

The seventh book points out that pagan oracles and prophetic spirits cannot be compared to the Xn prophets. The Holy Scriptures alone are authoritative.

The final book is essentially a defense of monotheism. Christ and God are not two gods, but one, according to the witness of the Bible.

Origen wrote this apology not merely to refute Celsus (who was long dead), but to convert the learned pagans of his acquaintance at Alexandria and Caesarea. Origen wanted to prove to them that Xy was a sound philosophy as well as a sound religion; and that it was not only moral and patriotic, but also intellectually respectable. It would appear that many copies were in circulation, and perhaps this indicates its success.

13. Divine Institutes by Lactantius (about 304-313)

Lactantius (about 240-320) was born in Africa (perhaps Circa) and was a student of Arnobius. Learned in the classics and rhetoric, he was appointed by the emperor Diocletian to teach rhetoric in Nicomedia, the new capital city of Bithynia. In the course of events he became a Xn, and during the persecution of 305-306 he was forced to leave. Shortly thereafter he was summoned to Gaul by the emperor Constantine to tutor his eldest son Crispus.

The Divine Institutes is one of the longest and most eloquent works on Xy up to that time. It is addressed to the emperor Constantine, and employs high style and erudition to appeal to educated readers. Lactantius' success in this attempt earned him the title "the Xn Cicero" among scholars of the Renaissance centuries later.

The work, in seven books, was intended to inform the emperor of the errors of paganism, the injustices done to Xy, and the nature of true religion and worship. The first two books form a concentrated attack on the errors of paganism, the root error being polytheism. The third book takes up the "false wisdom" of the philosophers. Though they seek truth, their systems contradict or deny one another. Only one philosopher, Arcesilaus (about 315-240 BC) realized that all philosophers know nothing! The fourth book turns to the positive statement of Xn teaching, which is "true wisdom" and true religion, and presents various witnesses to Christ. The fifth and sixth books deal with justice and true worship. Justice declined under the pagan gods, but is now being restored through Christ. True worship of God is the way to virtue, which has immortality as its reward. True worship directed toward one's fellowmen takes the form of mercy and kindness, which also merit God's rewards. The seventh book emphasizes the motif of immortality. The world will come to an end after 6000 years, and the 1000-year kingdom of Christ will then begin. The Institutes close with an exhortation to virtue.