

History then was a crucial issue for the Antiochenes--this they stressed repeatedly. Beyond this they acknowledged that there were other concerns. At times they work with *theoria* as a kind of typological relationship, but at other times it seems to mean more an extrapolation of principles from the biblical text, but not a typological relation.

4. Western interpretation

Before leaving the patristic period we should consider briefly the hermeneutical development of the Latin fathers. We mention two crucial issues:

- a. Authoritative exegesis--the Western (Latin) church was generally conservative theologically. The conflict with heresies led Fathers like Irenaeus (fl. ca. 180-) and Tertullian (ca. 160-220) to stress the importance of tradition and apostolic succession. The Fathers recognized what is still a common problem: heretics can also appeal to the Bible for support, and often their interpretations are difficult to refute conclusively! In his treatise Concerning the Prescription of Heretics (ca. 200), Tertullian concludes that heretics should not be answered by biblical argument because the Bible belongs rightfully only to the Church:

"They [the heretics] put forward the scriptures and by their audacity make an immediate impression on some people. In the struggle itself they wear out the strong, seduce the weak; as they depart they leave a scruple in the heart of the mediocre ones. Therefore it is here above all that we bar their way by declaring them inadmissible to any dispute over the scriptures. If their strength consists in the fact that they are able to possess them, we must see to whom the scriptures belong, so that no one is admitted to them who is not legally competent."
(Tertullian, De praesc. 15)

The consequence was that in the West exegesis was tied more and more to the framework of tradition.

- b. The triumph of Alexandrian hermeneutics--allegorism is firmly established in the West. Origenistic exegesis came to be preferred in the Latin Fathers in place of the more literal approach of the Antiochenes. Beryl Smalley (The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages [Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1964], p. 20) writes:

"The allegorical method captivated the Latin world, and could be used more freely since it had ceased to be dangerous. Neither St. Hilary nor St. Ambrose regarded it as an instrument of speculation as Origen had done. The Latin Fathers made their allegories conform to orthodox theology, which was more clearly defined than it had been in Origen's time.