have been divine. If Jesus had foreseen His own death, Celsus argues, He would have been able to prevent it.

In Part 2 Celsus objects in his own person. The Christians, he argues, demand a **faith not based on examination**, and this can only be an irrational commitment. Further, they shun open debate with the learned. They operate as a secret society and, despising wisdom, seduce the ignorant and the credulous. The Bible is full of childish legends and falls far below the finest achievements of classical history. It falsely teaches that God changes His mind, that He chooses favorites among the human race, and that He manages the whole of creation for the benefit of man alone. The acceptable doctrines of Christianity, such as its ethical teaching and its doctrine of future rewards and punishments, are also professed by the better pagan philosophers. Worship of the one supreme God should not prevent the

peoples of the various nations from also propitiating the lesser deities who are particularly charged with their protection. Instead of separating themselves from the rest of men, Christians should worship the local deities, live according to the customs of their country, and do their part in military and political service.

Origen's reply, known by the title **Contra Celsum**²⁹, is lengthy (more than 500 pages in most editions) and somewhat disordered. After an early section in which he takes up some of the more important questions, he begins to follow the argument of Celsus point by point. Since his answers are meticulously detailed, here no more than a few of his main contentions can be indicated.

In his preface Origen explains that faith is not based on philosophical demonstrations but, as Paul expresses it, on "demonstration of the Spirit and power" (1 Cor 2:4). By this Origen understands the influence of God as it comes to men through prophecies and miracles. Consequently no true believer can allow his faith to be shaken by plausible human arguments. Although there is a risk that some will be weakened in their faith by a refutation of Celsus—as if faith could really rest on human reasons—still this risk must be taken in order to help those who have little or no experience of true faith and who would consequently be misled if Celsus went unanswered.

Taking up the objections in Part 1, Origen begins by asserting that the evident nobility of Jesus's character makes it incredible that He would have invented the story of His own virginal conception in order to avoid the disgrace of illegitimacy. Equally baseless is the idea that Jesus and the Apostles, who laid down their lives for their doctrine, were fraudulent magicians.

Dovezile din istorie ale creștinismului, despre Hristos, nu sunt mai slabe decât cele despre Moise, sau Troia.

Origen continues by asserting that Celsus, in his effort to undermine the historicity of the Bible, inconsistently selects certain facts to provide a basis for his objections and dismisses others as fictions. He uses no principle of selection other than his own prejudices. In asking Christians to demonstrate the historicity of certain incidents, he makes an impossible demand, since there can be no strict proof of the reality of numerous past events—e.g., the Trojan War—that are universally admitted to have occurred. If Celsus were really the Jew in whose name he was objecting, he would admit the historical truth of the stories about Moses, and it would then be easy to convince him about Jesus, who is far more easily known.

To prove to the imaginary Jew that Jesus is the Christ, Origen argues first from the messianic prophecies, then from the miracles of Jesus, and finally from the traces of miraculous power still to be found among Christians, especially when the minds of those who accept the gospel are marvelously filled with peace and joy.

The fact that Jesus suffered and died does not prove that He did not foresee His own betrayal. Even some of the Greek heroes, such as Socrates and Leonides (the Spartan general who gave his life at Thermopylae), submitted to a death that they foresaw and could have escaped. The Resurrection of Jesus could not have been an invention because the disciples devoted themselves to preaching it at the risk of their own lives. Nor was it a fantasy, for daytime hallucinations such as the Resurrection appearances never occur among sane persons. This greatest of miracles was, moreover, predicted in prophecy.

Creștinismul nu este împotriva învățaturii filozofilor, nu este obscurantist. Pavel obiectează în 1 Corinteni și în Romani față de învățătura superficială.

Turning his attention now to Celsus's own objections (Part 2), Origen protests that the **Christian faith is free from all obscurantism**. In principle it would be desirable for all believers to be able to make a personal study of the grounds of faith, but those who have not the leisure to do so must, like the adherents of philosophical schools, rely at least initially on the authority of their teachers. Jesus, who laid down His life for the flock, is a far more trustworthy guide than the founders of the philosophical sects who enjoy so much authority among the pagans. The Christian, while he may be simple and uneducated, does not despise true wisdom. The wisdom against which Paul vituperates is a false, worldly wisdom leading to blindness.

The Mosaic history, according to Origen, far from being childish legend, is more ancient and reliable than the history of the Greeks, who gladly learned from nations older than their own. Celsus misunderstands the Bible in a slavishly literal way when he takes its anthropomorphic statements about God at face value. Unlike the Greeks, whom Celsus so admires, Moses does not tell immoral and incredible tales about the gods. Nowhere does the Bible teach that, for all the favors granted to the Jews, they alone are loved by God. Christians teach that Christ came to save all sinners everywhere. As for the biblical doctrine that all things are made for man, it agrees with sound philosophy, which places man higher in the scale of being than irrational creatures.

The fact that certain Christian doctrines are taught by Greek philosophers is no reason for denying that they are revealed. Plato, among others, was able to discern the "invisible things of God" (cf. Rom 1:20), but neither he nor his followers avoided polytheistic worship. To worship lesser divinities is offensive to God, for He commands all things by His personal providence. The fact that angels may have some share in the government of the universe does not permit man to adore them with divine honors.

Celsus nu are dreptate când crede că întoarcerea imperiului la Hristos ar fi un dezastru.

Celsus errs, finally, in imagining that it would be a disaster if the whole Empire were converted to Christianity. In answer to the true worship and prayer being offered to Him, God would surround the Empire with greater protection and blessings. As it is, Christians do no harm to the State. While refusing to bear arms and to accept certain political offices, they benefit the State by their prayers and by teaching men to live upright lives.

Origen's reply to Celsus indicates, first of all, how he would meet the objections put to him; but incidentally, in the course of his reply, Origen gives certain indications of the grounds of credibility supporting his own faith. In one important passage he asserts that "the evidences of Jesus's divinity are the Churches of people who have been helped, the prophecies spoken about him, the cures which are done in his name, the knowledge and wisdom in Christ, and reason which is to be found in those who know how to advance beyond mere faith, and how to search out the meaning of the divine scriptures" (Contra Celsum 3.33). In addition, Origen often speaks of the moral stature of Christ and of the wonderful moral renewal that takes place in the lives of those who live up to their Christian faith. He also alludes to the rapid propagation of the Christian religion, which Providence has made stronger than all the worldly powers that have sought to destroy it.

The **Contra Celsum** ranks high among the classics of apologetics. Adopting a direct and logical style Origen pursues each argument to its ultimate conclusion. His reflections take him into profound disquisitions on subjects such as the problem of evil, the resurrection of the body, the senses of Scripture, and the functions of angels and demons. He is perhaps the first apologist who seems

prepared to take on any objection that can be urged against the Christian faith, whether from the standpoint of history, of philosophy, or of the natural sciences.

For all its erudition and solidity, the **Contra Celsum** has never been popular reading. Unlike the *Protrepticus* of Clement, it is **not a polished literary achievement**. Following no clear outline of his own, Origen allows the order and emphasis to be chiefly dictated by Celsus's diatribe. Once Celsus's work was lost, Origen's reply became hard to follow. To some extent, also, the objections of Celsus became dated as **Middle Platonism gave way to Neoplatonism** in the latter part of the third century. **Many of Origen's arguments are too much ad hominem to be serviceable against objections raised from other quarters.**

Clement and Origen between them mark the decisive epoch when Christian apologetics achieves maturity. No longer pleading for mere toleration, whether political or intellectual, they launch a vigorous counteroffensive. Having mastered the full range of pagan philosophy and letters, they can speak as authorities in their own right. While continuing to make use of certain arguments borrowed from Platonic and Stoic philosophers, Jewish controversialists, and earlier Christian apologists, they assimilate what they borrow and make it a part of their own system. The most impressive feature of their apologetic is not so much what they have to say about any particular problem, nor even the sum total of their individual assertions, but rather the example of what they do. By their mighty syntheses they inspire faith that the gospel can engender a wisdom more comprehensive and profound than any rival religion or any philosophy that does not rest on revelation.

Apologeți latini din secolul 3-4

Sec. 3

All the works analyzed thus far were composed in Greek, but at the end of the second century Christian apologists in the West, both in Italy and Africa, begin to write in Latin. Their works increasingly reflect the practical, Latin cast of mind, perhaps especially because so many of the apologists of this period were convert lawyers.

Marcus Minucius Felix, din Roma

Dialogul Octavius. Foarte cult, educat, politicos. Nu citează Biblia dar argumentează elegant și convingător.

Remarkably placid and urbane in spirit is the **dialogue Octavius**,³⁰ composed about the end of the second century by the distinguished Roman advocate Marcus Minucius Felix, who had become a convert to Christianity. The work is an imaginary conversation among three characters: **the pagan Caecilius, the Christian Octavius, and the author**, Minucius, who is supposed to be still a pagan. The author takes the role of chairman and judge.

Caecilius, in this dialogue, combines the skepticism of the Academy with religious traditionalism. The universe, he contends, is so great a riddle that human speculation can achieve no certain

knowledge regarding the existence or nature of the gods. It is most prudent therefore to adhere to the religion of one's ancestors, which has brought abundant blessings to the Empire. To become a Christian, according to Caecilius, would be to join a secret society that undermines the national religion, teaches absurd doctrines, and practices moral infamies.

Octavius, in reply, readily concedes that man should begin with the effort to understand himself rather than the whole universe. But since man is not an isolated individual, he is bound to reflect on his position in the world. Contemplating the harmony of nature and the beauty of man himself, one cannot but feel the creative power of God. The best philosophers, such as Plato, hold with the Christians that God is incomprehensible, invisible, and unique. Popular imagination, however, fell away from the sound insights of philosophy and devised immoral tales about the gods. As for the greatness of Rome, it does not derive, as Caecilius imagines, from the protection of these fictitious gods, many of whom were violently captured from Rome's vanquished foes. Finally, Christians are manifestly innocent of the gross crimes imputed to them, such as ritual sacrifice and promiscuity, for their doctrine clearly inculcates reverence for life and chastity. At the conclusion of the dialogue Caecilius declares himself convinced of the main points, and the three friends part on cordial terms.

As a literary composition, the *Octavius* is **clear, graceful, and elegant**.³¹ Minucius Felix shows himself well versed in classical philosophy and letters, and he expresses himself in a pleasing Ciceronian style. His argument is persuasive so far as it goes, but the exposition of Christianity, as many critics have noted, is very rudimentary.

He never once quotes the Bible, nor does he penetrate beyond the threshold of theology.

In the author's defense it may be said that his aim is simply to write a winning introduction to Christianity for the benefit of cultivated Romans who know nothing of the Bible and have no special interest in Judeo-Christian speculation.

This modest aim Minucius Felix attains with eminent success. Because of certain correspondences with Tertullian's *To the Pagans* and *Apology*, some critics have maintained that the *Octavius* must be dependent on these works. Others contend that Tertullian, on the contrary, relies on Minucius Felix.³² However this question may be resolved, it remains true that the two authors are vastly different in spirit and in style.

Minucius Felix displays a noble reserve and consistently avoids all suggestions of polemical invective, whereas Tertullian is intense and aggressive.

One can hardly imagine Tertullian writing, as Minucius Felix does in chapter 20, that the philosophers of old were truly Christians and that the Christians of today are the true philosophers. Minucius Felix writes for the dying age of Roman religion, but Tertullian represents a Church ready to challenge and defy the pagan world.

Tertullian din Cartagina

From Rome we may now turn to Carthage, which became the principal theological center for the Latin-speaking world in the third century. The most prominent speaker for the Carthaginian church at the beginning of the century was Tertullian,³³ who was converted about A.D. 193 and wrote voluminously in defense of Catholicism until his lapse into Montanism about 207. He died, apparently still a Montanist, sometime after 220. A lawyer skilled in the practice of the Roman courts, he applied his extraordinary forensic talents with great success to the Christian cause. Many of his early works are primarily apologetical, whereas his later works tend toward controversy with other Christian groups.

Apologia, o pledoarie de avocat în favoarea creștinismului.

Tertullian's *Apology* (197),³⁴ probably the finest of his writings, is a brilliant application of Roman juridical principles to the defense of Christianity. In the opening chapters he demonstrates with irresistible logic how repugnant the persecutions are to the traditions of Roman jurisprudence.

Dacă sunt acuzați creștinii drept răufăcători, trebuie ascultată pledoaria lor de apărare.

Among all criminals, he asks, why are Christians alone convicted for their name with no investigation of their deeds?

By what logic does Trajan's Rescript authorize the conviction of Christians while at the same time forbidding the State to seek them out? "If you condemn them why not also search for them? If you do not search for them, why not also acquit them?" (chap. 2).

Împotriva acuzațiilor de infanticide, promiscuitate sexual și ateism.

In subsequent chapters Tertullian goes on to expose with wit and sarcasm the absurdity of the standard charges against Christians—**infanticide, sexual promiscuity, and atheism**. In chapter 17 he points out that the Christian conception of God as all-seeing, all-powerful, and all-perfect is that which springs spontaneously into the minds of pagans so that even they, in their unguarded moments, give testimony to the Christian God. They cry out, "good God", "God almighty", "God grant it", and the like. "O testimony of the soul," Tertullian comments, "which is by natural instinct Christian!"

But Tertullian, unlike Justin and Minucius Felix, does not conclude that the pagans are capable of true religion apart from positive revelation. He goes on in the *Apology* to point out that God has had to raise up Prophets in order for them to accept in deliberate faith what nature already prompts them to believe. He shows how God's witnesses, the Prophets of the Old Testament, spoke of Christ and of the punishments that would be visited on the Jewish people for their infidelity. These prophecies, Tertullian asserts, are being fulfilled as the Jews wander homeless.

Creștinii nu trebuie forțați să se închine la ce nu cred. Egiptenii au fost lăsați în pace, în idolatria lor.

Reverting to the Roman policies, Tertullian then attacks the practice of forcing the Christians to worship the gods of the Empire. "No one, not even a man, will be willing to receive the worship of an unwilling client."

If the Egyptians were permitted by Roman law to deify birds and beasts and to condemn to death anyone who killed these "gods", why are the Christians forbidden to worship the one God of all? Any religion seems to be lawful except the worship of the one God to whom all men belong! (chap. 24).

The Romans have no right to argue that failure to worship their gods will undermine the Empire, since these gods cannot be shown to exist. Rome achieved its greatness before it worshiped the present deities, most of whom were violently stolen by them from vanquished nations—a theme also developed, as we have seen, by Minucius Felix.

Having refuted the charges that Christian practices are evil, Tertullian goes on to demonstrate that they are good. He shows how Christians pray for the emperor and perform the service of pointing out to him that he too is a man. In chapter 39 he gives a moving description of the Christian way of life,

reminiscent of that in Justin's First Apology. "We form one body because of our religious convictions, and because of the divine origin of our way of life and the bond of a common hope." The mutual charity of Christians is such that even their enemies exclaim, "See how they love one another." Everything is held in common among Christians—except, again in contrast to paganism, their wives.

In the closing chapters Tertullian sets forth his reflections upon martyrdom, for him a favorite theme. In going to their death, Christians show their supreme freedom. No one can put them to death, for they are Christians only because they will to be. Christians do not will to suffer, but they accept suffering willingly. The viciousness of the Roman officials is proof of the innocence of Christians, whose virtue shines forth most splendidly in their destruction. "We become more numerous every time we are hewn down by you: the blood of Christians is seed" (chap. 50).

Tertullian's Apology is the most powerful and moving of its kind in the patristic era. While it lacks the urbanity of Minucius Felix and the philosophic depth of Clement and Origen, it throbs with a fierce love of truth and virtue. The iron logic of Tertullian's argument glows with passionate intensity, so that his arguments sear even as they cut. The fervent African raises the rhetoric of the Roman courtroom to a new pitch of eloquence.

Most of Tertullian's other apologetical works are best seen in relation to the Apology. His early work **Against the Jews**, in which he demonstrates that Christ fulfills the prophecies of the Old Testament and supersedes its Law, may be found more briefly in chapter 20 of the Apology. **To the Pagans** (early 197) may be viewed almost as a first draft of the Apology. His brief treatise, **The Testimony of the Soul** (late 197), is simply an expansion of the argument already noted in the Apology, chapter 17. **To Scapula**, a plea for toleration in time of persecution (about 212), recapitulates many arguments already given in the Apology, felicitously developing the doctrine of religious freedom.

Although no effort has been made to include in this survey polemical works against Christian heresies—which would involve a detailed discussion of particular doctrines of the faith—an exception may here be made in favor of Tertullian's **Prescription of Heretics**,³⁵ since this work deals with the case against heresy in general. Like the Apology it reveals the author's forensic talents at their height. Using the plea known technically in the courts as *praescriptio*, Tertullian seeks to bar the heretics from even entering their suit. He argues, essentially, that Christ handed over His revelation to the Church, to be taught by its authorized spokesmen. There is no other way of getting at Christian revelation than by listening to those churches that can claim continuity with the Apostles. The heresies are new, or at least they depart from the apostolic faith, and therefore have no right to be heard as authentic Christianity. The heretics are not entitled to appeal to the Scriptures, which belong to the Church alone. Their case should therefore be dismissed out of hand rather than debated on its merits. Tertullian's argument here is plausible and has deservedly made its mark on subsequent theology. He does not, of course, meet all possible objections. Might it not be, for instance, that Catholicism has fallen away from its pristine purity and is in need of reformation? If so, can one exclude the possibility that persons lacking in juridical status might have a keener insight than the authorized officials of the legitimate Church?

A scris si impotriva ereziilor. De exemplu, impotriva lui Marcion, Hermogenes, Praxeas, the Valentinians, etc. Totusi, el insusi a ajuns Montanist. Dar aici este necesara o discutie. Se simtea déjà nevoia unei reformari a clerului si a unei revitalizari a bisericii.

In point of fact, purely formal arguments from authority do not suffice to bring conviction. That Tertullian himself saw the necessity of discussing **individual heresies** on their merits is proved by the fact that **he wrote special treatises against Marcion, Hermogenes, Praxeas, the Valentinians, and others.**

Tertullian's own lapse into Montanism, moreover, is a practical denial of the principles on which his reasoning in the Prescription is based.

Notwithstanding his brilliance, Tertullian is an unreliable guide. His arguments are more adapted to the forensic atmosphere of the courtroom than to the scholarly reflection of the Academy or the prayer-fulness of the Church.

Although influenced by Stoicism and familiar with other schools of thought, **Tertullian had little liking for dispassionate speculation.** Unlike Clement and Origen, Justin and Minucius Felix, he had little respect for Socrates, Plato, and the philosophers.

A scris si impotriva ereziilor. De exemplu, impotriva lui Marcion, Hermogenes, Praxeas, the Valentinians, etc. Totusi, el insusi a ajuns Montanist. Dar aici este necesara o discutie. Se simtea déjà nevoia unei reformari a clerului si a unei revitalizari a bisericii.

Nu i-a placut angajarea in discutii si dezbateri filosofice. Ii placea insa dezbateri juridica si retorica de avocat.

“What has Jerusalem to do with Athens, the Church with the Academy, the Christian with the heretic? Our principles come from the Porch of Solomon, who had himself taught that the Lord is to be sought in simplicity of heart. I have no use for a Stoic or a Platonic or a dialectic Christianity. After Jesus Christ we have no need of speculation, after the Gospel no need of research.”³⁶

“Ce are Ierusalimul de a face cu Atena, sau Biserica cu Academia, ori crestinul cu ereticul? Principiile noastre vin de la porticul lui Soomon, unde s-a inteles ca Domnul trebuie cautat in simplitatea inimii. Nu am ce face cu stoicii, sau cu platonienii, sau cu crestinismul dialectic. Dupa venirea lui Hristos nu mai avem nevoie de speculatie, dupa evanghelie nu mai avem nevoie de cercetari filosofice.”

Efectul oratoriei juridice adus la amvonul predicarii evangheliei

To the demonstrations of philosophy Tertullian prefers the glitter of paradox. He wishes to bring out the distinctiveness of faith as it towers above all human reasoning and leaves one's intellect prostrate in adoration before the unfathomable mystery of God. “The Son of God was crucified; I am not ashamed because man must needs be ashamed of it. And the Son of God died; it is by all means to be believed, because it is absurd [ineptum].”³⁷

Tertullian, even more than Tatian, became the master of all those Christian thinkers, including Kierkegaard and the dialectical theologians, who wished to liberate Christian faith from the straitjacket of metaphysical systems. Tertullian gloried in Christianity as an affront to reason, and whenever God's

revelation is in danger of being imprisoned by human speculation, his defiant supernaturalism will again win a hearing.

Latin apologetics in the century after Tertullian produced few works of real importance. Cyprian, bishop of Carthage from 249 to 258, deserves at least a brief mention. Shortly after his conversion in 246 he wrote a lengthy letter³⁸ to his friend Donatus describing the firmness of conviction and serenity of spirit that he experienced following his baptism. In this letter he deplures in conventional and rather stilted terms the vices, miseries, and dangers of the present life and concludes with an exhortation to raise one's eyes above the distractions of this world and to seek only the joys of heaven. While apologetical considerations are not absent from this letter, it belongs rather to the category of spiritual edification.

Cyprian din Cartagina

Cyprian s-a născut într-o familie bogată, africană, romană (berberă) în nordul Africii, la începutul sec. 3. Se numea Thascius, dar a luat numele [Caecilius](#) în cinstea preotului care l-a convertit. A fost avocat, orator și profesor de retorică. Botezat la 35 de ani, c. 245 AD. Și-a dat o mare parte din avere săracilor din Cartagina.

Scrieri timpurii: *Epistola ad Donatum de gratia Dei* și *Testimoniorum Libri III*, unde este aproape de vederile lui Tertullian.

În scrierea polemică: **Deșertăciunea idolilor** (247),³⁹ demonstrează că idolii nu sunt divini, iar Dumnezeu este unul singur.

În răspunsul dat lui **Demetrianus, proconsul al Africii** (252),⁴⁰ care zicea despre creștini că sunt de vină pentru catastrofele și foametea venite peste ei, Cyprian zice că lumea este îmbătrânită, iar păgânii sunt decăzuți.

În lucrarea **Despre Unitatea Bisericii Catolice** (about 251),⁴¹ este și în favoarea unității bisericii, împotriva diviziunilor.

A compus **trei cărți de Mărturie**, o compilație de texte din biblie. Primele două sunt direcționate împotriva evreilor. A treia este un ghid moral pentru creștini.

Cyprian was born into a rich, pagan, [Berber \(Roman African\)](#),^[3] Carthaginian family sometime during the early third century. His original name was Thascius; he took the additional name [Caecilius](#) in memory of the [priest](#) to whom he owed his conversion.^[5] Before his conversion, he was a leading member of a legal fraternity in Carthage, an orator, a "pleader in the courts", and a teacher of rhetoric.^[6] After a "dissipated youth", Cyprian was baptised when he was thirty-five years old,^[2] c. 245 AD. After his [baptism](#), he gave away a portion of his wealth to the poor of [Carthage](#), as befitted a man of his status.

In the early days of his conversion he wrote an *Epistola ad Donatum de gratia Dei* and the *Testimoniorum Libri III* that adhere closely to the models of [Tertullian](#), who influenced his style

Several of Cyprian's shorter treatises are apologetical in character. His polemic **On the Vanity of Idols** (written in 247),³⁹ seeks to demonstrate, by arguments already seen here in Minucius Felix and Tertullian, that the idols are not divine and that there is but one God.

Likewise apologetical is Cyprian's **reply to Demetrianus, the proconsul of Africa** (written in 252).⁴⁰ Responding to the charge that Christians are responsible for the recent plagues and famines, Cyprian attributes these evils to the senescence of the world. In vindicating the innocence of Christians and the guilt of the heathen, Cyprian repeats various arguments already used by Minucius and Tertullian.

Cyprian's principal treatise, **On the Unity of the Catholic Church** (about 251),⁴¹ is pastoral rather than apologetical in intent; it is directed against schism rather than unbelief. But in his inspiring description of the spectacle of Catholic unity (reminiscent of certain passages in Irenaeus and Tertullian) Cyprian hints at what modern theologians often call the moral miracle of the Church—especially her universality, her inner cohesion, and her marvelous fecundity. In Cyprian's view there can be no life in Christ and hence no salvation for those who depart from the one true Church.

Cyprian also composed **three books of Testimonies**⁴², a compilation of Scripture texts, for the use of his convert friend Quirinus. The first two books, introduced by a common preface, are written in part against the Jews.

Book 1, according to the prefatory letter, aims "to show that the Jews, according to what had been foretold, had departed from God, and had lost God's favor, which had been given them in past time, and had been promised for the future; while the Christians had succeeded to their place, deserving well of the Lord by faith, and coming out of all nations from the whole world".⁴³ This book consists of twenty-four theses on the relations between the Jews and the Gentiles. Each of these theses is backed up by a series of supporting quotations from both Testaments, intended to exhibit the harmony between the prophecy and the fulfillment.

Book 2 of the Testimonies deals, according to the preface, with "the Sacrament of Christ, that He has come who was announced according to the Scriptures, and has done and perfected all those things whereby He was foretold as being able to be perceived and known".⁴⁴ It consists of **thirty theses**, all having to do with the person and the functions of Christ. These too are supported by numerous scriptural quotations.

Book 3 of the Testimonies, which was separately composed and apparently combined with the other two by a later editor, is also introduced by a preface to Quirinus. It contains 120 precepts for the moral guidance of the Christian, with supporting quotations from both Testaments, especially the New.

Cyprian's Testimonies are the best surviving example of a type of literature that must have been widespread in the early Church. Works such as Irenaeus's *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching* seem to rest upon compilations of biblical quotations such as Cyprian's. Some scholars have conjectured that similar lists of proof texts from the Jewish Scriptures antedated the New Testament itself.⁴⁵

The Latin apologists of the third century are writers of exceptional energy and talent; but while they plead for the Christian cause with eloquence and skill, they cannot be compared with the Alexandrians for philosophical sophistication, comprehensive vision, and synthetic power. Their genius is practical rather than speculative. Both by natural disposition and by force of circumstance they are concerned with urgent political and pastoral issues and have little taste or leisure for broader and more philosophical questions. Unlike their counterparts in the East, they fail to set forth the case for Christianity in its full range and depth.

Sec. 4

Atacul împotriva păgânismului este mai îndrăzneț, superstițiile lor analizate mai atent. Creștinii încearcă o sinteză a dezvoltării religiilor până la creștinism.

Toward the beginning of this century, both in the East and in the West, the atmosphere changes. In spite of the sincere efforts of noble-minded men to restore ancient paganism, it becomes generally clear that paganism as a vital religious option is fast receding. While Christians continue to attack the old religions, they do so with increasing boldness and extravagance, as if they had no fear of being seriously challenged. They analyze the superstitions of their ancestors with a combination of wonder and disgust. When the triumph of Christianity is ratified by the conversion of Constantine, it becomes incumbent upon Christians to build a new religious synthesis. Even in the West the apologists feel obliged to offer their readers a global vision of life, which they generally construct by borrowing materials from the Stoic and Platonic philosophers and reshaping these in the light of the gospel.

Arnobius din Sicca

O lucrare tipică în sec. 4, **Acuzații împotriva păgânilor** de Arnobius din Sicca.⁴⁶ Are cunoștință despre teologia creștină, dar nu mare, și este familiarizat cu filosofia stoică.

Typical of the latins in sec. 4, is **The Case against the Pagans** by Arnobius of Sicca.⁴⁶ The author, a layman and a new convert, shows *little knowledge of Christian theology*, but he has a certain familiarity **with Stoic** philosophy and a mass of information about ancient religion.

Cartea are 7 capitole, books.

The first two books of his treatise are concerned with the defense of Christianity against pagan objections and were written, according to the best estimate, about 297. The remaining five books, which carry the war into enemy territory by a counterattack on paganism, were presumably written sometime after 303.

Book 1 revolves about two main objections. First, it is charged that Christians are to blame for the recent wars, famines, and pestilences. Arnobius answers in his diffuse way, by a series of arguments. He finds no evidence that these calamities have increased since Christianity began or that, even if they have increased, they are to be attributed to the anger of the gods rather than to merely natural causes. In any case the charges are unfounded since they are made by pagan priests, angry that their shrines and temples are being deserted.

The second main objection is that Christians worship a mere man who died upon a Cross. Arnobius replies that Christ, since He brought divine teaching, is rightly regarded as God. He proved His divinity by many miracles attested by reliable witnesses. The divinity of Christ is, moreover, corroborated by the rapid expansion of the Christian faith and by the unshakable loyalty of its adherents, who are ready to face death rather than recant. As for the crucifixion, Arnobius answers the objections by arguments that sound Docetic. "That death of which you speak was of the human form assumed, not His own; of the thing borne, not of the bearer."⁴⁷

In **Book 2** Arnobius takes on the heathen philosophers. He objects vehemently to Plato's doctrine that the soul is naturally immortal and insists that it is naturally mortal though capable of receiving immortality as a gift. In his refutation of Plato's doctrine of reminiscence he argues at length that the

mind of man is at birth a tabula rasa. Then he defends Christianity against those who attack it on the ground of its novelty. Everything good, he says, was once new; in fact, many aspects of Roman religion as currently practiced are also of recent origin.

In these two opening books Arnobius shows an almost skeptical awareness of the limitations of the human mind. He chides the philosophers for their pride in seeking answers to curious questions. After stating very forcefully the problem of evil (Hume could hardly have improved on the statement), Arnobius freely admits that he has no solution. Nor does he know why the Incarnation did not occur earlier. To this last question he is content to retort by asking the pagan why Hercules was not born earlier than he was. Regarding the life to come, Arnobius concedes that there is no way of strictly proving the reality of a future event. But he says that of two alternatives that are both uncertain “we should believe the one which affords some hopes rather than the one which affords none at all.”⁴⁸ As some commentators remark, one has here an interesting anticipation of Pascal’s wager argument.⁴⁹

The last 5 books

In the remaining five books Arnobius gives an interesting critique of the pagan religions of the Empire. He goes over some of the same ground as Clement of Alexandria but with vastly more detail concerning the myths and mysteries of various sects.

Unlike Clement, who was at pains to show that the valid concerns of paganism are fulfilled in Christianity, Arnobius takes a strongly negative attitude.

Influenced perhaps by Stoicism, he says that the gods are incapable of anger or other emotions; they have no sex or bodily functions. Nor are they of such a nature that they could be placated by bloody sacrifices, burnt offerings, or the games and dances with which their feasts are celebrated.

Surprisingly enough, Arnobius does not clearly deny the existence of the pagan gods. If a multiplicity of gods exist, he maintains, they are subordinate to the one supreme God and are sufficiently honored by the adoration paid to Him.

Arnobius scores a number of points against his pagan adversaries, but most of his work would be equally useful as an apology for deism. While he turns aside some illegitimate objections against Christianity, he furnishes very few positive arguments for accepting the Christian faith. In fact, it is doubtful that he knew his own religion very well. He never quotes from the Old Testament and seems to have been largely ignorant of its contents. His references to the New Testament are few and generally vague. He has nothing to say about the doctrine of the Trinity and does not so much as mention the Holy Spirit. He is silent concerning the birth and Resurrection of Christ, never speaks of the sacraments, and engages in no discussion of Church order or polity.

Lactantius din Nicomedia

Lactantius, născut în Numidia, a ajuns în Nicomedia în Bithynia, ca profesor de retorică numit de Diocleția. A devenit creștin (300) și a fost dat afară de Dioclețian. Sub Constantin a redevenit profesor, la Trier, în sudul Franței. 316.

Lactantius, a younger contemporary and one-time pupil of Arnobius, was likewise a rhetorician by profession. From Numidia, his birthplace, he went to Nicomedia in Bithynia, where he was appointed a teacher by order of Diocletian. About 300 he became a Christian. Several years later, during the persecution of Diocletian, he was removed from his chair. After the conversion of Constantine he was

returned to favor and summoned to Trier in Gaul about 316. He spent his last years as a tutor to the emperor's son, Crispus.

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Lactantius, *Doctrinile divine (Divine Institutes)*,⁵⁰ approx. 304–314, dedicate lui Constantin. Nu doar respinge credințele păgâne, ci le explică păgânilor educați motivele pentru care pot să devină creștini. El este teolog și retor, poate prea mult teolog ca să fie într-adevar atractiv ca apologet. Stilul nu este foarte elevat sau finisat.

Lactantius folosește stilul lui Cicero și citează din autori greci și latini. Foarte mult din Plato, Cicero, Vergil, și Lucretius.

Cartea 1.

Argumente despre existența lui Dumnezeu și providența divină. Miturile păgâne despre origini sunt contradictorii și absurde.

Cartea 2,

O polemică împotriva imaginilor idolești.

Cartea 3,

Limitele filosofiei în cunoașterea lui Dumnezeu. Importanța revelației.

Cartea 4,

Despre divinitatea lui Hristos. Minunile lui Isus. Lactantius zice “El este crezut că este Dumnezeu, de noi, nu pentru acest motiv ca a făcut minuni (cum de exemplu is Apollonius se zice ca a făcut), ci pentru ca am văzut că în El s-au împlinit toate lucrurile spuse nouă de mesajul profeților”⁵¹

Cărțile 5-6 sunt despre teologia etică, morală. Cartea 7 se referă la eschatology, și împărăția de 1000 de ani.

Lactantius 's claim to fame as an apologist rests on his principal work, the *Divine Institutes*,⁵⁰ which was probably written about 304–314 and was dedicated to Constantine. As he himself remarks, his aim, unlike that of Tertullian in the *Apology*, is not simply to answer the accusations against Christianity but to give instruction to educated pagans who might be inclined to embrace the new religion. For this reason he aims to give a positive exposition of the principal doctrines of the faith.

Few Christians before his time, Lactantius observes, wrote eloquently in defense of the faith. Tertullian, though highly learned, wrote in a rude, unpolished style and was quite obscure. While Cyprian was a master of rhetoric, he was too much the theologian to be a good apologist. He had recourse to arguments from Scripture and to deeply mystical insights, thus going beyond the depth of his non-Christian readers. The Octavius of Minucius Felix succeeded admirably, but unfortunately its author did not produce other works of the same character. Like Minucius Felix, Lactantius is careful to

express himself in a pure Ciceronian style and to quote almost exclusively from Greek and Latin authors. He makes extensive use of Plato, Cicero, Vergil, and Lucretius. The first few books of the *Divine Institutes* are strongly apologetic in tone and content. Book 1 is largely devoted to establishing from reason and authority that there can be but one God and that He is all-provident. In the remainder of this book Lactantius engages in the familiar game of exposing the contradictions and absurdities in the pagan myths regarding the nature of the gods and the origins of the universe.

Book 2 surveys primeval history according to the main lines of Genesis, without, however, citing Scripture. It concludes with a polemic against images, which are presented as diabolical deceptions. In Book 3 Lactantius exposes the limitations of philosophy; while philosophy purports to be the pursuit of wisdom, he looks upon it as a futile effort to acquire wisdom by purely human powers, which are insufficient for the task. Book 4 is concerned with the divinity of Christ. Although he cites miracles as manifestations of Christ's divine power, Lactantius adds, "He is believed a God by us, not for this reason, that He performed miracles (as Apollonius, for instance, is said to have done), but that we have seen that in Him were fulfilled all the things that were foretold to us by the preaching of the prophets."⁵¹

Lactantius's arguments from the prophecies, however, suffer from the same defects noted in most of the apologists of the ancient Church. He relies on doubtful readings, slanted translations, and forced exegesis. He draws from apocryphal works such as the Psalms of Solomon and from forgeries such as the Sibylline oracles, which he, like other apologists, accepts as genuine.

Books 5 and 6 of the *Divine Institutes* depart somewhat from apologetics in order to set forth the fundamental precepts of moral theology—a field in which Lactantius is at his best. But he does not neglect to score some apologetic points. In his chapter on justice he has occasion to discuss the persecutions. The fact that Christians of both sexes and of every age, tribe, and region exhibit the same contempt of death suggests that their attitude must have a basis in reason, which the heathen would do well to consider. They should ask themselves also why the Christian religion, far from being weakened and diminished by persecutions, is strengthened and increased.

Book 7, treating of eschatology, contains an interesting discussion of death and a defense of the immortality of the soul. A strong chiliast, Lactantius engages in many curious speculations about the final phase of universal history. His weaknesses as a dogmatic theologian are nowhere more apparent than in these chapters.

The *Divine Institutes* undoubtedly served to facilitate the conversion of many educated Romans to the Christian faith. Lactantius writes as a Christian thoroughly at home in the world of classical thought and deeply attached to the best interests of the Empire. His apologetic, splendid in architecture and graceful in style, contains very few original arguments. As a theologian he falls far below the standards set by Tertullian and the great Alexandrians. Nor does he have the independence of mind that gives interest to Arnobius. For all his talents he cannot be said to have made a notable contribution to the progress of apologetics.

Ambrosie din Milan

Episcop în Milano 374-397.

Nu respecta mult rațiunea ca instrument de cunoaștere. „Ni s-a poruncit să credem, nu ni s-a permis să evaluăm, să cercetăm.” El pledează împotriva lui Symmachus, prefectul Romei, că numai creștinismul este calea spre Dumnezeu, nu și alte religii. „Prin credință ajungem la cunoaștere, iar prin cunoaștere ajungem la disciplina (vieții și gândirii)”.

Prudentius, un al creștin a compus între 401-403, poemul apologetic **Contra Symmachum**,⁵⁸ la Roma, despre Ambrosie și Symmachus.

Cartea 1: împotriva politeismului păgân.

Cartea 2: împotriva luptelor de gladiatori, și a jertfelor pentru idoli și zei.

Ambrose, who served as bishop of Milan from 374 till his death in 397, was likewise more concerned with the suppression of paganism than with giving reasons in support of Christianity.

He had little respect for reason as an instrument of religious knowledge.⁵³ **“You are commanded to believe,” he wrote, “not permitted to inquire.”**⁵⁴ “To Abraham it was counted righteousness that he sought not reasons but believed with most ready faith. It is good that faith should go before reason, lest we seem to exact a reason from our Lord God as from a man.”⁵⁵ “By faith we come to knowledge, and by knowledge to discipline.”⁵⁶

With his exorbitant exaltation of faith at the expense of reason, Ambrose quite naturally opposed any concessions to the non-Christian religions. **When Symmachus, as Prefect of the City of Rome, pleaded for toleration on the ground that no one road, such as Christianity, could lead men to so great a mystery as the divine**, Ambrose wrote to Valentinian II (383) arguing that every road discovered by man would be inadequate but that in Christ the very Word of God had spoken.⁵⁷ Quite characteristically, too, Ambrose in 388 used ecclesiastical sanctions to prevent Theodosius from making the Christians pay restitution to the Jews for having maliciously burned down the synagogue at Callinicum.

Contra Symmachum,⁵⁸ composed at **Rome by Prudentius about 401—403**.

The controversy between Symmachus and Ambrose formed the subject of an apologetical poem, **Contra Symmachum**,⁵⁸ composed at **Rome by Prudentius about 401—403**.

Book 1 of this poem is a polemic **against pagan polytheism**, reminiscent of Minucius Felix and Arnobius.

Book 2 Prudentius summarizes the arguments of Symmachus’s memorial and rebuts them point by point as Ambrose had done in his letter to Valentinian II. **Against gladiatorial contests**.

The poem concludes with a plea to the emperor to abolish gladiatorial contests, in which human beings are made to die for the amusement of the crowds, just as formerly animals were sacrificed to the gods.

Christian apologetics in the West underwent a continuous decline in the course of the fourth century and was not to rise again until it had felt the intellectual stimulus of a new philosophical challenge. Neo-platonism was to provide this challenge, first for the Greek-speaking Church, then for the Latin.

Apologeții greci antiochieni din sec. 3-4

Origen și Atanasie din Alexandria – Inovație, Logos și rațiunea credinței

Contextul nou: provocările neoplatonismului: Plotinus și Porfirius

The founder of Neoplatonism, Plotinus (205–270), after studying at Alexandria under Ammonius Saccas, came to Rome in 245 and taught there until his death. His leading disciple, Porphyry (234–301), who had been an acquaintance of Origen as a youth, came from Caesarea to Athens and then, in 263, traveled to Rome to put himself at the feet of Plotinus.

Plotinus and Porphyry, inspired in part by the example of the Christian theologians, erected a kind of **systematic theology for late paganism** and in so doing succeeded in providing a respectable intellectual alternative to Christianity.

While in Sicily in 268–270, **Porphyry wrote *Against the Christians***,⁵⁹ a treatise comprising fifteen books. The treatise has perished, but some excerpts have been preserved for modern times by Eusebius and other Christian writers. It seems certain that Porphyry assailed the Church partly on philosophical and partly on historical grounds.

Obiecțiile lui Porfirius

In philosophy he would have objected to the Christian doctrines that the world had a beginning and has an end in time, that evil is real, and that the dead would rise in body.

His historical objections were based on a detailed critique of Scripture not unlike that set forth by Celsus's Jew.

In particular Porphyry attacked the historicity of the New Testament accounts of the ancestry of Jesus, His miracles, and His Resurrection.

Eusebius din Caesarea (antiohian ca formație)

Principalul opponent al lui Porfirius. Născut în Caesarea, appr. 263. Educat în Caesarea. A fugit de aici în timpul persecuției lui Dioclețian și s-a întors în 313, când a fost ales episcop. Până în 339. A fost consilier apropiat al lui Constantin, și influent în medierea controverselor cu erezia ariană.

Ca apologet, a compus o lucrare majoră în două volume: *Pregătirea evangheliei* (314)⁶⁰ and *Dovezile evangheliei* (320).⁶¹ O versiune condensată, *Teofania* (333). A scris 25 de cărți contra lui Porfirius.

Citează mult. Este unitar și foarte legat în argumente.

În **Pregătirea evangheliei**, răspunde lui Porfirius, care zice că creștinii au trădat istoria și moștenirea filosofică elenistă. Arată că revelația din VT și NT este superioară gândirii păgâne.

În **Dovezile evangheliei**, răspunde iudeilor care acuzau creștinii că au trădat scriptura VT. Aici arată că evrei și-au interpretat greșit scripturile și au așteptat să fie mântuiți prin Lege.

El adună tot ce a fost valoros de la înaintași cum sunt părinții greci, Clement, Origent, etc. Ii cinstește mult pe greci cum sunt Platon și Porfirius, și îi recunoaște, dar îi și corectează.

Pregătirea evangheliei.

În primele cărți argumentează împotriva politeismului grec.

Zei greci sunt demoni care i-au condus în idolatria plăcerilor, care i-a dus la degenerare.

Cei mai înțelepți filosofi greci, au râs de panteonul grec.

În cartea 5, afirmă că profețiile și oracolele grecești i-au dus în eroare și rătăcire.

În cartea 6, discută, deși superficial, problema destinului și a voinței libere.

Începând cu cartea 7, privește la religia lui Moise și la profeții evrei. Îi descrie ca foarte vechi și în unanimitate. Descrie VT ca preocupat cu creația universului și viața interioară, spirituală. Apoi compară gândirea greacă și cea ebraică, subliniind asemănările. El găsește pre-ecouri de gândire trinitară și despre Duhul Sfânt, în VT și în gândirea greacă.

Dovezile evangheliei,

Studiază profețiile despre Hristos, foarte atent.

Consideră Biserica și Statul, ca destinate să fie împreună, cum credea Constantin cel Mare.

Intruparea o vede ca simultană cu formarea Imperiului mondial Roman.

Ar trebui să vină o lume a adevărului și păcii (??).

The Christian apologist who most effectively answered Porphyry was Eusebius of Caesarea. Although famed chiefly as a Church historian, Eusebius deserves high praise for his apologetical works, which make him, in the opinion of some authorities, the leading apologist of the ancient Church. Born in Caesarea about 263, he was educated there.

He had to flee from his native city during the persecution of Diocletian, but he returned and in 313 was elected bishop of that city. From that time until his death about 339 he was a close theological adviser of the Emperor Constantine and in that capacity played a leading role in the disputes connected with the Arian heresy.

As an apologist Eusebius composed a monumental two-part work, *The Preparation of the Gospel* (written about 314)⁶⁰ and *The Proof of the Gospel* (about 320).⁶¹ The fifteen books of the former survive intact; out of the twenty books of the latter only the first ten and a fragment of fifteenth still exist. Shortly before his death, perhaps about 333, Eusebius wrote a briefer resume of the main arguments in the two works just mentioned. This summary, the Theophany (or Divine Manifestation),⁶² survives in a slavishly literal Syrian translation, though not in the original Greek. Eusebius also wrote twenty-five books, which have perished, in reply to Porphyry's *Against the Christians*.

It is customary to deplore his lack of originality. Whenever possible he establishes his points by quoting from other authors. But notwithstanding the multitude and length of these excerpts, Eusebius's apologia does have a genuine unity of design and argument. In the *Preparation* he answers the principal objections of pagans such as Porphyry who accuse the Christians of infidelity to the Greek religious heritage; in the *Proof* he absolves the Christians from the Jewish accusation that they have been unfaithful to the religion of the Hebrew Scriptures. In the *Preparation* Eusebius proceeds first negatively, by showing the absurdities of Greek polytheism, and then positively, by showing the vast

superiority of the Hebrew faith. In the Proof he defends the Christians from the Jewish charges that they have misinterpreted the Scriptures and have illegitimately claimed the benefits of God's covenant promises without accepting the burden of conformity to the Mosaic Law.

Eusebius would be valuable, if for no other reason, because he has gathered up almost everything of real importance in the apologetics of the Greek Fathers, especially Clement and Origen. In the Preparation he also quotes extensively from Greek historical and philosophical works. He shows the highest esteem for Plato and for Porphyry, both of whom he quotes more often to agree with than to differ from, even though Porphyry is thought to have been the adversary whom Eusebius chiefly had in mind.

In the first few books of the Preparation, Eusebius restates more thoroughly than earlier Greek apologists the Christian case against Greek polytheism. The demons, he contends, have seduced people into the idolization of pleasure, and the cult of pleasure has led to moral degeneracy. The wisest philosophers of Greece, Eusebius contends, ridiculed the gods of the Greek pantheon. In Book 5 of the Preparation Eusebius goes on to develop a fairly original polemic against the deceptiveness of the Greek oracular religion, which leads him into Book 6, a long and by no means superficial discussion of fate and free will. Beginning with Book 7 he examines the religion of Moses and the Hebrew Prophets. Like his predecessors Eusebius exaggerates the antiquity and perfect unanimity of the biblical writers. His own philosophic interests betray him into depicting the early Hebrews as deeply concerned with reflection on the causes of the universe and with the cultivation of the inner life. In his comparisons between Greek philosophy and Hebrew theology, which take up the last five books of the Preparation, Eusebius platonizes the Bible almost as much as he baptizes Greek speculation. He finds strong confirmations of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity in the Old Testament doctrine of word and spirit and in the Plotinian doctrine of the three primary hypostases.

The Proof of the Gospel, less tied to Greek philosophy than the Preparation, is perhaps of greater contemporary interest. Books 1 and 2 are a prolegomenon for the remainder. To enhance the antiquity of Christianity, Eusebius holds it to be a republication, in more explicit form, of the religion of the Patriarchs. He dismisses the Mosaic Law as an unfortunate departure that God permitted after the Israelites had been weakened by demonic assaults in Egypt. The Mosaic Law, unlike the patriarchal religion, was incapable of founding a truly universal religion; it therefore had to be superseded in order that the prophetic promises of the Old Testament might be fulfilled. Book 3, which shows Eusebius at his best, focuses on Jesus Christ. For the sake of the Gentiles, who are not likely to be moved by deductions from the Hebrew Scriptures, Eusebius here argues directly from the New Testament. He calls attention to the surpassing moral stature of Christ and the sublimity of evangelical doctrine, which agrees with, and at the same time outstrips, the best in Greek philosophy. Then he turns to the miracles of Jesus as demonstrations of divine power. In order to validate the miracle stories, Eusebius appeals to the credibility of the Apostles. If one supposes them to have been deceivers, he asks, whence come their agreement, their willingness to abandon home and riches for the apostolate, their readiness to die for their message? Ironically he suggests that perhaps one should suppose that they entered into an insidious pact to this effect: let us manufacture untruths that will profit neither ourselves nor those being deceived, nor indeed Christ Himself. What could be finer, ask the Apostles, than to renounce all things just to deceive and be deceived?

The remaining books of the Proof of the Gospel deal mostly with the Old Testament prophecies of Christ. Here Eusebius takes up with his accustomed thoroughness the various texts that had by his time become traditional. More the advocate than the judge, he is determined to establish that each of these texts is really Christological. If Eusebius surpasses his predecessors in the handling of these proof texts, his superiority lies not in his better judgment but in his more careful attention to textual and hermeneutical problems that others tended to neglect.

Strongly in favor of the Constantinian union of Church and State, Eusebius tends to view the Christianization of the Empire as the universal goal of history. With his historian's eye he cannot forget

that the time of the Incarnation coincided with the unification of the world under a single Empire. At this time, he says in the Theophany, warlike hatred between nations came to a complete end. When the Gospels were written, who could have foreseen that their message would one day be extended to the entire world? Yet the power of truth has proved invincible. No longer do the demons hold men's minds in the grip of idolatry. No longer do the ambiguous replies of oracles confuse and torment anxious seekers after truth. "Every word about fate has been rendered unavailing; every war-making necessity too has been removed far away: the Divine peace-making Word is hymned throughout the whole earth: the race of man is reconciled to God its Father; and peace and love have been restored to all nations."⁶³

Few if any of the early apologists have so stressed the signs of the times as arguments for the Christian faith. Eusebius, the court theologian, did not need to be taught the worldly relevance of revelation. But the very skill with which he adapted his apologetic to his own times has made his work less serviceable for posterity. A reader of the twenty-first century, recalling the long and mournful chronicle of wars among supposedly Christian nations, finds it difficult to identify with the triumphant enthusiasm and grandiloquent rhetoric of Eusebius. If he was correct in believing that the gospel had power to reconcile enemies to one another and to bring them into an all-embracing society, he underestimated the difficulty of fully converting men to the gospel.

Athanasius din Alexandria(c. 295—373)

Două cărți timpurii, *Tratatul despre Păgâni și Întruparea Cuvântului lui Dumnezeu*, 328—333, scrise pentru instruirea unui tânăr prieten convertit.

Biserica încă nu suferise efectele ereziei ariane.

Îi urmează pe Athenagoras din Atena și Clement.

Intruparea Cuvântului lui Dumnezeu este foarte citită. Amintește de *Protrepticus*, a lui Clement. Este o polemică pozitivă și docrinală.

Athanasius este superior în stil și conținut lui Minucius Felix, Arnobius, și chiar Lactantius. Nu are tonul vehement al lui Tertulian. Pe de altă parte, nu intră în detalii tehnice și exegetice atât de mult ca Origen și Eusebius.

Cum a devenit Dumnezeu om. Doar așa putea fi și îndurător și drept (vezi Anselm).

În Isus s-au împlinit profețiile VT (vezi Daniel).

El respinge obiecțiile păgâne împotriva întrupării.

Consideră că învierea este reală și se poate proba, pentru că Isus conduce lumea azi în mod active.

Din vremea lui Hristos, oracolele păgâne au tăcut, iar templele lor sunt părăsite.

Crede, ca și Eusebius, că s-a atins un apogeu al Bisericii, sub Constantin, nu vede problemele care apar. Și este ff satisfăcut.

Dar, după Constantin, vine Iulian apostatul (361-363). A încercat să restaureze cultura păgână. A vrut să reconstruiască templul în Ierusalim, în contra creștinilor. A scris trei cărți împotriva Galileenilor.

Activitatea lui Iulian a determinat un răspuns viguros din partea apologetilor creștini. Diodor din Tars, Grigore din Nazianz, Ioan Gură de Aur și Chiril din Alexandria.

Athanasius of Alexandria (c. 295—373), who composed his youthful works of apologetics about the same time that Eusebius was authoring his learned treatises, registers a similar mood of triumphant joy.

Educated at the famous catechetical school, Athanasius grew up during the last and greatest persecution, which ended in Egypt in 311. His two little books, the *Treatise against the Pagans* and *The Incarnation of the Word of God*, were probably composed about 328–333, early in his episcopate, for the instruction of a friend and recent convert. They reflect the glorious springtime when the Church had begun to benefit from the Edict of Milan and had not yet suffered the full effects of the Arian heresy.

The *Treatise against the Pagans*⁶⁴ has little originality. Following the main lines of Judeo-Christian polemics since the *Book of Wisdom*, it reiterates the standard arguments against idolatry and polytheism. Athanasius appears to be especially indebted to Athenagoras and Clement.

The *Incarnation of the Word of God*⁶⁵ is still one of the most widely read pieces of patristic theology. In its vibrant enthusiasm it recalls the *Protrepticus* of Clement. The main emphasis is not negative and polemical but positive and doctrinal. As a theologian Athanasius is far superior to Minucius Felix, Arnobius, and even Lactantius. His warm and eager commitment to Christ is more winning than the vitriolic eloquence of a Tertullian. Unlike Origen and Eusebius, who are much more thorough, Athanasius writes in swiftly moving prose and does not become bogged down in points of erudition.

The first portion of this little book is a brief dogmatic discussion of the problem, *Cur Deus homo?* Athanasius concludes, somewhat as Anselm was to do, that there was no other way in which God could satisfy both His justice and His mercy. He then goes on to establish against the Jews that Jesus really fulfilled the messianic promises. He cites the standard proof texts without recognition of their ambiguities and asserts confidently that the seventy weeks of Daniel⁶⁶ had run their course at the moment of the Incarnation. In the last portion Athanasius refutes Hellenistic objections to the doctrine of the Incarnation.

Justly famous in this treatise are the passages in which Athanasius argues to the reality of the Resurrection on the ground that Christ is presently active in the world. All His disciples, says Athanasius, despise death as an enemy already overcome. Drawn by Christ, men of all nations are streaming into the Church. Since the time of Christ, the pagan oracles have fallen silent, the shrines of the idols are being abandoned, the heroes and gods of the pagans are being exposed as mere mortals, and magic is being trampled underfoot. “For let him who wishes come up and see the demonstration of virtue in the virgins of Christ and the youths who live a pure life in chastity, and the belief in immortality in such a great company of martyrs.”⁶⁷

Like Eusebius, then, Athanasius writes with high enthusiasm at the moment of the Church’s greatest triumph. Not suspecting the difficulties to the faith that might arise (and that he himself would later experience) at the hands of an absolutist emperor seeking to regulate the affairs of the Church, Athanasius pointed with evident satisfaction to the signs of the times. “The demons no longer deceive with phantasies and oracles and magic, but as soon as they dare and try they are put to shame by the sign of the cross. To sum up, see how the teaching of the Saviour increases everywhere, while all idolatry and all opposition to the faith of Christ day by day diminish and weaken and fall.”⁶⁸ An effective manifesto to its own generation, the Incarnation of the Word of God will continue to reveal its power whenever people vividly recall that moment of glory and whenever like revivals of faith and fervor occur.

A fresh stimulus for apologetics, especially in the East, arose with the reign of Julian the Apostate (361–363), who after being raised a Christian, fell away from the faith. Having become convinced that he was mystically called to restore the pagan heritage of Greco-Roman civilization, using Neoplatonism as an intellectual base, he composed three books *Against the Galileans* (363), the contents of which are recoverable to some degree from Christian responses.⁶⁹ He sought to show that Christianity was a debased form of Judaism with pagan accretions. Resurrecting the ancient charge that the Christians had made the man Jesus into a God, he accused them of idolatrously worshiping the wood of the Cross and the corpse that hung upon it. In particular, he sought to demolish the contentions of Eusebius and

others that the destruction of the city of Jerusalem and its temple was a fulfillment of the messianic prophecies of Daniel.

To support his own line of argument, Julian tried to restore Jerusalem to the Jews and rebuild the temple. By this means, he believed, he could undermine the claims of Christianity to have superseded Judaism and could enlist the Jews as allies in his program to restore sacrificial religion in the Empire.

Julian's political and symbolic actions, far more than his writings, provoked an immediate flurry of activity on the part of Christian apologists. In his own lifetime he was answered by the great Antiochene scholar Diodore of Tarsus, who rose to defend the divinity of Christ. Shortly after the emperor's death, Gregory of Nazianzus composed two impassioned orations against him. But the two most memorable respondents were John Chrysostom and Cyril of Alexandria.

Ioan Hrisostom, Gură de Aur (din Antiohia)

cca. 347 – 407. Arhiepiscop in Constantinopol. A luptat împotriva păgânismului, a denunțat decăderea liderilor creștini ai vremii, abuzul de autoritate. A fost un mare predicator și exeget al Scripturii, după școala din Antiochia.

Hrisostom, l-a criticat pe Iulian că a încercat să restaureze și să reinstaureze închinarea la Apolos (382), la mormântul lui St Babylas din Antiohia.

Demonstrație pentru evrei și greci că Hristos este Dumnezeu (cca 381–387).

John Chrysostom (/ˈkrɪsəstəm, krɪˈsɒstəm/; **Greek:** Ἰωάννης ὁ Χρυσόστομος; c. 347 – 14 September 407)^[5] was an important [Early Church Father](#) who served as [archbishop of Constantinople](#). He is known for his [preaching](#) and [public speaking](#), his denunciation of [abuse of authority](#)^[6] by both ecclesiastical and political leaders, *[Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom](#)*, and his [ascetic](#) sensibilities. The epithet Χρυσόστομος (*Chrysostomos*, anglicized as Chrysostom) means "golden-mouthed" in Greek and denotes his celebrated eloquence.^{[2][7]} Chrysostom was among the most prolific authors in the early Christian Church, although both [Origen of Alexandria](#)^[8] and [Augustine of Hippo](#)^[9] exceeded Chrysostom.

John Chrysostom, in an early panegyric of St. Babylas of Antioch (about 382),²⁰ gloated over Julian's recent failure to restore the worship of Apollo at the site of the martyr bishop's grave. His principal apologetical treatise is his relatively brief and apparently incomplete *Demonstration to Jews and Greeks That Christ Is God* (about 381–387).²¹

Against the Greeks he here argues that Jesus has done what no mere man could do, namely, to win over people of all nations from corruption to a new way of life. This he has done through the preaching of a small band of ignorant Galileans. Fired with enthusiasm for the new faith, martyrs still lay down their lives, as may be observed today among the Persians. In a second part of the treatise, directed against the Jews, Chrysostom contends that the messianic promises have been fulfilled and that the Christian faith, according to the predictions of Christ Himself, is spreading irresistibly.

Chrysostom has an unenviable reputation for anti-Semitism because of eight sermons usually known as Homilies against the Jews,²² preached at Antioch about 387. Recent scholarship, however, reminds us they are better called Homilies against the Judaizers,²³ since the principal adversaries are Christians who observe aspects of Jewish law and celebrate festivals with the Jews. As a preacher seeking to stir up his congregation to zealous activity, he engaged in abusive language, accusing the

Jews of stubborn blindness, demanding that they renounce their errors, and warning the faithful against their diabolical malice. He even pictures Christ Himself as rebuking them: “Yet, O Jew, herein lies the wonder, that He whom you crucified did afterwards pull down your city, scatter your people, and disperse your nation throughout the whole world.”⁷⁴ In partial extenuation of Chrysostom one may allude to historical factors such as the support that some Jews had given to Julian, the aggressive tactics of the Jewish community at Antioch, and the rhetorical style characteristic of sermon and satirical literature. But the more fundamental weakness was theological. Like other apologists of the patristic period, Chrysostom “saw no way of acknowledging the ongoing reality of Israel without calling into question the truth of the Christian faith”.⁷⁵ This serious flaw was to perpetuate itself in much of the anti-Jewish polemics of the Middle Ages and even into modern times.

Theodoret din Cyrrhus (din Antiohia)

cca. 393—c. 457

Călugăr antiohian. A compus în tinerețe **Vindecarea de maladiile păgâne**, sau **Adevărul evangheliilor arătat prin filosofia greacă**.

Respinge trei mari obiecții intelectuale păgâne față de creștinism:

1. Creștinii se bazează pe credință oarbă.
2. autorii biblici erau ignoranți, needucați.
3. cultul martirilor este o superstiție lipsită de sens.

Cartea are 12 capitole.

- Cap.1: relația credință – rațiune
- Cap. 2: Dumnezeu, cauza supremă, principiu suprem.
- Cap. 3: îngeri, demoni, zei falși
- Cap. 4: lumea material
- Cap. 5: natura omului
- Cap. 6: providența divină
- Probleme practice:
- Cap. 7: jertfe
- Cap. 8: cultul martirilor
- Cap. 9: legile
- Cap. 10: oracole (profeții) false și adevărate
- Cap. 11: despre moarte și judecată
- Cap. 12: natura adevăratelor virtuți

Metoda lui Theodoret: filosofii greci nu agreează în toate. Cei mai buni au puncte comune cu creștinii (Platon). Înțelepții greci nu înaintează prea mult cu intuiția lor, nici nu duc vieți sfinte care să respecte adevărurile înțelese. Prin contrast, cărțile Bibliei au un singur mesaj, în armonie. Are revelația

divină și dă putere să trăiești o viață sfântă, conform celor înțelese. Cine o acceptă dobândește caracter și virtuți.

For all practical purposes the patristic age in the apologetics of the Eastern Church comes to a close with the great Antiochene theologian Theodoret of Cyrrihus (c. 393—c. 457). Probably in his youth, as a monk at Nicerte near Antioch, he composed a magnificent summa against paganism entitled *The Cure of Pagan Maladies*; or, *The Truth of the Gospels Proved from Greek Philosophy*.⁷⁸

In his preface Theodoret explains the necessity of refuting three main objections raised against Christianity by cultured Hellenists: that the Christians, despising reason, rely upon blind faith; that the biblical writers were ignorant and unpolished; and that the cult of martyrs is a senseless superstition.

The answers to these objections that emerge in the course of the treatise are much what one might expect.

To the first he replies in Book 1 that even the philosophers demand human faith from their disciples and that in the mystery religions only a few hierophants understand the meaning of the sacred rites. If such credit can be extended to human authorities, how much more should it be accorded to the divine Teacher! In this connection *Theodoret engages in an interesting discussion of the mutual priorities of faith and reason. He explains how every student first believes in order that he may be able to understand but that belief itself always presupposes a modicum of understanding.*

As to the second objection, Theodoret turns it aside by pointing out (also in Book 1) that elegance of style, can be deceptive, which is admittedly found more among Greeks than among barbarians, can be deceptive. Socrates, as one reads in the Apology, was not ashamed to use simple and uncouth language. The wisest Greeks were humble enough to learn from the barbarians, whose wisdom is far more ancient and venerable.

When he turns to the third objection, in the latter part of his treatise (Book 8), Theodoret points out that God Himself has glorified the martyrs by working extraordinary wonders through their relics. The ex-votos bearing witness to these cures are evident everywhere.

It is quite natural, then, that idols are being abandoned and that crowds should flock to the shrines of martyrs.

As the treatise evolves, it turns into something vaster than a reply to these random objections. In effect Theodoret outlines a whole system of dogma and Christian morality, as may be seen from the subject matter of the twelve books. In Book 1, he discusses the nature of faith and the interrelationship between faith and reason. Then in Book 2 he deals with God, the first principle. Thereafter he treats of the angels, demons, and false gods (Book 3), the material world (Book 4), the nature of man (Book 5), and divine providence (Book 6). The next three books deal with practical questions: sacrifices (Book 7), the cult of martyrs (Book 8), and laws (Book 9). Then, after a discussion of true and false oracles (Book 10), Theodoret concludes with treatises on death and judgment (Book 11) and the nature of true virtues (Book 12).

In dealing with these various problems his method is almost constant. He shows, first, that the philosophers disagree but that some of the best philosophers, including Plato, hold views that at least approach the Christian doctrine. The Greek sages, however, do not do justice to their own best intuitions, nor are their lives up to the level of their doctrine. The Bible, on the other hand, speaks unanimously. It heralds decisively what the philosophers are tentatively groping toward and gives the

power to live accordingly. Those who accept Christianity, even though they be unlearned, possess wisdom and virtue accessible to very few pupils of the philosophers.

The net result of Theodoret's disquisition is an impressive synthesis between the testimony of the Bible and the highest insights of Platonic and Neoplatonic speculation. Theodoret made an important contribution to Christian humanism and was to be highly esteemed by Ficino and other Renaissance Platonists. As apologetic his argument is persuasive up to a point but leaves many unanswered questions. Theodoret is open to the charge of selecting what he likes from Greek philosophy and rejecting what does not please him. Why are the philosophers to be approved whenever they agree with the Bible and reprobated when they disagree, unless one is willing to assume the very point at issue, namely, the revealed character of the biblical message? If Theodoret had been proficient in philosophy he might have been able to show that the points he accepts from the philosophers are capable of being solidly demonstrated, while those he repudiates are based on faulty reasoning. But Theodoret was no philosopher. His work therefore cannot be exonerated from the charge of superficiality.

In emphasizing the accord between Platonism and Christianity, Theodoret unwittingly transforms the latter. He gives the impression that Christianity is a revealed philosophy or at best a school of virtue. His approach to the faith is doctrinaire and moralistic rather than historical and kerygmatic. The strong Christological devotion that gives life and warmth to the apologies of Clement and Athanasius is absent in Theodoret. He brings in the Incarnation as a kind of appendix to the treatise on providence.

Like Clement and Eusebius, Theodoret is fond of quoting pagan as well as sacred authors. Indeed he quotes almost the same passages, presumably gathered from Christian florilegia, but he weaves them more successfully into his own work than Eusebius had done. His arguments, likewise, are borrowed from earlier apologists. To read *The Cure of Pagan Maladies* after studying the other Greek apologies can therefore be a disappointing experience. But for one who has to make a choice of some one treatise, Theodoret's commends itself as much as any. There is perhaps no apologetical work that better illustrates the strengths and weaknesses of Greek apologetics in the patristic age.

Sf. Augustin din Hippo din sec. 4-5, anii: 354-430

Augustin din Hippo – Credință și rațiune

Primul apologet din vest care a strălucit și ca teolog.

A plasat creștinismul în contextual metafizicii (filosofiei) religioase, în căutare de adevăr absolute.

A adunat și sintetizat argumentele de până la el, a atacat neoplatonismul grecilor și vederile politice ale romanilor.

Cărți filosofice timpurii, înainte de botez

În vila de la Cassiciacum, lângă Roma, în iarna 386—387, înainte de botez, a scris dialogurile:

Despre viața fericită

Răspuns contra scepticilor (Contra academicos),

Providența divină și problema răului (De ordine),

Monologuri (Soliloqui)

În 388 a scris **Despre calea de viață catolică și Despre calea de viață manicheistă** (*De moribus ecclesiae catholicae and De moribus manichaeorum*).

În 390 și 391 a scris împotriva manicheismului tratatele: **Despre religia adevărată și Despre beneficiul credinței**.

În perioada de mijloc a scris dialogurile: **Despre libertatea voinței** (388–395), **Răspuns scrisorii lui Manicheu, numită Fundamentală** (397), și **Confesiunile** (397–401). Apoi, monumental **Orașul lui Dumnezeu** (413–427).⁸⁴

Abordare subiectivă și psihologică, nu obiectivă și sistematică

Subliniază a caracterul absolut al adevărului și existența eternă a lui Dumnezeu. Rațiunea umană poate să identifice argumente corecte despre existența lui Dumnezeu (adevărurile eterne). Aici se bazează ep neoplatonism.

Filosofii antici ar fi putut deveni (fi) creștini, dacă erau contemporani cu evanghelia (Platon, Socrate). Mentea iluminată îl cunoaște pe Dumnezeu, dar uneori, *via negativa*. Dumnezeu atrage pe om prin revelație credință, prin gândire (intelect), dar și prin autoritatea sa divină.

Rațiuni, Credință, Rațiune: cine precede pe cine?

Cine crede în Dumnezeu, crede și în minuni.

Rațiuni-credință-rațiune, o dependență mutuală, reciprocă.

Investigarea Bisericii Catolice (de fapt, Universale... Catolice și Sobornicești)

“N-aș avea de ce să cred evanghelia, dacă nu aș fi motivate de autoritatea Bisericii Universale (Catolice)”

Ea are autoritate pentru că

a.este universală, integrală

b.este antică

c.este în armonie și unitate teologică bună

Un uriaș tratat despre minuni?

Biserica, în apariția ei, în existență și în expansiune, este văzută ca o minune, un miracol

În **Orașul lui Dumnezeu**, Augustin vorbește despre trei lucruri incredibile: că Hristos a înviat în trup și cu acest trup s-a înălțat în gloria cerească. Că oamenii au crezut aceasta; că ucenicii fără naștere aristocrație au vestit cu succes, și i-au convins pe foarte mulți, indiferent de bogăție și educație și poziție socială.

Implinirea profețiilor din VT

Cartea 18 din **Orașul lui Dumnezeu**, și în **De consensu evangelistarum**, **De fide rerum quae non videntur**, **Contra Faustum**, și **Adversus Judaeos**,

Orașul lui Dumnezeu

O capodoperă, prin lungime și structură. Dă un răspuns acuzațiilor păgâne împotriva creștinilor, când Roma a fost atacată de Alaric (410). Se zicea că Roma a fost pedepsită de zei din cauza creștinilor pentru infidelitate.

Primele 10 cărți sunt apologetice și polemice și au avut mare succes împotriva acuzațiilor păgâne. De la 1-5 se referă la viața umană, în istorie. De la 6-10 se referă la viața dincolo de moarte. De la 11-22 se referă la teologia lui Augustin despre istorie.

In Cartea 1, Augustin arată atacul nu a fost cu adevărat distrugător, iar în istorie Roma a fost atacată mult mai greu. Iar ce a fost acum distrus e o pedeapsă pentru viața degradată din Roma.

In Cartea 2 Augustin descrie degradarea morală a romanilor, foarte tare încurajată de idolatrie.

Cartea 3 demonstrează că zeii nu i-au scăpat pe romani în trecut de războaiele punice, de revolta fraților Gracchi, de războaie civile (sub Marius și Sulla), de atacuri externe.

In Cartea 4 Augustin arată că este imposibil ca creșterea Romei să fie atribuită unor zeități ca Jupiter sau Victoria, Fericirea, Fortuna (Noroc), etc. Pe de altă parte, evrei au fost păstrați în istorie de Dumnezeu care avea un plan cu ei.

In Cartea 5 Augustin arată că ridicarea și prabușirea imperiilor este decisă de singurul Dumnezeu adevărat.

Cartile 6 la 10, arată că zeii păgâni nu pot veni în ajutor nici pentru viața aceasta, nici pentru cea viitoare.

Thanks to his rare combination of speculative power, erudition, and literary eloquence, Aurelius Augustine (354–430) occupies a place of unique eminence in the story of patristic apologetics.

As a thinker he is the equal of Origen; as a scholar he ranks not far below Origen and Eusebius; and as a writer he outclasses even Clement and Lactantius.

He is the first Western apologist to achieve true eminence as a theologian.

Whereas others were content to achieve tactical victories or to negotiate profitable alliances, Augustine was able to situate the approach to Christian faith within the framework of a highly developed metaphysics of religious knowledge. He gave new precision to the distinctions between authority and reason, faith and understanding, which have remained classic since his time. Besides recapitulating all

that was best in the patristic tradition before him, Augustine formulated an original response to the philosophical onslaught of pagan Neoplatonism and to the political critique of Christianity on the part of Roman patriots. For all these reasons he deserves to be treated at some length.⁷⁹

Cărți filosofice timpurii, înainte de botez

For an understanding of Augustine the apologist it is indispensable that one have some familiarity with the early philosophical dialogues that he composed in his retreat at the villa of Cassiciacum, near Rome, in the winter 386–387, while preparing to be baptized. His dialogues **On the Happy Life, An Answer to Skeptics (Contra academicos), Divine Providence and the Problem of Evil (De ordine),** and his Soliloquies stem from this period.⁸⁰ The following year (388) he wrote his twin treatises **On the Catholic and Manichaeian Ways of Life (De moribus ecclesiae catholicae and De moribus manichaeorum),**⁸¹ which are likewise strongly apologetic.

Other anti-Manichaeian works such as the treatises **Of True Religion and On the Usefulness of Belief** (probably to be dated respectively in 390 and 391)⁸² present his views on the role of authority in religious knowledge and outline his demonstration of the truth of the Catholic faith.

From Augustine's middle period, the dialogue **On Free Will** (about 388–395),⁸³ the **Reply to the Letter of Manichaeus Called Fundamental** (about 397), and the **Confessions** (about 397–401) are of importance for the apologetic theme. Of his later works the most pertinent is his monumental **City of God** (413–427).⁸⁴

Abordare subiectivă și psihologică, nu obiectivă și sistematică

The point of departure for Augustine's apologetic is subjective and psychological rather than objective and systematic.

He notes within man an inescapable drive toward happiness and, once the possibility of immortality becomes known, a drive toward eternal life. As he observes at the conclusion of his dialogue *On the Happy Life*: "This, then, is the full satisfaction of souls, this the happy life: to recognize piously and completely the One through whom you are led into the truth, the nature of the truth you enjoy, and the bond that connects you with the supreme measure."⁸⁵

Caracterul absolut al adevărului și existența eternă a lui Dumnezeu

Augustine holds that human reason is capable of establishing by indubitable arguments the existence of God. His favorite argument is taken from the "eternal truths".

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His favorite argument is taken from the "eternal truths".

Truth, Augustine holds, is absolute; it is above human minds, which are above human bodies and the whole material world. "If there is anything more excellent than wisdom, doubtless it, rather, is God. But if there is nothing more excellent, then truth itself is God. Whether there is or is not such a higher thing, you cannot deny that God exists."⁸⁶

In depicting the effort of the mind to reach upward beyond all material and changeable things to the eternal, invisible Godhead, **Augustine relies heavily on his Neoplatonic philosophic heritage.** But he finds numerous Scripture texts in his favor. He is fond of quoting from Paul: "We look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen; for the things that are seen are transient, but the things

that are unseen are eternal” (2 Cor 4:18). He also quotes from 1 John 2:15-16: “Love not the world or the things which are in the world. For everything that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the ambition of this world.”⁸⁷ To approach God with the mind demands suitable moral dispositions—detachment from the senses, restraint of the passions, and earnest longing for enlightenment.⁸⁸

Filosofii antici ar fi putut deveni creștini

Because Plato so acutely perceived the necessity of rising above matter and the senses he was, according to Augustine, very close to Christ. If Plato were to return to life, Augustine assures us, he would be delighted to find the churches full of men seeking spiritual and intelligible goods, animated by hope of eternal blessedness.⁸⁹ Augustine is confident that Socrates and Plato, if they lived today, would become Christians “as so many Platonists of recent times have done”.⁹⁰

Mintea iluminată. Via negativa și cunoașterea lui Dumnezeu

While acknowledging that reason is in principle capable of knowing something about God, Augustine is no rationalist in natural theology. **He asserts that for the mind to see God it must be illuminated by God Himself.**⁹¹ At best, one’s knowledge of God in this life is negative rather than positive. God is “better known by knowing what he is not”.⁹² **(VIA NEGATIVA)** Many men have failed entirely to achieve the knowledge of God through reason. The philosophers disagree among themselves about whether one should worship many gods, one God, or no god.⁹³ Since wisdom is so scarce and difficult to attain, the path of skepticism is a very tempting one. **Augustine was himself inclined toward the view of the skeptics until he became aware that God draws the soul not only by reason but by authority.**⁹⁴

Rațiuni, Credință, Rațiune: cine precede pe cine?

In matters of great importance, pertaining to divinity, Augustine maintains, **one must first believe before he seeks to know.**⁹⁵ **Faith precedes knowledge or reason.**

One ought to believe that God exists because “that is taught in the books of great men who have left their testimony in writing that they lived with the Son of God, and because they have written that they saw things which could not have happened if there were no God”.⁹⁶

In other words, Augustine proposes an approach to the existence of God that is integral with and inseparable from his belief in miracles and in the Christian testimony. The normal order is first to believe such matters, and then later to arrive at some rational understanding of them. This agrees with the text from Isaiah so frequently quoted by Augustine: “Unless you have believed, you shall not understand” (Is 7:9, LXX). **PRIORITY OF FAITH IN UNDERSTANDING.**

Rațiune-credință-rațiune, reason-faith-reason

Augustine, however, is quite aware that the **priorities between reason and belief are mutual.** Nobody, *he says*, “believes anything unless he is first convinced that it ought to be believed”.⁹⁷ Before we can lend credence to anyone, we must have reasons for accepting that person as an authority.⁹⁸ But this brings us face to face with a grave difficulty. How can we know who is wise unless we ourselves are wise? Wisdom, unlike material things, is of such a nature that it cannot be known except by those who possess it; and if we are seeking it, we do not possess it. Hence we are in no position to judge what teacher is or is not wise.⁹⁹

In some of his writings Augustine gives a pragmatic answer to this difficulty, based on the alternative possibilities with which he, as a religious inquirer, found himself confronted. His argument may be traced in the latter part of his anti-Manichaeism treatise *On the Usefulness of Belief*. The Manichaeans, he says, raised certain specious objections to the Catholic doctrine of the causes of evil as they understood it, and they then proposed their own explanation as one that could be justified by demonstrative reasons. But Augustine found that when he pressed them, they gave not reasons but rhetoric. While purporting to dispense with authority, they actually invoked it. They invited men to learn from them rather than the Catholic Church and frankly sought to bring men to belief in Christ. Thus they implicitly contradicted themselves.

Now if one is to believe in Christ, Augustine replied, this cannot be done on the basis of personal acquaintance with Him. The choice is between believing in Him on the unanimous authority of the great and ancient Church, which traces her history back to the original companions of Christ, and doing so out of respect for the Manichaeans, who are of recent origin, few in numbers, and discordant among themselves. If one believes in Christ through others than the Manichaeans, why should he come to them for instruction about Christ? Let them advise inquirers rather to consult the leaders of the great mass of believers.¹⁰⁰

Influenced, no doubt, by Tertullian, Augustine looked upon the Bible as the book of the Catholic Church. He himself came to the gospel through the influence of Catholics, and he argued that anything tending to weaken the authority of the Church would inevitably undermine his confidence in the gospel. If the Manichaeans, then, wished to lay weight upon their alleged arguments from the gospel, they ought to support the claims of the Catholic Church! In this context Augustine wrote his famous sentence: "I should not believe the gospel except as moved by the authority of the Catholic Church."¹⁰¹

Investigarea Bisericii Catolice (de fapt, Universale... Catolice și Sobornicești)

Augustine, then, had strong pragmatic grounds for beginning his own religious investigations with Catholicism. The Catholic Church recommended herself to his consideration, **first, by reason of her size, antiquity, and the relative unanimity of her teachers; and second, by reason of the fact that she was the one in which he had been brought up.** In the religious crisis of his early thirties he resolved to remain a catechumen in that Church until he was persuaded either that she taught the truth he was in search of or that nothing was to be gained from seeking.¹⁰²

The story how Augustine proceeded from his practical decision **to investigate Catholicism** to his conviction that it was a divine revelation is well known to all readers of his *Confessions*. In **Confessions, Book 8** he tells how he was struck by learning of the heroic virtue of the monks and virgins who dedicated their lives to God, in poverty and chastity, according to the example of Anthony. In their example he found hope and confidence that he himself could be delivered from the enslavement of lust and ambition by embracing the Christian faith with his whole heart.

In his apologetical works, Augustine, mirroring the route he had followed in his own religious pilgrimage, frequently argues to the truth of Christianity on the basis of the concrete reality of the Catholic Church. The history of the Church in the past few centuries seemed to contain an evident lesson:

After all the Christian blood shed, after all the burnings and crucifixions of the martyrs, fertilized by these things churches have sprung up as far afield as among the barbarian nations. That thousands of young men and maidens condemn marriage and live in chastity causes no one surprise. Plato might have suggested that, but he so dreaded the perverse opinion of his times that he is said to have given in

to nature and declared [in]continence to be no sin. Views are accepted which it was once monstrous to maintain, even as it is monstrous now to dispute them. All over the inhabited world the Christian rites are entrusted to men who are willing to make profession and to undertake the obligations required. Every day the precepts of Christianity are read in the churches and expounded by the priests. Those who try to fulfil them beat their breasts in contrition. Multitudes enter upon this way of life from every race, forsaking the riches and honours of the present world, desirous of dedicating their whole life to the one most high God. Islands once deserted and many lands formerly left in solitude are filled with monks. In cities and towns, castles and villages, country places and private estates, there is openly preached and practiced such a renunciation of earthly things and conversion to the one true God that daily throughout the entire world with almost one voice the human race makes response: Lift up your hearts to the Lord.¹⁰³

Augustine's principal argument for the truth of Catholicism takes the form of what today might be called a demonstration that the Church is a moral miracle. His clearest development of this theme is found in his tract *The Way of Life of the Catholic Church*, in which he extols the beneficent influences of the Church as the "true mother of Christians".¹⁰⁴ In this apologia he shows that the argument is not invalidated by the faults of "those who, while professing the name of Christian, neither understand nor manifest the nature of the faith they profess".¹⁰⁵

Un uriaş tratat despre minuni?

In discussions such as this Augustine often alludes to the marvel that in spite of all opposition from worldly powers, the Church succeeded in converting what he hyperbolically calls the human race.¹⁰⁶

Biserica, în existenţă şi expansiune, văzută ca o minune

While he does not unequivocally characterize this expansion of the Church as a miracle, he suggests as much.

In the *City of God* he speaks of **three incredibilities**:

*"It is incredible that Christ rose in the flesh and with his flesh ascended into heaven. It is incredible that the world believed so incredible an event; and it is incredible that men of no birth, no standing, no learning, and so few of them, should have been able to persuade, so effectively, the whole world, including the learned men."*¹⁰⁷

According to the received accounts, the Apostles converted the nations with the help of miracles. The skeptic may deny this, but if so, he makes it more difficult for himself to explain the conversion of the civilized world. "Nevertheless, if they do not believe that those miracles were effected through Christ's apostles, to ensure belief in their proclamation of Christ's resurrection and ascension, then this one overpowering miracle is enough for them—that the whole world has come to believe without any miracles at all!"¹⁰⁸

In his discussion of the Church as a marvel, Augustine does not overlook the constancy of the martyrs, which had so impressed Tertullian and others. Contrasting the behavior of Christians with that of Romans who allegedly believe in the divinity of Romulus, Augustine asks: "And has anyone been forbidden to assert that Romulus or Hercules or other similar men are gods, and yet has preferred to die rather than refrain from asserting it?"¹⁰⁹ The Christians, on the contrary, went joyfully to their deaths for the sake of Christ and defiantly continued to preach Him openly to every people in the world, notwithstanding every prohibition and penalty. As a result, says Augustine, the blood of martyrs

watered the seeds of hope implanted in the world by Christ's rising from the dead. "[T]ruth, new to experience though not contrary to reason, exercised its persuasion, until the world which had persecuted in frenzy now followed in faith."¹¹⁰

In various tracts and sermons Augustine presents materials for an exceptionally **rich and thorough treatise on physical miracles**. He is fully cognizant of the problem of the historicity of the miracle stories told in Scriptures and elsewhere, and he honestly faces up to the task of distinguishing between true miracles and the wonders of magic and necromancy. Aware of these difficulties, he does not demand too much from an apologetic of miracles.

Most of all, perhaps, he stresses the pedagogical value of miracles. They serve to call attention to things we might not otherwise notice and to remind us of the power and goodness of God, which we might otherwise forget. The miracles of Christ, he says, speak eloquently of God's goodness and mercy and attract men's hearts. Miraculous signs were particularly needed in the early years of the Church, when the witnesses of the faith were few and unlearned, but they became less essential once the Church had been diffused throughout the world. God did not allow miracles to continue in great numbers "lest the mind should always seek visible things, and the human race should grow cold by becoming accustomed to things which when they were novelties kindled its faith."¹¹¹ Yet miracles have not utterly ceased. In the *City of God*, Book 22, chapter 8, Augustine gives circumstantial descriptions of some familiar to him at first or second hand.

Minuni creștine și minuni necreștine

On the basis of Scripture and the claims of the non-Christian religions, Augustine admits that there are many prodigies that cannot be attributed to the God of Christians. He therefore recognizes two classes of prodigy, those that are demonic and those that are angelic or divine.

Christianity has in its favor certain extraordinary miracles—such as the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection and the Ascension of Christ—that are not paralleled in pagan religions.¹¹² If the **historicity of these miracles** is contested, Augustine calls on the confirmatory arguments from **fulfilled prophecy** and from the **marvelous expansion** of the Catholic Church. These three types of argument converge and interlock, forming an unbreakable chain of evidence.

Second, Augustine maintains that true and false miracles can be distinguished on the basis of their religious effects. In his refutation of the Neoplatonist Porphyry, in the tenth book of the *City of God*, Augustine argues against accepting any miracles that tend to divert men from the worship of the one true God: "It is to this God that man must cleave in all sincerity, if he is to attain the only Good which brings true happiness. The Platonists themselves admit this by a multitude of testimonies."¹¹³ The marvels of magic are meant to persuade people to worship many gods or to adore the created spirits who perpetrate them, but true miracles, such as those recounted in Scripture, which far outmatch magical deeds, draw people to adore the God above all gods.¹¹⁴

Implinirea profețiilor din VT

In the apologetic writings of his early period Augustine gives little weight to the argument from prophecy, which presumably played no important part in his conversion. But in some of his later works, composed after his elevation to the episcopate, e.g., in Book 18 of the **City of God and in De consensu evangelistarum, De fide rerum quae non videntur, Contra Faustum, and Adversus Judaeos**, he does attempt to prove the truth of Christianity from the fulfillment of what was promised in the Old

Testament. He progresses beyond earlier apologists in that he does not limit himself to texts that imply miraculous precognition on the part of the Prophets or hagiographers. Rather he looks upon the total experience of the people of God under the Old Law as a providential foreshadowing of what was to be accomplished in Christ and the Church. This permits him to engage in a mystical or allegorical interpretation of virtually any text from the Old Testament. While this form of exegesis may be helpful for Christian spirituality, it creates some difficulty in apologetics, inasmuch as it depends on interpretations that are not evident except, perhaps, to those who are previously convinced that Christ is the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets. Modern critics object, with some justice, that Augustine relies too much on forced interpretations and adaptations totally foreign to the minds of the sacred writers.¹¹⁵

One of the pieces in which Augustine most presses the argument from prophecy is his sermon **In Answer to the Jews, probably preached sometime after 425**. Like Chrysostom's Homilies against the Jews, this seems to have been intended primarily to warn the Christians against falling prey to Jewish objections and influences. But Augustine is free from the harshness of Chrysostom. After giving Christian interpretations of a number of texts from the Jewish Scriptures, he exhorts his hearers:

Dearly beloved, whether the Jews receive these divine testimonies with joy or with indignation, nevertheless, when we can, let us proclaim them with great love for the Jews. Let us not proudly glory against the broken branches; let us rather reflect by whose grace it is, and by how much mercy, and on what root, we have been ingrafted. Then, not savoring of pride, but with a deep sense of humility, not insulting with presumption, but rejoicing with trembling, let us say: "Come yet and let us walk in the light of the Lord", because His "name is great among the Gentiles." If they hear Him and obey Him, they will be among those to whom Scripture says: "Come yet to him and be enlightened: and your faces shall not be confounded."¹¹⁶

While Augustine accepted the traditional argument from prophecy and utilized it in his debates with Jews and Manichaeans, it does not seem to have been of crucial importance for his own faith. Even miracles were for him important only insofar as they provided a clue as to how the Catholic faith had spread in the age of persecution. For his personal faith he relied very much on the divine wisdom that he found in Catholic teaching, and second on the authority of the Church, "inaugurated by miracles, nourished by hope, enlarged by love, established by age".¹¹⁷ To these motives he adds, in the same passage, the continuous succession of popes and bishops, and the very name of "Catholic", which no heresy has ever been able to wrest from the true Church.

City of God

Reference has already been made to the treatment of miracles in Augustine's City of God. But this masterpiece deserves much greater attention, since it occupies a unique place among his works by reason of its length and majestic architecture.

It was occasioned by the pagan charges that the sack of Rome under Alaric (410) was a punishment for Rome's infidelity to the ancient gods. As Augustine explains in his *Retractations*,¹¹⁸ the first ten books of the City of God are primarily apologetical and polemical; they are designed to refute the view that pagan religion is necessary for man's welfare.

In **Books 1 through 5** he proves this with regard to temporal life and in **Books 6 through 10 with regard to the life beyond death**. Then in **Books 11 to 22 he develops his own theology of history**, tracing the concurrent and interacting vicissitudes of the cities of God and of man.

The polemic against paganism in the first ten books is eminently successful and doubtless did much to undermine whatever prestige paganism still enjoyed at the time.

In Book 1 Augustine shows that the atrocities of the sack of Rome were those customary in war but that the moderation practiced by the victors, and especially their respect for the churches as places of sanctuary, were due to the power of Christ's name. If many Christians suffered as the pagans did, this is partly because if God were to spare them such calamities, men would be drawn to the faith for unworthy motives. Yet the Christian doctrine of the Cross and Resurrection enables Christians to suffer with a patience and hope not available to others. *The afflictions visited on Rome were a just punishment for its moral degradation.*

In Book 2 Augustine dilates further on the vices of pagan society, which the Greco-Roman religion, far from arresting, actually fostered.

Book 3 demonstrates the powerlessness of the gods worshiped by the Romans to prevent previous calamities such as the Punic Wars, the revolt of the Gracchi, and the civil wars under Marius and Sulla.

In Book 4 Augustine points out the impossibility of ascribing the expansion of the Roman Empire to divinities such as Jupiter or the various others (Victory, Felicity, Fortune, and the like) who are sometimes invoked. On the other hand, the history of the Jews shows that their kingdom was preserved as long as they were faithful to the Mosaic religion.

In Book 5 Augustine goes on to show that the **rise and fall of empires** is not ruled by chance, by fate, or by the stars but **only by the true God**, who wills to confer earthly glory upon those who live up to the moral standards of the earthly city. Beyond these temporal rewards, Christian emperors look forward in hope to the fullness of happiness in the life to come.

Books 6 to 10, probing more deeply into speculative questions, aim to exhibit the futility of looking to the pagan gods for salvation in the future life.

In Book 6 Augustine argues that if the gods cannot give temporal prosperity, they are even less capable of bestowing eternal blessings.

This incapacity, according to **Book 7**, affects even those whom Varro classified as the "higher" gods of "physical theology". These gods, indeed, are in many cases nothing more than **personified natural forces**.

Having previously disposed of the old paganism, Augustine turns in Books 8 and 9 to the religion of Plato and the Neoplatonists.

In Book 8, after showing that these schools excel all other philosophical sects, he cautiously accepts the common view that Plato was probably indebted to Moses for some of his crucial insights.¹¹⁹ Then he goes on to reprobate the polytheism and demon worship of the later Platonists, especially Plotinus and Apuleius.

In this connection he argues (**in Book 9**) that the angels, though they are instruments of Providence, should not be worshiped with divine honors.

Finally in Book 10 he shows that Christ's sacrifice was supremely pleasing to God and contends, against Porphyry, that the divine nature was in no way stained by taking on human flesh.

This first half of the City of God, here summarized all too briefly, is the most brilliant of all the Christian refutations of pagan religion thus far examined. No less brilliant is the second half, which seeks to lay the groundwork of a total theology of history, from the moment of creation to the final restoration of all things in Christ. In this survey it seems permissible to omit these last twelve books, since they pertain more directly to dogmatic than to apologetical theology. The points of greatest apologetical interest in these pages, such as the observations on miracles and prophecies, have been discussed above.

In connection with Augustine's City of God some mention should be made of two of his younger contemporaries, the presbyter Orosius (born in Braga, modern Portugal) and the Gallic presbyter Salvian.