

concept of authority, there could have been no Confessionalism and no norm for the grasp of doctrine (or dogma) -in the centuries to come. We see how it is solved largely in the attitudes and activities of the fathers and their early moves.

Authority
in
Reason

1. The Authority of Reason. Which might seem like a strange place to start but in the early writings of the apologists and others, much was made of the fact that God had made man a rational being. From this starting point much of the early literature grows. It seems to have been assumed that if man could think correctly about key issues, he could be brought on in pursuit of other aspects.

The Apologists accordingly argued for what may be called the "fundamental articles of religion." From what they knew of life and the world they argued for the Being, Unity, and spiritual character of God, His creation and the world's subsequent dependence on Him, His administration and providence over the present created world, His moral law, and the ultimate accountability of man. They did not discard the Scripture in this but they began on the concept of thinking that reasonable men had to accept the reality of being beyond themselves. For this reason some have criticised the earlier fathers for being "too philosophical" and not making explicit the biblical base for their discussions. We think this an overly severe criticism not allowing for the situation of the time.

The Polemicists led something of a revolt against the authority of reason and they are best represented with Tertullian and Theophilus. Tertullian was most outspoken about resorting to the supposed learning of the pagan mind. At best reason was a tool of defense and not authoritative in matters of faith or life decision.

Note:
Use of reason
and statement
on faith.

The interested student will, about now, see a developing dichotomy of ideas. The school of Justin will come to be represented by the Alexandrian thinkers where things are thought out in an attempted scientific presentation of the faith while the ideal of Tertullian will find more ground in the school of 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.

Part of the total difference is in the approach of Tertullian and Justin and the character of their foes. The arguments of the apologists are, in theory, with those who do not make a profession of recognition of truth...the arguments of the polemicists are with some, at least, who do. This helps us