

was also a Montanist for part of his life, and this has kept him out of the canonical lists. His sympathies with this group were formed by his opposition to worldliness in the church...a problem that knows no age in particular. His labours are for correct order and theological understanding in the church and he touches on almost every issue to that end. The breadth of his writing allows him an opinion on every subject and he is one of the most widely quoted fathers of the early church--by everybody! As with other polemicists, his opinions must be read in the light of his personal convictions and emphases.

d. Origen (d. 254)

Although condemned at the fifth ecumenical council, Origen was a very important man of his time and continues to be that to us today. His orthodoxy is questioned in key areas, influenced by a speculative mind and perhaps too much influence of the older Alexandrian philosophies. His chief work in doctrine is De Principiis while his great work in polemics is Contra Celsum, a work directed as the snide shots taken at Christianity by a pronounced pagan critic. (Actually Origen is better known to us today for his work in textual criticism, the Hexapla.) Origen was enough things to enought men that his total influence is negated by what often seem to be self-contradictory expressions.

5. The Shepherds

This is my designation for a group of formative thinkers who seemed to cross all boundaries but whose greater interests were in building the flock of God. I list but two although there are many other candidates.

a. Clement of Alexandria (d. 220)

He was probably the foremost scholar of his time and in his homilies and devotional expositions showed a great spiritual interest in the growth of believers. As head of the catechetical school in Alexandria he is more important for showing us the way in which the church developed than for helping us understand the growth of doctrinal comprehension.

b. Cyprian (d. 258)

This famous Carthaginian bishop lived and served during a time of maximum persecution. His letters and treatises concerning his interest in the health of the church are the items that interest us most. Out of them comes his concept of the church and the relationship of members to the bishop. He touches very often on ecclesiology and his ideas in church polity eventually become very meaningful.