

worshiping pagan idols which are made of ordinary stone or clay, are dumb and blind, cannot feel or move, are subject to decay, and need to be protected from harm. How can these things be called gods and worshipped? He then asks why, since the Xn religion began among the Jews, the Xns are not worshipers of the Jewish God. The author refers to Jewish law, the food regulations, and circumcision, and gives the Xn argument against observance of Jewish law.

Next the Address demonstrates that Xns externally are like the rest of mankind, but they do for the world what the soul does for the body -- they sustain the world. Finally, the author develops the idea that Xy is the love and service of the one true God, who has revealed Himself and saved mankind through His Son.

1. Octavius by Minucius Felix (about 230)

Marcus Minucius Felix was a Roman lawyer. His Octavius was written both as an apology for Xy and as a memorial to his recently deceased friend Octavius Januarius. Composed for pagan Romans of the cultured class, it has a charming, dignified, elegant style.

The Octavius takes the traditional Greco-Roman form of an imaginary dialogue, here between the pagan Caecilius and the Xn Octavius. Minucius writes himself into the account as the arbitrator in the debate. The narrative opens with the three travelling from Rome to Ostia to enjoy the sea. They sit down on some rocks at the beach and begin to discuss Xy.

Caecilius presents the case against Xy first. He is shocked that Xns rebel against the pagan gods. He charges them with conspiracy, child sacrifice and cannibalism, incest and lust. Finally, he concludes with an attack on the doctrine of the Last Judgment and the cleansing of the heavens and earth by fire, and leads for the simple ignorance of Socrates.

At this point Minucius challenges Octavius to see what he can do to answer Caecilius, and warns him against making too overwhelming a case for his side. Caecilius accuses Minucius of bias, but is still eager to hear what Octavius will say.

Octavius argues for the existence of God from the order in the universe; attacks pagan mythology as ridiculous and their ritual practices as absurd; attempts to refute the false charges against Xn practice and belief; and finally dwells on the virtues and high morality which Xns not only hold up as their ideal but actually exhibit.

Caecilius interrupts at this point, congratulating Octavius and himself as both winning: "He has defeated me, but so too I have defeated error," and Caecilius becomes a Xn. Minucius is relieved not to have to pass judgment on the debate, and ends with praise for Octavius and for God who gave Octavius his gifts.