

Chapter 1

The Use & Abuse of Church History

Nevertheless, as to those things which I have condensed from the sacred books, I do not wish so to present myself as an author to my readers, that they, neglecting the source from which my materials have been derived, should be satisfied with what I have written. My aim is that one who is already familiar with the original should recognize here what he has read there; for all the mysteries of divine things cannot be brought out except from the fountain-head itself. I shall now enter upon my narrative.(1)

Sulpicius Severus, *History of the World*, Chapter 1

A great deal of effort has been expended in recent years by all sides in the debate over the biblical view of origins setting about what the early church believed to be the correct interpretation of Genesis 1-11. As we will see shortly the result has been that a number of often contradictory positions each presented as “the early church’s view.” This present work was begun with the intention of determining which of these views (if any) accurately represents the teachings of the church fathers up until the time of Augustine. It can conveniently be broken down into three main sections.

1. The importance of knowing what the early church fathers believed and some of the difficulties involved in discovering what they believed will be addressed in this chapter.
2. The teachings of the church fathers on the passages of Genesis chapters 1-11 that are most hotly debated by modern creationists and evolutionists will be summarised and discussed.
3. The final section brings together all that has been discussed before by attempting to determine the significance of the early church’s understanding of Genesis 1-11 for modern creationists.

Some Definitions

Many books on origins fail to define the terms they use. The word ‘creationism’ has suffered particularly badly from this omission. The definition given in the dictionaries tend to be quite broad, such as: “...the doctrine that matter and all things were created, substantially as they now exist, by the fiat of an omnipotent Creator, and not gradually evolved or developed.”(2) A *Creationist* is defined as someone who believes in *creationism*. Many writers lament that the term *creationist* has acquired a far narrower popular meaning - someone who believes that the earth was created by God a few thousand years ago - young-earth creationism.(3) Lloyd R. Bailey refers to this group as “young-earthers” and specifically links this title with the works of Henry M. Morris. Old-earth creationist Davis A. Young and progressive creationist Hugh Ross

likewise note the narrowing in the semantic range of the word *creationist* to refer specifically to *young-earth* creationists.(4) This book will use the word Creationist in the broad sense, unless the word is qualified by the adjectives “young-earth” or “old earth”, etc. By the “early church” is meant the church from the time of the close of the New Testament (c. AD 96) to the time of the death of Augustine of Hippo (AD 430).

Why is Christian Tradition Important?

The interest in the writings of the early church is explained easily enough. The historical nature of Christianity makes it logical to trace what Christians believe and practice today back to its ultimate source of authority - the Bible. Following the close of the New Testament its teachings were systematised into a doctrinal framework. (We will return to the important subject of doctrinal development in Chapter 2.) A certain tension is evident in the process of development. On the one hand, the church fathers were not unaware of the danger of repeating an earlier misinterpretation of Scripture.(5) Whilst on the other, the length of time that a doctrine had been accepted was considered an important test for truth. Tertullian (c. 160 - c. 225 AD) used this latter argument against Marcion(6) and both Clement of Alexandria(7) and the church historian Eusebius (263-339 AD) equated “innovation with heresy.”(8) Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444) was the first person to place the opinions of the fathers alongside the testimony of Scripture to counter the teaching of the heretic Nestorius.(9) Later, during the Reformation, both Roman Catholics and Protestants expended much effort attempting to establish whose teaching was closest to that of the primitive church, as described in the writings of the early church fathers. For the Protestants Matthias Flacius Illyricus (1520-1575) produced a thirteen volume work called the *Magdeberg Centuries* in which he portrayed what he saw as the gradual subversion of New Testament Christianity by the Church of Rome. This work brought a Roman Catholic counterattack from Cardinal Caesar Baronius (1538-1607) in the form of his *Ecclesiastical Annals* (1588-1607). Baronius retorted that the Church of Rome was the true successor of the apostolic faith. The argument went back and forth for “more than a century after the rupture of the Reformation, the consensus of the first five centuries was accepted as empirical criteria of authenticity.”(10) It should be noted however, that in this debate both sides differed in the authority they placed on the early church fathers' testimony. The Reformers accepted tradition only as far as it reflected accurately the teaching of Scripture,(11) while the Roman Catholics treated them as being of equal authority as the Council of Trent puts it: “in matters of faith, and of morals pertaining to the edification of Christian doctrine, it is not lawful to interpret sacred Scripture in a manner contrary to the unanimous consent of the Fathers.”(12)

In view of the range of often contradictory views expressed by the church fathers it is wise to be cautious when making an appeal to tradition. As far as the Roman Catholic position is concerned there are very few subjects on which the church fathers were unanimous and, that being the case, it is not very helpful as a test for truth. Looking back we can see that many of the fathers were mistaken (for a variety of reasons) in their interpretations. Centuries ago the Reformers recognised this and were forced to qualify their appeal to them by testing them against the

touchstone of Scripture. The Orthodox Lutheran theologian Johann Gerhard (1582-1637), for example, produced a work that indicated “the areas of theology in which a given father may be relied upon, and those in which he must be treated with suspicion...”(13) When the fathers differed on their interpretation of a particular passage this was seen by the Reformers as a spur to refer back to the original source - the text of the Bible itself.(14)

The real difference between the classic Protestant and the classic Roman Catholic views lies in the Protestant rejection of the view that tradition, expressed in the teaching of the magisterium, possesses a *binding* authority against which there can be no appeal to Scripture. Behind this difference lies, on the one hand the Reformation’s originating experience of a rediscovery of the Gospel in Scripture apart from and in contradiction to the teaching of the contemporary church, and, on the other hand, the Roman Catholic trust in God’s promise to maintain his church in the truth. On the one hand, tradition was ruptured by an experience of discontinuity between Scripture and the contemporary church, while on the other hand an unbroken tradition remained the vehicle of continuity between the teaching of the apostles and that of the contemporary church.(15)

Were The Early Church Fathers Better Able to Understand the Bible Than We Are?

It is often argued that the early church fathers were better able to understand the teachings of the New Testament because they shared the same background, culture and language as those to whom it was originally addressed.(16) While there is undoubtedly much truth in such a view, it can be overstated, especially with regard to the later church fathers.(17) Many of these lived in situations far removed from Israel and knew little about the culture of the Jews. As can be seen from Table 1.1 below many of the leaders of the early church had little familiarity with the original languages of the Bible.

A number of reasons have been identified for the lack of interest in the study of Hebrew among the church fathers. The majority of Jews living in the western empire never mastered the Hebrew language and relied instead on Greek translations, especially the Septuagint. This explains why the New Testament writers predominantly used this translation when quoting the Old Testament. More importantly the Septuagint rapidly gained the status of “inspired translation” in the church, in much the same way as the *King James Version* is treated by some Christians today.(18) As such it could not be questioned and did not require any correction from the Hebrew original. In contrast the “...Hebrew Bible was devalued or even rejected, either because it was taken as a forgery, or because it was the Jewish Bible.”(19)

Early Christians produced their own Latin translations of varying degrees of accuracy. The wide range of readings produced in this way led Jerome (347-419/420 AD)- one of the very few early Christians who had mastery of all the Biblical languages - to produce an accurate vernacular Latin translation. The result of his work, the *Vulgate*, became the standard text of the western church until the Reformation and of Roman Catholic church until the Second Vatican Council (1962-65).(20) Jerome rejected the idea that the Septuagint was in itself divinely inspired(21) and depended instead on the Hebrew text for the Old Testament, despite the objections of some

of his contemporaries.(22)

Given the number of poor quality Latin translations upon which Christians had to rely it is not surprising that theological errors arose, some of which have had far-reaching consequences. An example will be helpful here.(23) Augustine of Hippo developed his doctrine of original sin from the Old Latin version of Romans 5:12. This mistranslated the Greek and implied that the sin of Adam was passed on to his descendants. In contrast to this view, the Greek Fathers, including John Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Athanasius, Methodius and Gregory of Nyssa(24) generally held that Adam passed on merely the consequences of his sin, i.e. death. Augustine’s doctrine of original sin still remains central to the Roman Catholic doctrine of baptism. Differences between the Latin *Vulgate*, the Greek Septuagint and the Hebrew text of Genesis also caused Augustine problems. How, for instance, can one explain how Methuselah lived 14 years after the flood (according to the Latin translation)? For him the answer was simple - the Septuagint translation was wrong. For some pious believers questioning the translation was beyond the pale. The text *must* be right - so Methuselah must have been snatched up to be with Enoch during the flood, and then set down again when it was over!(25) Augustine agrees with Jerome(26) that the Hebrew text gives the correct reading for according to it Methuselah died in the year the flood came. He rules that on difficult textual points the Hebrew text should be taken as the final authority.(27)

Not only were the early theologians separated by language from the Biblical texts, but they were also separated from each other. Many of the early Christological controversies centred around the translation of various Latin and Greek terms because very few words have direct equivalents in another language.(28) Given this evidence, I think it is fair to conclude that at least in its knowledge of Hebrew modern Christian scholarship has the edge over the church of the third and fourth centuries.

Table1.1: The Early Church Fathers Linguistic Abilities

Date	Writer	Hebrew	Greek	Latin
c.100-c.165	Justin Martyr		X	
110-180	Tatian		X	
c.180	Theophilus of Antioch		X	
c.115-202	Irenaeus of Lyons		X	
2nd Cent.	Athenagoras		X	
c.170-c.236	Hippolytus		X	

c. 150-215	Clement of Alexandria		X	
c.160-c.225	Tertullian			X
c. 160-240	Julius Africanus		X	
185-253	Origen		X	X
240-320	Lactantius			X
d. c. 311	Methodius		X	
d. 258	Cyprian			X
263-339	Eusebius of Caesarea		X	
c. 276-373	Athanasius		X	
340-397	Ambrose of Milan		X	X
330-394	Gregory of Nyssa		X	
330-390	Gregory of Nazianzus		X	
329-379	Basil of Caesarea		X	
374-407	John Chrysostom		X	
347-419/420	Jerome	X	X	X
c. 350-428	Theodore of Mopsuestia	X	X	
354-430	Augustine of Hippo			X

X indicates fluency in language

Early Church History is a Complex Subject

Popular writers on early church history often fall into the trap of making generalisations about what the early church ‘taught’ or what the early church fathers ‘believed.’ The reasons why such simplifications can be misleading may be summarised as follows:

- Apart from people like the Apostle Paul and his co-workers the majority of believers were content to be anonymous.(29) Most had neither the need nor the desire to produce Christian literature of their own. They were content to spread by word of mouth the teachings of the apostles recorded for them in the writings of the New Testament(30) and make their own copies of the apostolic writings.
- As is evidenced by the book of Acts (chapter 15) and various other New Testament references (e.g. Gal. 2:11-14) Christians often disagreed among themselves on theological issues.(31) Doctrine in the early church was in a state of flux, and matters not explicitly laid down in Scripture, such as the details of the doctrine of the Trinity, were the subject of wide-ranging speculation. Later, as the bounds of orthodoxy became more clearly defined many earlier writers (long since deceased) were considered theologically suspect. Among these were Tertullian (because he became a Montanist), Origen, Tatian and Lactantius. Modern research has shown that the charges made against most of these writers were almost certainly groundless. Nevertheless, many of their works are now lost because they were condemned as heretical, including Tertullian's *Seven Books Against the Church in Defence of Montanism*, Origen's *Commentary on Genesis*(32) and all but two of the writings of Tatian. Unlike the almost indestructible clay tablets used by writers in the 2nd millennium BC the papyrus and parchment documents used by the early church had a limited life-span.(33) For this reason all documents needed to be painstakingly copied on a regular basis onto fresh material in order to survive.(34) Works that may have been lost because of this process include: *On the Creation* by Melito of Sardis,(35) Theophilus of Antioch's *On History*,(36) Hippolytus' *On the Hexaemeron*,(37) and Methodius' commentaries on Genesis and *On Creation*.(38) Somewhat ironically the *Nag Hammadi library*(39) - a set of (in this case) truly heretical works - has survived because it was buried after being declared non-canonical by Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria.(40)
- During the *Great Persecution* instigated by the Roman emperor Diocletian (245-313)(41) all Christian literature and Scripture was ordered destroyed.(42) Although some Christians managed to get away with surrendering only heretical writings to the magistrates(43) undoubtedly many works were lost at this time.
- A writer's opinion on any given subject may change considerably throughout his lifetime. Very few of the church fathers have left us sufficient evidence to enable us to plot these developments in their writings.(44) Augustine is perhaps the only theologian with whom this is possible with any degree of certainty.(45) Reconstructions of the development of others - Tertullian for example - depend on how a particular scholar constructs his chronology for that writer's works.
- The theologians of the early church were not attempting to write "systematic theologies" of the kind that we are familiar with today. The way in which they approached theological issues were therefore very different from ours. In order to fully appreciate the writings of the early church we have to attempt, as far as possible, to understand what the

people who wrote them were trying to achieve.(46)

Hermeneutics & The Early Church Fathers

The methods used by the early church to interpret the Bible have been the subject of innumerable volumes. It is not my purpose to repeat their findings here, but a few examples are necessary in order to help the reader appreciate the mind set of the early Christians. Many of their conclusions appear to us bizarre, until it is realised that their hermeneutic was radically different to ours. As Gerald Bray points out:

The early Christians accepted the Jewish Scriptures as divinely inspired, but interpreted them in a completely different way. They did not regard the Old Testament as a prelude to Christianity, which the new revelation in Christ augmented or displaced.... Christians generally believed that the Old Testament spoke about Jesus Christ, not merely prophetically but in types and allegories which the Spirit revealed to Christians.(47)

Bray continues:

In all probability, the first Christians looked on every part of Scripture as Christological, and were prepared to see Christ in it by whatever exegetical means would produce the desired result. It did not worry them if the literal meaning of the text seemed somewhat distant from this concern, since in that case it was plain that the passage in question contained a revelation of Christ which was more difficult to grasp than simpler texts.(48)

All of the fathers used typology to provide biblical illustrations for their preaching of Christ. Some took this method to extremes that leave the modern reader wondering if they saw any difference between typology and allegory, or whether the latter is just an exaggeration of the former.

St. Justin devotes ten chapters to the discovery of the Cross in the Old Testament. The types include the Tree of Life in Paradise, the oak of Mamre, the tree planted by the water-side (*Ps.* I, 3), the piled wands of Jacob, the rods of Moses and Aaron, the Branch from the stem of Jesse (*Isa.* xi, 1), and the floating wood of Elisha. Origen adds the tree from which the King of Ai was hung, the cedarwood which played its part in the ritual cleansing of the leper, and the wood which made the bitter water sweet. Further types are found in the brazen serpent of Moses and the cruciform trumpets of Gideon's men. A strong impression is left that any piece of wood, living or dead, in the Old Testament can represent the Cross.(49)

In the so-called *Epistle of Barnabas* (c. AD 70-135),(50) the writer sees references to Jesus throughout the Old Testament. The 318 servants of Abraham (Gen. 14:14) are interpreted as a symbol for the cross of Christ. His reasoning was as follows:

$318 = 10 + 8 + 300$.

Ten is written "I" in Greek, 8 as "H". These are the initials of Jesus Christ in Greek.

Three hundred is denoted by "T", which was the shape of the cross.

Therefore, the 318 servants represent the cross of Christ!(51)

Upon this Christological hermeneutic the church fathers were united, and it must not be supposed that it was derived from a low view of the inspiration of Scripture. On the contrary, so convinced were the fathers of the Divine origin of Scripture that they sought to interpret every single verse of Scripture as somehow speaking about Christ.(52) Most modern theologians and Bible students seek to identify the meaning God intended a biblical text to have to its original audience. From this they derive its contemporary application, which (to be considered valid) must be linked to the text's original meaning.(53) For Origen the what we would call the contemporary application - what the text teaches about Christ and how the reader can become like Him - *was* the original meaning of the text.(54) If a text did not appear to be speaking about how you might advance towards perfection then you had misunderstood it. This was the key that showed Origen that he had interpreted a text correctly. To put it simply: if he could make a passage speak in this way then he was confident that he had uncovered its true 'spiritual' meaning. Some passages yielded such an application easily; others required more spiritual insight and, sometimes, the rejection of the historical meaning. It was this 'insight' that the 'literalists' (those who saw only the 'letter') lacked.

The church fathers shared the same principle for identifying when Scripture was not to be taken literally with contemporary Judaism. When the literal meaning appeared to be blasphemous, ridiculous or impossible then this was seen as indicating a deeper non-literal meaning, a rule of thumb that is found in Philo,(55) Tertullian(56) and Origen.(57) The differences in the results of Tertullian and Origen's exegesis do not, therefore, stem from a fundamental difference in their view of inspiration, but rather from a divergence of opinion on what was to be considered blasphemous or ridiculous and in the effort each considered necessary to reconcile the literal meaning with "common sense". This is not to accuse the allegorists of laziness, for often because of a simple misunderstanding of the text's meaning the resulting allegory requires more effort to produce than the literal meaning! A good example of this is found in Origen's second *Homily on Exodus*. Here Origen's problem is caused by a defective translation in the Septuagint(58) which renders Exodus 1:21 as: "Because the midwives feared God, they made houses for themselves." This leads him to comment:

This statement makes no sense according to the letter. For what is the relationship that the text should say, "Because the midwives feared God, they made houses for themselves.?" It is as if a house is built because God is feared. If this be taken as it stands written, not only does it appear to lack logic, but also to be inane. But if you should see how the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, teaching the fear of God, make the houses of the Church and fill the whole earth with houses of prayer, then what is written will appear to have been written rationally."(59)

Of course the solution becomes obvious when one translates the Greek word *oikias* correctly in this context as "families" instead of "houses". The verse then reads: "And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own." (*NIV*).

The early church fathers checked their interpretations against a summary of the essence of Scripture, properly understood,(60) which was held in common by all churches of Apostolic foundation.(61) Irenaeus often referred to this as the "canon of faith,"(62) while Tertullian called it "the Rule of Faith"(63) (Latin: *regula fidei*). The Rule of Faith acted as an interpretative key

that guarded the Church against heresy.(64) The rule of faith was not set above Scripture, but rather derived from it.(65) Taking the Rule of Faith as his starting point theologians like Origen launched his theological speculations into areas not covered by it.(66)

The Development of Doctrine

As we shall see in Chapter 2 many doctrines took a long period to be defined. During the period of development a number of options were often proposed and debated before a position that adequately expressed biblical teaching was arrived at.

The Charge of Heresy

It has often been said that history is written by the victors, and this is no less true of church history. Those who were vindicated in theological disputes often wasted no time in condemning both their opponents and their opponents predecessors. Tatian, Tertullian and Origen have all suffered posthumously from this condemnation. So when discussing the doctrines of the early church we should not be too easily taken in by labels assigned to a writer by later generations, the term “heretic” being the most common. The reasons for these accusations of heresy varied considerable. It all to often they served then, as they does today, as a means of silencing discussion by means of *ad hominem* argument. Students of the early church would do well to take the advice of the 18th century historian Johann Lorenz von Mosheim, who wrote:

Those, therefore who approach this part of church history, should exclude every thing invidious from the name *heretic*: and consider it as used only in a more general sense for a man, who, by his own, or by anothers fault, has given occasion for wars and disagreements among Christians.(67)



Throughout church history Tertullian has received condemnation for two main reasons: his association with the Montanist movement(68) and because of his supposed anti-intellectualism. However, the majority of church historians now agree that the Montanists were doctrinally orthodox,(69) and so there are no grounds for rejecting Tertullian’s contribution to theology on the grounds of his association with them. Roger Forster & Paul Marston, for example, refer to Minucius Felix (late 2nd/3rd century), as Tertullian’s “more orthodox” contemporary.(70) However, it should be noted that in Minucius Felix’s work *Octavius* Christianity is treated from the standpoint of philosophy, Scripture is not cited, nor are major biblical teachings much discussed.(71) It is therefore difficult to accept Forster & Marston’s view on the basis of arguments from silence. There has also been a long history of debate whether Tertullian used *Octavius* as a source for his *Apology* or vice versa. Current

opinion favours the priority of the *Apology*.(72)

This is not the first time that Tertullian's orthodoxy has been attacked in order to undermine his credibility as a witness to the beliefs and practises of the church of his day. William Wall used the same ploy in the 1840's to support his case for infant baptism. Wall wrote that Tertullian "...fell into the heresy of the Montanists, who blasphemously held that one Montanus was that Paraclete or Comforter which our Saviour promised to send: and that better and fuller discoveries of God's will were made to him than to the Apostles, who prophesied only in part."(73) To which Paul K. Jewett responded: "But the noble African's reputation as a Christian and theologian scarcely needs defence against such beggarly invective."(74)

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References

- (1) Sulpicius Severus, *History* 1 (NPNF, 2nd series, Vol. 11, 71)
- (2) Arthur Delbridge, Editor in Chief, *The Macquarrie Encyclopedic Dictionary*. (Macquarie University, New South Wales: Macquarie University, 1990), 218.
- (3) Lloyd R. Bailey, *Genesis, Creation and Creationism*. (New York: Paulist Press, 1993), 3-6.
- (4) Young, *Christianity*, 10; Hugh Ross, *Creation and Time: A Biblical and Scientific Perspective on the Creation-date Controversy*. (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Navpress, 1994), 36.
- (5) Cyprian, *Epistle* 71.3; 73.9; 74.9 (ANF, Vol. 5, 379, 389, 391).
- (6) Tertullian, *Marcion*, 4.5 (ANF, Vol. 3, 349-350).
- (7) Clement of Alexandria, *Miscellanies*, 7.17 (ANF, Vol. 2, 554-555).
- (8) e.g. Eusebius, *History*, 1.1.1 (NPNF, 2nd series, Vol. 1, 81) *Preparation*, 14.3; Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, *Preparation For The Gospel*, Part 2, Books 10-15, trans. Edwin Hamilton Gifford. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), 775-776; David F. Wells, *No Place For Truth. or Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 105.
- (9) Cyril of Alexandria, *Epistle* 1 & 4; cf. Johannes Quasten, *Patrology*, Vol. 3. (Westminster: Christian Classics, 1950), 135-136.
- (10) Yves Congar, *Tradition and Traditions: Historical and Theological Essay*. (New York: MacMillan, 1967), 143-144, cited in Wells, 105.
- (11) See further: Jaroslav Pelikan, "Luther the Expositor: Introduction to the Reformer's Exegetical Writings," *Luther's Works Companion Volume*. (St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia, 1959), 71-88.
- (12) Canon Dorlodot, *Darwinism and Catholic Thought*, trans. Rev Ernest Messenger. (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1925), 15. See Council of Trent, Sessio IV, *Decretum et um sacro cum librorum* and 1st Vatican Council, Sessio III, cap. ii. Dorlodot later adds that "...when we speak of a unanimous opinion of the Fathers on any question, we mean an opinion expressed, not by all the Fathers, but by all those who have discussed the question, and whose

teaching has been handed down to us either in their authentic writings or else by witnesses at second hand.” Dorlodot, 66.

(13) The work was entitled *Patrologia sive primitivae ecclesiae Christianae doctorum vita*. G.R. Evans, A.E. McGrath & A.D. Galloway, *The History of Christian Doctrine*, Vol. 1, *The Science of Theology*. (Basingstoke: Marshall Pickering, 1986), 141.

(14) Evans, McGrath & Galloway, 139.

(15) Richard J. Bauckham, “Tradition in Relation to Scripture and Reason,” Richard Bauckham & Benjamin Drewery, eds., *Scripture, Tradition and Reason: A Study in the Criteria of Christian Doctrine. Essays in Honour of Richard P.C. Hanson*. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 123-124.

(16) See, for example, Gordon J. Wenham & William E. Heth, *Jesus and Divorce*, updated edition. (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997), 20-21.

(17) Richard Hanson cites two examples of where the early church fathers interpretation was not superior to the result of modern exegesis. Richard P.C. Hanson, *Studies in Christian Antiquity*. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1985), 11-12.

(18) The following church fathers subscribed the “inspired and infallible translation” theory: Irenaeus of Lyons, *Heresies*, 3.21.2 (*ANF*, Vol. 1, 452-453); Clement of Alexandria, *Miscellanies* 1.22 (*ANF*, Vol. 2, 334); Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical* 4.34 (*NPNF*, 2nd series, Vol. 7, 27); Augustine, *Doctrine*, 2.15 (*NPNF*, 1st series, Vol. 2, 386-387); *City*, 18.42-43 (Bettenson, 819-822). On the parallels between this belief and modern debates over Bibles versions see: James R. White, *The King James Version Controversy*. (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany House Publishers, 1995).

(19) Mogens Müller, *The First Bible of the Church: A Plea For The Septuagint*, JSOT Supplement Series 206. (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 78.

(20) Terrence G. Kardong, “Vulgate,” *EEC*, 932-933.

(21) From Augustine’s account it would appear that in pious folklore the LXX had achieved ‘Inspired Translation’ status, much the same as the King James Version has today in some circles. Augustine, *City of God*, 15.13; Bettenson, 615-616. See further: James R. White, *The King James Version Only Controversy: Can We Trust the Modern Translations*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany House Publishers, 1995).

(22) Augustine, *Letter* 82 (*NPNF*, 1st series, Vol. 1, 361).

(23) McGrath discusses another example regarding the development of the doctrine of merit. See Alister E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification: The Beginnings to the Reformation*. (Cambridge: CUP, 1896), 14-15.

(24) Paul M. Blowers, “Original Sin,” *EEC*, 669-670.

(25) Augustine, *City*, 15.11 (Bettenson, 612).

(26) Jerome, *Hebrew*, 2.5-7. C.T.R. Hayward, translator, *Saint Jerome’s Hebrew Questions on Genesis*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 36.

(27) Augustine, *City*, 15.13 (Bettenson, 618).

(28) Gerald Bray, *Creeeds, Councils and Christ: Did the Early Christians Misrepresent Jesus?* 1984. (Fearn, Ross-shire: Mentor, 1997), 83-84.

- (29) R. Laird Harris, *Inspiration and Canonicity of the Bible*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1969), 244: "Numerous other people were friends, companions, acquaintances of the apostles, but were not regarded in the Early Church as authoritative at all. Quite clearly Mark and Luke are not authoritative in their own right; rather they are authoritative because of their adherence to their apostolic masters."
- (30) John D. Woodbridge, *Biblical Authority: A Critique of the Roger/Mckim Proposal*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 31; Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions*. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), 24; Patrick J. Hamell, *Introduction to Patrology*. (Cork: The Mercier Press, 1968), 21.
- (31) Woodbridge, *Authority*, 31.
- (32) Eusebius, *History* 6.24.2 (NPNF, 2nd series, Vol. 1, 271-272).
- (33) Papyrus proved particularly susceptible to the elements, quickly decomposing in a moist climate.
- (34) Paul Johnson, *A History of Christianity*. (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1976), 47.
- (35) Mentioned by Eusebius, *History* 4.26.2 (NPNF, 2nd series, Vol. 1, 203-204).
- (36) This work contained a discussion of the genealogies of the sons of Noah. Theophilus of Antioch, *Autolytus*, 2.30.
- (37) Eusebius, *History* 6.22.2 (NPNF, 2nd series, Vol. 1, 270).
- (38) Frederick W. Norris, "Methodius," *EEC*, 595.
- (39) Discovered in Egypt in 1945.
- (40) PHEME PERKINS, "Nag Hammadi," Everett Ferguson, ed. *EEC*. (New York: Garland, 1990), 636; Henry Chadwick, "The Domestication of Gnosis," *Heresy and Orthodoxy in the Early Church*. (Aldershot: Variorum, 1991), XIII: 14-15.
- (41) This period of persecution began on 23rd February, 303. See further: Frend, *Rise*, 456-463.
- (42) W.H.C. Frend, *The Early Church: From Beginnings to 461*, 1965. (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1991), 116.
- (43) Frend, *Early Church*, 119: "Even the Primate of Africa, Mensurius, only salved his conscience by handing over heretical (probably Manichaean) books..."; W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989) 460: "...and at Calamia in Numidia the bishop got away with handing over medical works."
- (44) Woodbridge, *Authority*, 27.
- (45) Peter Brown, *Religion and Society in the Age of Saint Augustine*. (London: Faber and Faber, 1972), 9.
- (46) Bradley & Muller, 28.
- (47) Bray, *Creeds*, 49.
- (48) Bray, *Creeds*, 51.
- (49) H.E.W. Turner, *The Pattern of Christian Truth: A Study in the Relations between Orthodoxy and Heresy in the Early Church*. (London: A.R. Mowbray & Co. Ltd., 1954), 282. See original source for patristic references.
- (50) *The Apostolic Fathers*, trans. J.B. Lightfoot, & J.R. Harmer, edited & revised by M.W. Holmes, 2nd edn. (Leicester: Apollos, 1989), 160.

(51) *Epistle of Barnabas* 9 (ANF, Vol. 1, 142-143).

(52) G.W. Bromiley, "The Church Fathers And Holy Scripture," D.A. Carson & John A. Woodbridge, eds., *Scripture And Truth*. (Leicester: IVP, 1983), 218. Bromiley earlier notes: "The fact that this Christological interpretation is a commonplace of patristic hermeneutics should not blind us to its significance. As Judaism perceived, it formed the very heart of Christianity itself. It explained why the church so easily adopted the Old Testament canon. It also constituted in a sense the justification of the canonizing of the New Testament, which so patently involved this christological interpretation of the Old." Bromiley, 213.

(53) See further: Gordon D. Fee & Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible For All Its Worth: A guide to Understanding the Bible*, 2nd edition. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993); William W. Klein, Craig Blomberg & Robert L. Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. (London: Word Publishing, 1993).

(54) Karen Jo Torjesen, *Hermeneutical Procedure and Theological Method in Origen's Exegesis*. (Berlin, New York: Walter De Gruyter, 1986), 125-126.

(55) Thomas H. Tobin, *The Creation of Man: Philo And The History of Interpretation*. The Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series 14. (Washington, DC: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1983), 159. Philo, *Allegorical Interpretation* 2.19 (C.D. Yonge, *The Works of Philo* [Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1993], 40). Philo finds it unbelievable that God should create Eve from one of Adam's ribs, and so rejects the literal meaning of the text.

(56) T.P. O'Malley, *Tertullian and the Bible: Language - Imagery - Exegesis. Latinitas Christianorum Primaeva*. (Utrecht: Dekker & Van De Vegt N.V. Nijmegen, 1967), 128, 157-158.

(57) Origen, *Principles*, 4.1.9 (ANF, Vol 4, 357-358). Joseph W. Trigg, *Origen*. (London: SCM Press, 1983), 120; Bethune-Baker, 54.

(58) This is one of several reasons underlying Origen's spiritualising of the text he was working on. See further Henri Crouzel, *Origen*. trans. A.S. Worrall, (Edinburgh: T.& T. Clark, 1989), 62-63.

(59) Origen, *Exodus* 2.2 (Origen, "Homilies on Genesis and Exodus," trans. Ronald E. Heine, *Fathers of the Church*, Vol. 71. [Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1981], 242-243).

(60) F.F. Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture*. (Downers Grove: IVP, 1988), 272.

(61) Bruce, *Canon*, 150.

(62) Irenaeus, *Heresies*, 1.10.1-2 (ANF, Vol. 1, 330-331).

(63) Tertullian, *Heretics*, 13 (J. Stevenson, *A New Eusebius: Documents Illustrating the History of the Church to AD 337*. [London: SPCK, 1987], 165).

(64) See Clement of Alexandria, *Miscellanies* 6.15; 7:15-16 (ANF, Vol. 2, 509, 549-554); Ferguson, "Rule of Faith," *EEC*, 804-805.

(65) G.W. Bromiley, "Church Fathers," 208-209: "Superficially this might seem to exalt the authority of the rule above the authority of Scripture itself. Plainly however, Tertullian did not intend to do this, for as he saw it the rule was a compendium of what the Bible also taught, so that the Bible was being interpreted in terms of its own essential message. The central point here is that, while the rule might have been developed in the ongoing ministry of the church, it had not developed in independence of the New Testament or in competition with it. Behind the twofoldness of the form lay a unity of content, so that in its hermeneutical role the rule functioned only as the analogy of faith did for the Reformers of the sixteenth century. Everything depended, of course on the identity of Scripture and the rule, on the correctness of their equation, but if the Rule served as a key to the interpretation of

Scripture, Scripture also acted as an important check on the content of the rule.”

(66) Ferguson, “Rule of Faith,” 805; Origen, *Principles*, Preface 10 (Stevenson, 201).

(67) Johann Lorenz von Mosheim, *Institutes of Ecclesiastical History, Ancient and Modern*, trans. J. Murdock, ed. H. Soames, Vol. 1. (London: Longman & Co., 1841), 18, cited by James E. Bradley and Richard A. Muller, *Church History: An Introduction to Research, Reference Works, and Methods*. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 15.

(68) Sider, 883: “It is because of their opposition to the Montanists that neither Eusebius of Caesarea nor Jerome are regarded as reliable witnesses concerning Tertullian.” Schaff comments that Jerome “...admired Tertullian for his powerful genius and vigorous style, though he could not forgive him his Montanism...” Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. 3. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989 reprint), 969.

(69) Barnes, *Tertullian*, 42: “Historical interpretations of the rise of Montanism inevitably differ, according to the prejudices and preoccupations of the exegete. But the theological issue is clear. The orthodox dubbed the Montanists ‘Cataphyrians’ or ‘the Phrygian Heresy’. Yet they had to confess that they were orthodox in all matters of Christian doctrine. Only in the fourth century could polemical writers accuse the Montanists of purely theological error, and then the accusation patently relied upon a perverse and anachronistic interpretation of an utterance of Montanus himself.”

(70) Roger Forster, & Paul Marston, *Reason & Faith*. (Eastbourne: Monarch Publications, 1989), 260.

(71) Michael P. McHugh, “Minucius Felix,” *EEC*, 600. “Minucius Felix,” *ODCC*, 920.

(72) Stevenson, 177.

(73) William Wall, *The History of Infant Baptism*. (London: Griffith, Farran, Okeden & Walsh, n.d.), 41.

(74) Paul K. Jewett, *Infant Baptism & The Covenant of Grace*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 21.

