

Lactantius (320)

A classical Latinist, Lactantius was converted later in life and his major works seek to show the adequacy of Christianity as opposed to the inadequacy of the pagan systems. He is a source for information of the persecutions in the time of Diocletian and his own conversion dated from that period. In many ways his work is more in the area of historical apologetics and his account of Constantine's conversion varies slightly from the one contained in Eusebius.

Summary on the Apologists

This is, of course, but a partial listing but those who seem most important to me in the thrust of this course. It is a good bit easier to criticize an apologist than to be one and there are many reactions against a reasoned apologetic based on thought that the unregenerate man cannot perceive spiritual things anyway and the theological apologist is likely to make concessions in that direction and so misstate the truth. This is an oversimplification of the problem and the thought in this quarter is that to disavow a reasoned apologetic on such lines is to suggest (somewhat) that the faith is not worthy of expression in an outgoing manner. In broad form, the earliest apologists said something like this:

Christians, like others, have a right to live

Christianity is a reasonable worldview with better answers to the questions of life.

Christianity is reasonably compatible within itself and consistent in expression.

The later apologists added these concepts:

Christianity shows the fulfillment of history and the plan of God.

Christianity is logically defensible.

Christianity successfully challenges other world systems and demonstrates superiority in continuity and stability.

The problems that beset the apologists of this period came from without the church both in the way of