

2. The Apologists – defending the Faith

- a. Justin Martyr

- b. Athenagoras of Athens

- c. Irenaeus of Lyons

- d. Tertullian of Carthage

- e. Clement of Alexandria

- f. Origen of Alexandria

- g. Cyprian of Carthage

Gathering the Saints, and Defending the Faith

*The Development of Scripture, Worship, and Leadership
in the Early Church*

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering...not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.” Hebrews 10: 23, 25

I. INTRODUCTION

Two continuing challenges facing the early Church:

1. Developing worship and leadership

2. Explaining and defending the Faith

Truth mixed with error, persecution with growth, division with unity; yet the Lord preserved his Church.

II. THE PRACTICE OF EARLY CHRISTIAN GATHERINGS

1. From the Jewish temple to private homes

2. From Saturday to Sunday

3. Baptism
 - a. Study and preparation

 - b. For infants or believers?

c. Regenerative? Or “sign and seal”?

4. The Lord’s Supper

III. DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON

1. “Canon” means “rule or standard”
2. Church already believed in Old Testament Canon
3. Early “unofficial” understanding of New Testament Canon
4. The challenge of Marcion the Heretic
 - a) Gnostic; believes in two “gods”
 - b) rejects the Old Testament, and all things “Jewish”
5. Tests of Canonicity –
 - a. Author had to be an apostle or close friend of an apostle.
 - b. Doctrine had to conform to accepted doctrine of the apostles.

c. The writing had to be functioning as scripture widely within the church. Letters used only locally were not recognized as inspired.

6. The problem of questionable documents

7. B.B. Warfield: Canon completed in 98; Athanasius’s Easter Letter 39, written in 367

IV. DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP STRUCTURES

1. Two Offices: Elders (or Bishops) and Deacons
2. Development of Hierarchy
 - d. Rising Supremacy of the Church at Rome
 - e. Beginnings of division between East and West

V. PROFILES OF SOME CHURCH FATHERS

1. Apostolic Fathers – taught by the Apostles
 - a. Ignatius of Antioch
 - b. Polycarp of Smyrna