

H. The Last Fifty Years of the Period (170-313) (203-313)

General

- a. No outstanding Christian writers
 - b. Little that is outstanding
 - c. Consists of 40 yrs. peace terminated by persecution under Domitian.
 - d. The lack of color in this period is very likely due to the calculated effort of the persecution to exterminate leaders.
1. The period is marked by a few writers of moderate importance - followers of Origin.
 2. The Novatian Schism - A split in the early church arising out of the controversy regarding "laspers"
 - a. Novation
An earnest, though stern and gloomy man whose attitude: "God may forgive, but the church cannot." Himself highly thought of, Novatian was influenced by Cyprian's opponent Novatus.
 - b. Cyprian - Laspers should be kept out of the church unless they give absolute evidence of repentance.
 - c. While Cyprian was in hiding the Confessors (those who had affirmed their faith before the courts and survived) began issuing papers granting pardon to the lapsers. Novatus was a leading advocate of this policy while he was in Carthage. Cyprian refused to accept the decision of the Confessors and forced Novatus to leave Carthage. Novatus, then went to Rome where he supported the very opposite view from that which he had held in Carthage.
The bishop of Rome was very lax in reinstating lapsers and he was vigorously opposed by Novation (now supported by Novatus). Upon the death of the bishop Novation though seemingly best qualified failed to become bishop due to the lapsers vote. Cornelius, supported oddly enough by Cyprian, was elected bishop. Novation's party set up their own bishop and for 300 years a separate church existed under Novation noted for its "moral earnestness and its affirmation of the deity of Christ."
 3. Paul of Samosata
 - a. 3 synods considered the condemnation of this Bishop of Antioch. Paul maintained that Jesus was not God the Son incarnate from birth. He exalted