

Two Classes of Apologists

The writing in defense of Christianity is called the *apology*, and the writer, an *apologist*. It is from a Greek word *apologia*, which meant a work written for resistance. But the apologies of the early Church were more than this. They were not only counter-arguments, but aggressive weapons. It was a fierce warfare upon the enemy's camp, followed by a hot pursuit. There were two classes of apologists, the Greek and the Latin, according to the territory which they occupied, and the language in which they wrote. But there were further differences. The Greeks belonged mostly to the second century, and their writings exhibited a profound intimacy with the Greek philosophy. Some of them had studied in the Greek schools, and entered the Church only in mature life. They endeavored to prove that Christianity was the blossom of all that was valuable in every system. They stood largely on the defensive. The Latins, on the other hand, were aggressive. They lived mostly in the third century, were more argumentative, wrote in a clearer and more methodical style, and carried the warfare into the hostile ranks with an energy equal to the Roman soldier on foreign battle-fields. Their perspective of Christianity was that of universal conquest and permanent dominion.

(Short History of the Early Church by John F. Hurst, New York: Chautauqua Press, 1887, 39)