

the earliest fathers for being "too philosophical" and not making explicit the biblical base for their discussions—a charge which we think is overly critical and does not allow for sympathy with the situation of the times.

The polemicists led something of a revolt against the authority of reason and they are best represented by Tertullian and Theophilus. Tertullian was most outspoken about resorting to the supposed learning of the pagan mind... perhaps an indication of the dissatisfaction he had found in his own studies of an unregenerate era. At best, to these thinkers, reason was a tool of defense and not authoritative in matters of faith or life decisions.

An interested student will see a developing dichotomy of ideas. The school of Justin (those who thought as he did) will come to be represented by the Alexandrian thinkers where things are thought out in an attempted scientific presentation of the faith while the school of Tertullian will find more ground in the work at Antioch where human reasoning is less important and simple exegesis more. The distinctions cannot be pressed too far at this time but the general character of this diversity is plain. Naturally, if you are inclined skeptically, you will realize that both schools are dependent on one another's essential ideology and a lot of the controversy that existed between them (and continues to this day) would be eradicated with some simple understanding of common concern.

To some degree, the difference in polemical and apologetical ideas may be accounted for on the basis of their foes. The arguments of the apologists are with those who do not make a profession of recognition of truth while the polemicists argue with those who make the profession but do not apply it in a satisfactory manner. This helps us to see why the emphasis of Tertullian was more real with his "intended" audience. He may have thought that controversy with the unbelieving world was wholly not needed but whatever the case we should remember that the weapon should suit the battle and it is not easy to join the battle with a weapon not so suited.

In summary there was no uniform agreement on the authority of reason but all employ it for the gains desired.

4. The Authority of Tradition

Tradition is a "loaded term" with connotations and denotations meaning a vastly different amount of things to various readers. We must be somewhat clear on what the term means before continuing to discuss it as an authority voice. If we can gain the definition and hold it consistently, we will be in better position to affirm or deny the value.