

citizen who honors his king by praying for him and by giving him the honor that is due him. Besides, the pagan philosophers and poets disagree among themselves. The truth is to be found in men who were God-taught, and whose writings are thus the wisdom of God. These writings give us a consistent account of creation, of sin, and of restoration to God.

Theophilus concludes by stating that reason and wisdom demand that Xns, who are zealous for truth and live holy lives, should not be tortured and persecuted by those who in foolishness have themselves lost the wisdom of God.

7. Apology of Melito (about 180)

Melito was bishop at Sardis in Asia Minor during the reign of Marcus Aurelius (161-180). He greets the emperor as a "person of liberal mind and familiar with the truth." He declares that Xns, who are loyal subjects of the emperor, have received such treatment as ought not to be shown even toward barbarous enemies. He then goes on to display Xy as "the true philosophy."

8. Against Heresies by Irenaeus (about 180)

Irenaeus (c115-200) was born in Asia Minor and raised in Smyrna, where he studied under Polycarp, a disciple of the Apostle John. He later went to Lyons, in France, where he became an elder and later bishop.

His most important work, Against Heresies, was entitled by him The Detection and Overthrow of Fake Gnosis. Consisting of five books, it is still an important source for the study of Gnosticism. The Gnostics taught that not all Xns had saving knowledge, since it was a secret teaching given by the apostles only to their most intimate disciples, a "speaking wisdom among the perfect." Irenaeus answered that the Apostles did not preach until they had full knowledge of the gospel, which they then recorded in the Gospels! To the Gnostic claim that there was, in addition to this public instruction, a secret private teaching "among the perfect," Irenaeus noted there was nothing of the sort. If there had been, the Apostles would have entrusted it to those, above all, whom they selected to succeed them in the churches they founded. "Go therefore to Rome, or Smyrna, or Ephesus," Irenaeus said, "and learn what is there taught, and you will find nothing Gnostic in these churches!"

Irenaeus uses three types of argument to counter Gnostic teaching. First, he appeals to reason, and to consensus gentium. The Gnostics believed in a celestial hierarchy of Aeons, Principalities and Powers emanating from a primal Being. Irenaeus argued that if there must be a Being above the highest Aeon, then there must be a still higher Being, and so on ad infinitum. He also notes that all nations of the world are convinced that there is one God, and that He is the Creator of the world.

Second, Irenaeus appeals to Scripture, devoting much space