

THE RELATIONSHIP OF MAN TO GOD, FROM CONCEPTION
TO CONVERSION, IN THE WRITINGS OF TERTULLIAN

A Thesis

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NOTE REGARDING THIS COPY OF THE THESIS

My supervisor, Dr. David Wright at New College, Edinburgh, was insistent that a thesis, presented for a Ph.D. degree in patristic studies, should not contain an English translation of passages quoted in Latin, Greek, French, German or Italian. In deference to his views, the translations, which I had prepared, were deleted from the thesis as presented. Since, however, the Faculties of Law in Scottish Universities no longer require Latin for undergraduates, leading to the virtual disappearance of the classics from school curricula, a reading knowledge of Latin and Greek has become an elitist subject and no longer considered 'relevant' for modern life.

As a number of friends had expressed the wish to read the thesis, I made an additional copy with the translations on the facing pages. This was easy to follow in the printed version, as the translations were directly opposite the words in non-English languages, but scanning for putting it onto the Internet means that the translations are on the following pages - apologies for that.

Ian Balfour.

May 2015.

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

The first aim of the thesis is to set out the relationship of man to God, from the moment of conception (when Tertullian believed that individual human life began) to the completion of conversion to the Christian faith (defined as the first admission to the Eucharist). The second aim is to investigate the extent to which Tertullian expressed that relationship in the language of Roman law.

The study is in three parts. The first part examines the relationship from conception to puberty. In refuting a variety of heresies, Tertullian gave his own views on the relationship of the soul to the body and of both to God. Whether the relationship altered during pregnancy and childhood is discussed in light of Tertullian's teaching on abortion, the effect of Christian parentage and infant baptism.

The second part looks at the relationship to God of the unregenerate adult, and in particular the ways in which God made Himself known to man. Everyone had the right to reject God, but rejection brought man under (future) judgment. The best of paganism was inadequate to bring the natural man into a saving relationship with God, but special consideration is given to the position of the mentally retarded.

The third part covers the relationship to God of the catechumen, from his first enquiry about the faith until his admission to the Eucharist. The significance of the various ceremonies surrounding baptism is considered, together with the relationship of baptism to paenitentia and of both to the merits of Christ.

Every chapter includes a statement of how far Roman law appears to be relevant for that area of the study, and re-examines the extent to which Tertullian used Roman law to set out the relationship of man to God.

repentance (before baptism)

THE RELATIONSHIP OF MAN TO GOD, FROM CONCEPTION TO
CONVERSION, IN THE WRITINGS OF TERTULLIAN

PREFACE

Although many monographs, learned papers and doctoral theses¹ have been published on the works of Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus,² no one seems yet to have analysed the way in which he expressed the relationship of man to God, from the beginning of life until conversion to the Christian faith. In the belief that a study of Tertullian's works can give valuable insight into our present understanding of that relationship, the first aim of this thesis is to set out systematically the words and the ways in which Tertullian described the relationship, from the moment of conception (when he believed that individual human life began) until the catechumen's first admission to the Eucharist (which normally followed the baptismal ceremony and which marked the completion of conversion to the Christian faith.) The second aim of the

¹ No less than 479 monographs, 624 periodical articles and 62 doctoral theses, devoted entirely or substantially to some aspect of Tertullian's works, were noted during the preparation of this thesis. Most had no direct relevance to the subject matter of this study, but all those cited, together with some not cited although read with profit, are listed in the bibliography on page 444. The primary source of material for the study was, however, the works of Tertullian himself.

² "Quintus" and Florens" are attested only by a tradition first recorded in the 15th century by John of Trittenheim and Angelo Poliziano. Tertullian called himself either "Tertullianus" - bapt 20.5.54 - or "Septimius Tertullianus" - virg 17.5.46-47. The only other possible reference by Tertullian to his own name is at the end of de exhortatione castitatis, but the text is corrupt and the name does not appear in the Agobardinus, the better manuscript. Most modern scholars follow Tertullian himself in the spelling 'Septimius' but the editors of Corpus Christianorum, series latina (the text quoted throughout the thesis) preferred 'Septimus'.

"An Exhortation to Chastity" (one of Tertullian's treatises).

(The name of a series of editions of patristic latin writers.)

thesis is to identify those places where Tertullian seems to have used the language of Roman law to describe the relationship of man to God, and to reassess the significance of that for his thought, in the areas under review.

This thesis is restricted to Tertullian's own era - no attempt is made to investigate the corresponding relationship (in so far as Tertullian referred to it) before or at the coming of Christ.¹ Furthermore, only passing reference is made to the special relationship to God of ethnic groups, like the Jews, or of occupational groups, like soldiers. The relationship of heretics to God is examined in Excursus One, and the position of slaves in Excursus Three.

Tertullian lived during the finest and fullest development of Roman jurisprudence,² and was himself well versed in law.³ This has not only led a

¹ In opposing Marcion, Tertullian had to emphasise that the God of whom he spoke was the same God as the Creator of the world, the God of both the Old Testament and the New. To that extent, the relationship between God and man did not alter from one era to the next, but the coming of Christ meant a fundamental change in both man's knowledge of God and man's approach to God: "nemo Christianus ante Christum caelo resumptum, nemo sanctus ante Spiritum sanctum de caelo repraesentatum ipsius disciplinae determinatorem." - pud 12.3.16-18.

² The "classical" period of Roman jurisprudence was from the beginning of the second century A.D. to the middle of the third. The juristic development of Roman law terminated abruptly when (and presumably because) the Emperors discontinued the jus respondendi and legislated instead by decree giving expression to their own will. When Roman law was codified, under the Emperor Justinian, the five jurists whose views were to prevail over all others were Gaius (alive in A.D. 178), Papinianus (executed in A.D. 212), Ulpianus (assassinated between A.D. 222 and 228), Paulus (contemporary with Papinianus and Ulpianus) and Modestinus (last known to be alive in A.D. 244) - "the great lights of jurisprudence for all time". There are, however, real difficulties in ascertaining what the law was at Carthage at the beginning of the third century; the problems are set out in Excursus Two.

³ Whether Tertullian was a professional jurist or whether he was a lawyer only in the sense that Cicero and Quintilian were lawyers (rhetoricians), is much debated, but the contributors all agree that he was familiar with legal terminology and made considerable use of it. (Tertullian himself nowhere stated that he had studied law). This thesis is more concerned with Tertullian's employment of Roman law than with the source of his knowledge of it, so whether he was the iuris consultus of the same name, mentioned by Ulpian and to whom five excerpts were attributed in Justinian's Digest, is not discussed; the literature on that up to 1930 was well summarised by Alexander Beck, Römisches Recht bei Tertullian und Cyprian, (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1930) pp 4-5, 13-17 and 33-43 and the literature since then was reviewed in the introduction to the 1967 reprint of Beck's monograph, pp x-xi. Beck was in favour of identification, but the opposite view was argued by Schlossman and by Fredouille who, for very (continued overleaf)

No one was a Christian before Christ was taken up into heaven; no one was holy before the Holy Spirit came from heaven to establish this discipline.

The emperor's authority, given to eminent jurists, to make written pronouncements on a point of law put to them; their "responses" were virtually binding on the judges, and formed 'precedents' for other cases.

lawyer (class)

"Roman Law in Tertullian and Cyprian".

number of scholars to speculate on the influence of Roman Law on Tertullian's theology, but has led some to state that Roman Law profoundly influenced his expression of the relationship of man to God. Examples of such claims - in chronological order and with the authorship immediately appended for easy reference - are:

- (a) Jedoch durch Tertullian, seinem früheren Berufe nach Jurist, erhielten alle christlichen Formen ein rechtliches Gepräge. Er hat nicht nur Vieles aus der Kunstsprache der Juristen in die Kirchensprache des Abendlands übergeführt, sondern auch alle Beziehungen des Einzelnen und der Gemeinde zue Gottheit and umgekehrt.

Adolf Harnack, Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte, (4th ed.; Tübingen: Paul Siebeck, 1910), part III, p 15. (First edition was in 1888).

- (b) Der Terminologie wie dem Inhalte nach hat Tertullian ein gut Teil "jus Romanum" in die in seinen Schriften erhaltene Lehre eingeführt: Der persönliche, dreieinige Gott ist ihm der Lehrer des Gesetzes und zugleich der Richter über dessen Erfüllung. Unter diesem Gesichtspunkte steht vorwiegend die ganze Tertulliansche Auffassung vom Verhältnisse zwischen Gott und Mensch.

Karl Hermann Wirth, Der Begriff des 'Meritum' bei Tertullian, (Leipzig: Ackermann & Glaser, 1892), p 63.

- (c) It is more owing to him than to any one that the relations of God and man came to be regarded as legal relations, and sin, for example, as a kind of legal liability, which might be dealt with in ways analogous to those with which his profession had made him familiar.

James Denney, The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation, (London: James Clark, 1959) p 45. (First published in 1902).

Footnote 3 continued:

different reasons, both concluded that Tertullian had received no legal training beyond the general education accorded in the rhetorical schools of his day. (S. Schlossman, in two articles entitled "Tertullian im Lichte der Jurisprudenz", Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte, 27 (1906), 251-275 and 407-430 and Jean-Claude Fredouille, Tertullian et la conversion de la culture antique, (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1972) pp 29ff, 221ff and passim. Another useful summary of the debate was made by Joseph Kaspar Stirnimann, Die Praescriptio Tertullians im Lichte des römischen Rechtes und der Theologie, (Freiburg: Paulusverlag, 1949) p 2-4, and the latest published contribution is by Timothy David Barnes, Tertullian. A Historical and Literary Study, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971) p 22-29. P. Vitton's much respected study, I concetti giuridici nelle opere di Tertulliano (Rome: 1924) was reprinted in 1972.

Yet through the agency of Tertullian, by his earlier profession a lawyer, all Christian forms received a legal impress. He is not only transferred the technical terms of the jurists into the ecclesiastical language of the West, but he also contemplated, from a legal standpoint, all relations of the individual and the Church to the Deity, and vice versa.

Textbook of The History of Dogma (Book)

According to the terminology as well as the content, Tertullian has introduced a good part of the "jus Romanum" into the doctrines in his essays: the personal God, the Three-in-One, is for him the teacher of the law and at the same time judge over its fulfilment. From this point of view, there stands the whole of Tertullian's conception of the relationship between God and man.

The Idea of 'Merit' in Tertullian (Book)

"Tertullian in the Light of Jurisprudence",

(periodical article in "Journal for the History of the Church")

Tertullian and the Conversion of Ancient Culture.

"The 'prasecriptio' of Tertullian in the Light of Roman Law and of Theology".

Legal concepts in the works of Tertullian

- (d) C'était un avocat qui voyait avant tout dans le christianisme un fait et une loi. Le fait, il fallait l'établir et le comprendre: la loi, il fallait l'interpréter et surtout l'observer. Dieu est, à notre égard, un maître et un créancier: nous sommes ses sujets et ses débiteurs. Il est donc juste, pour déterminer nos rapports avec lui, - c'est-à-dire notre attitude, nos rapports religieux, - d'appliquer les principes des législations humaines, et de porter dans cette application la rigueur qui préside à la détermination de nos dettes et de nos droits civils: question de passif et d'actif qui se peut traiter avec l'exactitude des opérations de commerce.

Joseph Tixeront, Histoire des Dogmes dans L'Antiquité Chrétienne, (7th ed.; Paris:Victor Lecoffre, 1915) I, 333. (First edition was in 1905).

- (e) He viewed the relation between God and man in the light of a legal transaction and expressed it in terms of Roman law.

J.M. Lupton, Q. Septimi Florentis Tertulliani, De Baptismo, (Cambridge: University Press, 1908) p xxvii.

- (f) Tertullian regards God above all as the Lawgiver and religion as a discipline ordained of God through Christ.

Robert Sleightholme Franks, The Work of Christ (London: Thomas Nelson and Son, 1962) p 78. (Published in 1918 as A History of the Doctrine of the Work of Christ).

- (g) God is portrayed at length as a Judge, and the relationship of men to Him is pre-eminently that of criminals to a Judge.

Robert Edward Roberts, The Theology of Tertullian, (London: Epworth Press, 1924) p 28.

- (h) One predominant characteristic of Tertullian's invention of a new terminology, is his introduction of the use of designating the relationship of man to God by means of terms derived from Roman Law.

James Morgan, The Importance of Tertullian in the Development of Christian Dogma, (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1928) p 52.

- (i) In fact all the relations between God and man are regarded by Tertullian as having the character of legal transaction. His pages contain manifold references to such terms as 'debt', 'satisfaction', 'guilt', 'compensation'. Even his doctrine of the Atonement is viewed from the same standpoint.

ibid., p 9.

- (j) Ein eigenartig ausgestaltetes Verhältnis zwischen Gott und Mensch bildet den Mittelpunkt der Religiosität Tertullians. Die verpflichtende Strenge einer römisch gedachten, objektiven lex fidei bestimmt bei ihm ausschliesslich und unverrückbar die gesamten Beziehungen zu Gott und

He was a lawyer who saw in Christianity first of all a fact and a law. The fact had to be proven and understood; the law, to be interpreted and above all, to be kept. God is for us a master and a creditor: we are His subjects and His debtors. Hence, to determine our dealings with Him, - viz., our religious attitude and relations in His regard, - it is but just that we should apply the principles of human legislation and carry into this application the strictness which prevails when debts and civil rights have to be stated and precision: a mere question of liabilities and capital, which can be treated with the exactness of commercial transactions.

History of Dogmas in Christian Antiquity.

A remarkably-envisaged relationship between God and man stands at the centre of Tertullian's spirituality. The obligatory severity of the lex fidei (the law of faith), conceived as a typically Roman objective law, determines for Tertullian, exclusively and immoveably, the collective relationship between God and

Welt. Näher gekennzeichnet wird die Natur dieses Glaubensgesetzes dadurch, dass es sozusagen eine religiöse Privatrechtsordnung darstellt.

Alexander Beck, Römischer Recht bei Tertullian und Cyprian, (Halle; Max Niemeyer, 1930, reprinted, Aalen; Max Niemeyer, 1967) p 20-21.

- (k) Tertullian's outlook unites Old Testament nomism and Roman moralism and jurisprudence. The result is a theology of merit whose influence on the later history of Christianity was calamitous. The idea of retribution is central to his interpretation of Christianity. Nothing, he says, can more become God, as the good and righteous Judge, than to elect and reprobate men according to their deserts. God simply cannot disregard man's merit; He cannot condemn those who have not deserved it, nor refrain from reprobating those who have sinned. The Law is thus the proper Way of Salvation.

Anders Theodor Samuel Nygren, Agape and Eros, (translated by Philip S. Watson), (London: SPCK, 1954) I, 132-133; (Original (Swedish) edition was in 1930).

- (l) He not only transferred the technical terms of the jurist into the ecclesiastical language of the West, but he contemplated from a legal standpoint all the relations both of the individual and of the Church, to the Deity, and reciprocally, His relation to them.

William Phillips, The Influence of Roman Law on the History and Doctrine of the Christian Church during the First Three Centuries, (Unpublished thesis presented to the University of Edinburgh for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Theological Faculty, 26th March 1931) p 235.

- (m) By means of the doctrine of justice a juristic relation to God was established and a legal character given to all the relations between God and man.

ibid., p 181.

- (n) The legal cast of Tertullian's mind is especially evident in his dealing with the subject of Redemption. The foundation and framework of his doctrine of salvation are legalistic. The relations of God and man are of the nature of a legal transaction. This follows from his fundamental conception of God; God is essentially a Judge whose will finds expression in forms of law.

ibid., p 194.

- (o) Law permeated his representation of the relation between God and man.

Johannes Quasten, Patrology, (Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press, 1964), I, 322. (First printing was in 1950).

- (p) He looks upon God, not as the divine Father to Whom he has free access, but as the sternly just distributor of rewards and penalties.

John Norman Davidson Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines, (4th ed.; London Adam and Charles Black, 1968), 460. (First edition was in 1958).

the world. The nature of this
law of belief can be characterised further by the establishment of a
civil legal order.

Roman Law according to Tertullian and Cyprian.

- (q) Throughout his writings, Tertullian reveals as a central point in his religion the concept of the legal relationship between God and man. He assumes a rigorous rule, which is the lex or regula fidei. This law covers the entire relationship of God and the world and His creatures.

Eleanor Russell Cate, Tertullian's Defence of the Christian Community: an Apologist's Task and Method, (Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, presented to the University of Columbia, 1966), p 82.

Such statements may be justified for certain areas of Tertullian's thought - for example, his treatment of post-baptismal sin, or his view of the final judgment of the ungodly, or the exclusion of heretics by praescripto. The extent to which such statements are true, and the extent to which they are misleading, for the years between conception and conversion, is the second main concern of this study. The method adopted is therefore to narrate, as far as can be ascertained from the text of Tertullian's writings, the ways in which he expressed the relationship of man to God for the period under review. That part of the work is essentially descriptive. The penultimate section of every chapter then sets out the Roman law which appears to have been in Tertullian's mind for that area, and the final section of every chapter draws conclusions from that chapter, with particular reference to the extent which Roman law appears to have influenced Tertullian's thought.

On further preliminary point should be made. While Tertullian insisted (particularly against Praxeas,) ¹ that the name of God was proper to Father, Son and Holy Spirit, he made clear that man could have no settled relationship with the Son or with the Spirit until after conversion to the Christian faith. ² Unless the context requires otherwise, the word 'God' will therefore refer, throughout this thesis, to the First Person of the Trinity only. Tertullian nowhere set out to prove the fact of His existence, nor did he require to, because the error of his

¹ e.g. "et Pater Filius Deus et Spiritus Deus, et Deus unusquisque" - Prax 13.6.42-43.

² This is established in chapters VIII.6 and X.3 respectively.

Law or Rule of Faith

Prescription (a technical term of Roman Law)

Both the Father is God and the Son is God and the Holy Spirit is God,
and each several one of them is God.

pagan contemporaries was not atheism but polytheism - "T.steht dem eigentlichen Ahteismusproblem innerlich durchaus fern; einem richtigen Atheisten ist er nie begegnet".¹ Tertullian's writings therefore assumed the existence of God as a self-evident truth, to be recognised by all men ex testimonio animae and/or by observation of the natural world.

The extent to which Tertullian's teaching on the relationship of man to God for the period under review altered over the years, as he became influenced by and then as he expounded Montanist doctrine, is examined in Excursus Four.

The opportunity is taken here of acknowledging with gratitude the help and guidance given by Mr. David F. Wright, M.A. Senior Lecturer in Ecclesiastical History in the University of Edinburgh, in the years during which these ideas germinated and then developed into the thesis now presented. Thanks are due also to the Librarian and staff of the New College Library for their patience over these same years, not least for obtaining both printed material and micro-films through the Inter-Library Loan Service for otherwise inaccessible material on Tertullian.

¹ Joseph Lortz, Tertullian als Apologet, (Münster: Aschendorff, 1927) I, 246. As Tertullian himself put it, si quando coguntur deum confiteri, tamen et alios infra illum uolunt - Herm 7.3. 10-11.

Tertullian stands, inwardly, very far away from the real problem of atheism; he has never met a true atheist.

by the testimony of the soul.

Tertullian as Apologist.

when (the heathen) on occasion are compelled to acknowledge the existence of God, will yet have it that there are also other gods below Him.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	i
PREFACE	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	ix
TERTULLIAN'S WORKS (chronology, abbreviations and text)	xiii

PART ONETHE RELATIONSHIP TO GOD OF EMBRYOS,
INFANTS AND CHILDREN UNDER FOURTEEN

CHAPTER

I. THE BEGINNING OF THE RELATIONSHIP TO GOD.

1. Introduction to chapter one.....	1
2. No earlier than conception.....	3
3. No later than conception.....	7
4. Traducianism.....	13
5. The potential of the embryo.....	20
6. The constituent parts of man.....	31
7. The implications of traducianism.....	42
8. The relationship to God at conception.....	47
9. Roman law for this area.....	50
10. Conclusions from chapter one.....	55

II. THE RELATIONSHIP OF GROWING EMBRYOS TO GOD

1. Introduction to chapter two.....	58
2. God supervised the growth of the embryo.....	59
3. The implications of abortion.....	61
4. Whether the relationship altered during pregnancy.....	64
5. Roman law for this area.....	73
6. Conclusions from chapter two.....	77

III. THE RELATIONSHIP OF INFANTS TO GOD

1. Introduction to chapter three.....	80
2. The devil's attack on infant souls.....	81
3. Infant mortality.....	86
4. Christian parentage affected the relationship.....	88
5. Whether baptism in infancy affected the relationship.....	92
6. Roman law for this area.....	97
7. Conclusions from chapter three.....	102

IV. THE RELATIONSHIP OF CHILDREN TO GOD

1. Introduction to chapter four.....	104
2. The devil's bid for the soul.....	
3. The soul took the lead.....	111
4. No significant distinction between boys and girls.....	114
5. Children counted innocent until fourteen.....	119
6. Roman law for this area.....	125
7. Conclusions from chapter four.....	130

PART TWOTHE RELATIONSHIP OF UNREGENERATE ADULTS TO GOD

V. THE NATURAL MAN'S KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

1. Introduction to chapter five.....	133
2. Tertullian's description of non-Christians.....	135
3. The love of God for non-believers.....	141
4. Every adult should have some knowledge of God.....	151
5. The testimony of the soul.....	160
6. The testimony of nature.....	171
7. Dreams, visions and revelations.....	177

8. Observing Christians, including exorcism.....	180
9. Reading or hearing scripture.....	187
10. Roman law for this area.....	192
11. Conclusions from chapter five.....	198

VI. THE NATURAL MAN'S ACCOUNTABILITY TO GOD

1. Introduction to chapter six.....	202
2. Free-will - man's right to reject God.....	204
3. Failure to recognise God was culpable.....	211
4. When man was accountable to God.....	217
5. The inadequacy of the best is paganism.....	226
6. The relationship between revelation and reason.....	234
7. Intellectual incapacity.....	247
8. Roman law for this area.....	251
9. Conclusions from chapter six.....	257

PART THREE

THE RELATIONSHIP OF CATECHUMENS TO GOD

VII. THE RELATIONSHIP AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CATECHUMENATE

1. Introduction to chapter seven.....	263
2. Relationships not open to catechumens.....	266
3. The choice put before the enquirer.....	270
4. Fear of God to be inculcated.....	277
5. Roman law for this area.....	281
6. Conclusions from chapter seven.....	286

VIII.	THE RELATIONSHIP DURING THE CATECHUMENATE	
1.	Introduction to chapter eight.....	289
2.	Instruction in the <u>regula fidei</u>	294
3.	<u>Paenitentia prima</u>	299
4.	Salvation only in the Church.....	309
5.	Final stages of preparation for baptism.....	311
6.	The relationship of <u>paenitentia prima</u> to baptism.....	315
7.	Roman law for this area.....	328
8.	Conclusions from chapter eight.....	336
IX.	THE RELATIONSHIP AT BAPTISM	
1.	Introduction to chapter nine.....	340
2.	Renunciation of the devil.....	347
3.	The baptismal vow.....	352
4.	Remission of sins.....	355
5.	Regeneration.....	357
6.	Deliverance from death and the devil.....	361
7.	Enlightenment.....	364
8.	Restoration to likeness of God.....	365
9.	Roman law for this area.....	368
10.	Conclusions from chapter nine.....	385
X.	THE RELATIONSHIP AT CONFIRMATION	
1.	Introduction to chapter ten.....	387
2.	The anointing and the signing with the Cross.....	390
3.	The Imposition of the Hand.....	395
4.	The grace of God.....	399
5.	Baptised but not confirmed.....	401
6.	The first admission to the Eucharist.....	404
7.	Roman law for this area.....	408
8.	Conclusions from chapter ten.....	409

the Rule of Faith

repentance (before baptism)

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.....	411
EXCURSUS ONE - The position of heretics.....	423
EXCURSUS TWO - The difficulty of ascertaining Roman Law.....	427
EXCURSUS THREE - Slavery and adoption.....	432
EXCURSUS FOUR - Montanist influence on Tertullian.....	437
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	444

TERTULLIAN'S WORKS (CHRONOLOGY, ABBREVIATIONS AND TEXT)

All thirty-one of Tertullian's extant works have contributed to this thesis. While it would be a study in itself to be specific about their chronology,¹ it is desirable (in order to follow the evolution of his thought) to arrange his works into at least broad groups and to indicate their approximate dates. This is done below and the abbreviations used for them, throughout the thesis, are set

¹ René Braun showed the extent of the debate and also summarised the views of the twelve main contributing scholars by listing Tertullian's works in the order which he himself preferred and setting out the conclusions of the others in note form underneath: René Braun, Deus Christianorum, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1962), Excursus One, pp 563-577. The list which follows here is basically Braun's, but it introduces a category entitled "Persuading to the Montanist viewpoint". The generally accepted pattern was challenged by Barnes, who proposed a substantially different chronology and order: op cit., pp 30-35. Bray provided an interesting summary of the efforts to establish a chronology for the writings of Tertullian from the first serious attempt in 1848 until the movement 'ran out of steam' at the end of the 19th century: Gerald Lewis Bray, Holiness and the Will of God, (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1979) p 17-18.

The God of the Christians (Book)

out on the right hand side of the page. References to the text of Tertullian's works throughout the thesis are to the chapter, paragraph and line¹ of the editions collected in Corpus Christianorum, series latina, volumes I and II.² Where the text has been quoted, the semi-consonant "u" of the manuscripts, reproduced in Corpus Christianorum, has been retained in place of the more modern "v"; integration marks < > and half square brackets $\lfloor \rfloor$ (indicating faded letters in the manuscripts) have been omitted unless the point is material to the study. The typewriter used (a "word processor") could not conveniently reproduce the "s p a c i n g" of Tertullian's quotations from the Bible, because in automatically justifying the right-hand margin it treated every such space as a new word and arranged the letters at irregular intervals.

The chronological table used in the thesis for Tertullian works is overleaf:

¹ For example V Marc 4.16.21-24 refers to the Fifth Book of the Adversus Marcionem, chapter 4, paragraph 16, lines 21-24; but no less than three different methods are used, within this one edition of Corpus Christianorum, for numbering the lines of the text!

- (a) In the first two works (mart and nat), every new page of the edition reverts to the number '1', without reference to the text.
- (b) The majority of the other works revert to '1' at every new chapter of the text, without regard to the pagination of the edition, but
- (c) Six of the works, scattered throughout both volumes of the edition, (Herm, Val, scorp, idol, jej, and pud) follow the numbering of the C.S.E.L. edition, from which they were reproduced, reverting to '1' wherever a new page is reached in C.S.E.L.; this is indicated by 'V' in the margin.

² Quinti Septimi Florentis Tertulliani Opera, (Turnhout: Typographi Brepols Editores Pontifici, 1954), Pars I (Opera Catholica. Adversus Marcionem), Pars II (Opera Montanistica).

(A collected edition of Tertullian's works in two volumes)

"Against Marcion" (one of Tertullian's treatises).

The Works of Q.S.F. Tertullian, (Part One - Catholic Works and "Against Marcion", Part Two - Montanist Works.)

Before any Montanist influence**Abbreviated to:**

<u>A.D. 197</u>	ad martyras	mart
	ad nationes	nat
<u>A.D. 197-198</u>	apologeticum	apol
	de testimonio animae	test
<u>A.D. 198-200</u>	adversus Judaeos	Jud
	de spectaculis	spec
	de praescriptione haereticorum	praes
<u>A.D. 200-206</u>	de baptismo	bapt
	de patientia	pat
	de paenitentia	paen
	de cultu feminarum	cult
	ad uxorem	ux
	de oratione	orat
	adversus Hermogenem	Herm

Tinged with Montanist influence

<u>A.D. 207-208</u>	adversus Marcionem	Marc
<u>A.D. 208-211</u>	de pallio	pal
	de carne Christi	carn
	adversus Valentinianos	Val
	de anima	an
	de resurrectione carnis	res
	de corona	cor
<u>A.D. 211-212</u>	scorpiace ¹	scorp

¹ Placed here, although there is considerable force in Barnes' argument for dating scorpiace at the end of A.D. 203 or the beginning of 204 - Timothy David Barnes, "Tertullian's Scorpiace", Journal of Theological Studies, n.s. 20 (1969), 108.

To the Martyrs.

To the Gentiles.

Apology.

On the Witness of the Soul.

Against the Jews.

On Spectacles (Shows).

On the Prescription of Heretics.

On Baptism.

On Suffering.

On Repentance.

On Women's Apparel.

To his Wife.

On Prayer.

Against Hermogenes.

Against Marcion.

On the Cloak.

On the Flesh of Christ.

Against the Valentinians.

On the Soul.

On the Resurrection of the Flesh (Dead).

On the Soldier's Crown.

The Scorpion.

de idolatria	idol
ad Scapulam	Scap

Persuading to the Montanist viewpoint

<u>After A.D. 213</u>	de exhortatione castitatis	ex
	de fuga	fug
	de virginibus velandis	virg

Montanist viewpoint stated, not argued

<u>A.D. 217-220</u>	adversus Praxean	Prax
	de ieiunio	jej
	de monogamia	mon
	de pudicitia	pud

On Idolatry.

To Scapula.

An Exhortation to Chastity.

On Flight from Persecution.

On the Veiling of Virgins.

Against Praxeas.

On Fasting.

On Monogamy.

On Modesty.

PART ONE

THE RELATIONSHIP TO GOD OF EMBRYOS, INFANTS AND CHILDREN UNDER FOURTEEN YEARS OF AGE

CHAPTER ONE - THE BEGINNING OF THE RELATIONSHIP TO GOD

I.1 INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER ONE

Tertullian taught, clearly and emphatically, that human life began at conception - not a moment sooner, not a moment later.¹ He rejected the view that the soul could have had a prior existence, and so a prior relationship with God - the view taught by Plato, Pythagoras, Empedocles, and others.² He rejected also the view that the human soul entered the embryo at some point between conception and birth - the view taught by Aristotle and others.³ He rejected, equally emphatically, and for the same reason, the view that the human soul entered the body at the first respiration of the child - the view of the Stoics, the Roman jurists, and the Jewish rabbis.⁴ All these ideas are examined in sections two and three of this chapter, together with how (and why) Tertullian refuted them.

In section four, Tertullian's rejection of 'creationism' is explored, and an introductory look is taken at his theory of propagatio animarum per traducem; metaphors from viniculture and from agriculture illustrate his teaching that

¹ Conception is now known to be a process, by no means instantaneous, but in the absence of instruments of magnification, Tertullian could not have known that.

² Examined in section I.2 below.

³ Mentioned in section I.2 below and then examined in chapter II.4.

⁴ The Stoic view is discussed briefly in section I.2 and the Roman jurist's view in section I.9; the view of the Jewish rabbis is mentioned in chapter II.4 (p 68 below).

the propagation of souls by traducianism (transmission of offshoots)

every soul was descended from the soul of Adam. Section four also sets out the three contemporary theories of conception, and the use which Tertullian made of them. Section five goes on to look at the potential of both body and soul for some relationship with God, from the very moment when they were joined together at conception. Since repeated reference will be made in this chapter to the "two parts" of embryonic man, section six is devoted to establishing whether Tertullian really believed man to be a dichotomy of body and soul only or whether (as some passages suggest) he thought of a trichotomy of body, soul and spirit. The relationship of the parts to each other is examined, partly in section five and partly in section six.

That clarified, the study turns in section seven to consider the implications of traducianism. Tertullian insisted that all mankind had inherited sin - or at least a sinful nature - and the importance of that becomes apparent as he contrasts the natural immunda of all men with the actual sins which they later commit. Nevertheless, the original, rational and good nature of the soul lived on, obscured but not eliminated; Tertullian would later use this residue of God's goodness in the soul as his most powerful argument for some relationship between every adult man and God. Meantime, however, the relationship of embryonic life to God at the moment of conception is examined in section eight; several texts are found to be important for this. Section nine then sets out the Roman law which is relevant for this chapter, and conclusions are drawn in section ten.

impurity

I.2 NO EARLIER THAN CONCEPTION

Although Tertullian stated plainly and¹ on a number of occasions¹ that human life originated at conception, i.e. with the coniunctio corporis animaeque², this did not logically exclude the possibility of a previous, separate existence by one or other or both of the component parts of man, and so a prior relationship with God. Indeed, some of his contemporaries, following Plato, did teach that the soul came to the body from a prior, independent, transcendental existence, where it had already known God - animae et innatae et in caelestibus conuersatae et consciae diuinorum illic et inde delatae et hic recordatae crederentur.³ The idea of psychic pre-existence has often, although not necessarily, been coupled with the theory of metempsychosis - the transmigration of souls. Tertullian encountered and dealt with both aspects, the former in de anima chapters 23 to 24, and the latter in de anima chapters 28 to 35 (together with incidental references elsewhere in his works).

Chapters 23 and 24 of de anima contain his refutation of various (false) ideas about the origin of the soul, all of which he traced back to Plato's theory of ἀνάμνησις. This claim, that Plato was condimentarius omnium haereticorum, makes it clear that Tertullian's aim throughout the chapter (as indeed throughout the whole book de anima) was the refutation of heretical ideas present in his own time.

Doleo bona fide Platonem omnium haereticorum condimentarium factum. Illius est enim et in Phaedone, quod animae hinc euntes sint illuc, et inde huc; item in Timaeo, quod genimina dei delegata sibi mortalium genitura accepto initio animae immortalis mortale ei circumgelauerint corpus; tum, quod mundus hic imago sit alterius alicuius. Quae omnia ut fidei

¹ Examined in section I.6 below.

² an 27.2.8.

³ an 24.12.96-97.

the joining of body and soul.

Souls are supposed to be unborn, and to live in heavenly regions, where they are instructed in divine mysteries; moreover, they come down to this earth and here recall the memory of their previous existence.

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

reminiscences

the caterer to all heresies.

I am sorry from my heart that Plato has been the caterer to all these heretics. For in the Phaedo he says that souls travel back and forth between this world and the other, while in the Timaeus he imagines that God had delegated to his offspring the production of men. Thus they clothed the mortal body around the immortal soul, thereby indicating that this world is the image of some other. In order to win credence for this theory - /

commendet, et animam retro in superioribus cum deo egisse in commercio idearum et inde huc transuenire et hic quae retro norit de exemplaribus recensere, nouum elaborauit argumentum, μαθήσεις ἀναμνήσεως id est discentias remiscencias esse; uenientes enim inde huc animas obliuisci eorum in quibus prius fuerint, dehinc ex his uisibilibus edoctas recordari. Cum igitur huiusmodi argumento illa insinuentur a Platone quae haeretici mutuuntur, satis haeticos repercutiam, si argumentum Platonis elidam. 1

Since, as Waszink remarked, "Hardly ever has the position of an adversary been combatted by Tertullian as Plato's doctrine of ἀνάμνησις",² the details need not be examined here. The important point for this study is Tertullian's insistence that all theories of psychic pre-existence led to dangerous heresy. Presumably his concern was to safeguard his teaching on the simultaneous origin of body and soul³ and also his teaching on traducianism,⁴ both of which would have been endangered if it could have been shown that the human soul lodged in man after some earlier and separate relationship with God.

Chapters 28 to 35 of de anima deal with various aspects of the related theory, (which Tertullian had mentioned briefly in chapter 23.2) namely the transmigration of souls. Again he regarded Plato as the chief culprit, for providing heretics with the materials from which to work,⁵ although this time he blamed Plato only for transmitting the ideas, not for originating them.

Quis ille nunc uetus sermo apud memoriam Platonis de animarum reciproco discursu, quod hinc abeuntes sint illuc et rursus huc ueniant et fiant et

¹ an 23.5.20 - 6.35.

² Jan H. Waszink, Quinti Septimi Florentis Tertulliani De anima (Amsterdam: J.H. Meulenhoff, 1947)p 304.

³ Examined in section I.3 below.

⁴ Examined in section I.4 below.

⁵ Whether Tertullian was being fair to Plato is outside the scope of this study. Plato certainly believed in the pre-existence of the soul, but he seems to have avoided committing himself in his explicit teaching (as distinct from his myths) to belief in reincarnation. His own hope, put into the mouth of Socrates, was that his soul would return to its bodiless state in the realm of the gods, from which it had come.

- that the soul had formerly lived with God in the heavens above, sharing His ideas with Him, and afterwards came down to live with us on earth, and while here recollects the eternal patterns of things which it had learnt before - he elaborated his new formula, (Greek), which means "learning is reminiscence". He tells us that souls on their arrival in this world have forgotten what they have learned in heaven, but gradually, under the stimulus of visible things, they recall what they once had known. Since, therefore, the ideas of the heretics are borrowed from this notion of Plato, I can take care of them by demolishing him.

reminiscences

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

What is the source of this ancient doctrine mentioned by Plato as to the successive migrations of souls? He says that they leave this world and go to the other, /

Book "Q.S.F. Tertullian, 'On the Soul'"

dehinc ita habeat rursus ex mortuis effici uiuos? Pythagoricus, ut uolunt quidam.¹

Having demonstrated the errors of Pythagoras and of Plato in these matters, in chapters 28 to 31, Tertullian turned, in chapters 32 and 33, to the even more radical teaching of the "lunatic Empedocles"² who believed in metempsychosis as well as metempsychosis - that a human soul could enter the body of an animal or even of a plant. Perinde igitur et hic dimicemus necesse est aduersus portentosiorem praesumptionem bestias ex hominibus et homines ex bestiis reuoluentem.³ Tertullian had already dealt briefly with the theme in the apologeticum⁴ but in de anima he proceeded to refute Empedocles with no less than five lengthy arguments. He recognised that no heretical sect had yet adopted metempsychosis⁵ but nevertheless he felt it necessary to refute the idea because of its link with metempsychosis, which had already influenced certain earlier heretics, whom Tertullian denounced by name - Simon Magus in chapter 34 and Carpocrates in chapter 35. The details need not concern this study, but the principle at stake (enunciated by Tertullian himself in introducing chapter 34) was the heresy of accepting transmigration of souls in any form.

¹ an 28.1.1-5.

² "Empedoclis furor" as Tertullian described his teaching in an 3.2.15. Empedocles himself professed to remember being a boy, then a girl, a shrub, a bird and a fish. Extracts of his works were collected by Heinrich Ritter and L. Preller, Historia philosophiae graecae (8th ed.; Gotha: F.A. Perthes 1898) pp 181-192.

³ an 32.2.7-10.

⁴ apol 48.1-4 (although there he attributed the theory to Pythagoras.)

⁵ Nulla quidem in hodiernum dementiae huiusmodi sententia erupit sub nomine haeretico, quae humanas animas refingat in bestias, sed necessarie hanc quoque speciem intulimus et exclusimus ut superioribus cohaerentem, quo perinde in pauo retunderetur Homerus sicut in Pythagora Euphorbus atque ita hac etiam metempsychosi siue metempsychotisi reuerberata illa rursus caederetur quae aliquid haeticis sumministravit. - an 34.1.1-8.

then come back here again, live their lives and depart once more, and once again from death return to life. Some people say it was invented by Pythagoras.

Now we must deal with that still more horrible theory that some have imagined - that, in the process of transmigration, men become beasts and beasts are turned into men.

"Apology" and "On the Soul" - (two of Tertullian's treatises)

The lunacy of Empedocles

History of Greek Philosophy

Although no foolish sect of heretics has up to the present espoused the doctrine of transmigration of souls, nevertheless I have felt it advisable to attack and refute it, since it is allied to other heresies. Thus, in getting rid of Homer and the peacock we can also dispose of Pythagoras and Euphorbus, and once metempsychosis or, if you wish, metempsychosis is demolished, we will destroy another notion which has been of great help to the heretics.

Never adverse to making use of material which came his way, Tertullian turned the pagan idea of metempsychosis to his own advantage in de resurrectione carnis. The heathen had no reason to mock at the Christian belief in resurrection, he said, because it was no more contrary to reason than their own belief in the transmigration of souls, especially if they were prepared to accept transfers from men into animals and vice versa.

Satis est autem, si non minor sententia Pythagorae et Empedocles et Platonici immortalem animam e contrario reclamant, immo adhuc proxime etiam in corpora remeabilem adfirmant, etsi non in eadem, etsi non in humana tantummodo, ut Euphorbus in Pythagoram, ut Homerus in pauum recenseantur.¹

However, although he was prepared to utilise the pagan notion for the sake of argument, he could not allow any real suggestion of metempsychosis. If the soul could have migrated from body to body, Tertullian's belief in the resurrection of the body, once only, would have been endangered. Furthermore,² the idea of descending and ascending by reincarnation, until the soul was worthy of heaven, was the basis of dualistic heresies regarding divine punishment; by attacking the basic idea that a soul which did not live in accordance with its original essence during its time on earth would be punished by a series of reincarnations, Tertullian hoped to safe-guard the Christian doctrine of judgment by God, once only and at the resurrection.

To conclude this section, it should be noted that Tertullian nowhere suggested the body could have had an independent existence, prior to conception; accordingly the demonstration that the soul had no prior existence established, beyond any argument, that man had no relationship with God, in any form, prior to the coniunctio corporis animaeque.

¹ res 1.5.14-19.

² In apol 43. 3 & 4, Tertullian made a clear distinction between the two reasons, viz. safeguarding both the Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the body and also the judgment of God (which would be thwarted if the human soul could be transferred into the body of an animal and thereby lose its consciousness of its deserts), but he ran the two ideas together in the de anima passage.

"On the Resurrection of the Flesh (Body)" - (one of Tertullian's treatises)

But it is enough if the no younger judgment of Pythagoras, as well as Empedocles and the Platonics, make the contrary claim that the soul is immortal, yet more, assert that it is destined very soon afterwards to return into bodies, albeit not the same bodies, nor human bodies only, with the result that Euphorbus is reborn as Pythagoras and Homer as a peacock.

joining of body and soul

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

Tertullian faced two further challenges to his belief that individual human life began coniunctio corporis animaeque.¹ These were:-

- (a) the Aristotlean belief that the human soul entered the embryo at some point between conception and birth,² and
- (b) the Stoic belief that the human soul entered the newly-born infant at the moment of its first breath³.

Another of Tertullian's fundamental doctrines was at stake here, namely his belief that the soul, and with it the sin of Adam, passed from generation to generation by the act of procreation.⁴ If the body could exist independently of the human soul, hominisation⁵ could not be attributed to the physical transmission of the father's seed, and Tertullian's doctrine of traducianism would

¹ an 27.2.8.

² Examined in chapter II.4 below.

³ The Stoic philosophy of the soul is well set out by E. Vernon Arnold, Roman Stoicism, (London: 1958) pp 238-272. To breathe is the first act which marks the life of a newly born infant and to cease to breathe is the first sign which tokens the extinction of life. It was therefore not unnatural to assume that the principle which animated the body was a breath, which entered it at birth and left it at death. Tertullian named the Stoics and Aenesidemus as putting forward this view, and that sometimes Plato did - Hoc Stoici cum Aenesidemo et ipse interdum Plato, cur dicit perinde animam extraneam alias et extorrem uteri prima adspiratione nascentis infantis adduci, sicut expiratione nouissima educi - an 25.2.14-18. No other extant writing however attributes this view to Plato.

⁴ Traducianism - examined in section I.4 below.

⁵ The word 'hominisation', although not used by Tertullian, is here preferred to 'animation', to denote the union of a human soul with a human embryo because 'animation' does not necessarily mean the infusion of a human soul. Aristotle taught that the human embryo received first a vegetative soul, then a sensitive soul, and finally an intellective soul - as examined in chapter II.4 below. - so although Aristotle's followers could reasonably have claimed that the embryo was animated from the very start, the soul which animated it was not for them a human soul. For them, animation was immediate but hominization was delayed. Aristotle, Generation of Animals (with an English translation by A.L. Peck, London: Heinemann, 1943) book II, chaps 1-4.

joining of body and soul

This view is held by Aenesidemus and Stoics in general, and occasionally by Plato, as when he tells us that the soul is an alien thing and originates apart from the womb, since it is received at the first breath of air, just as it departs when a man draws his breath.

fall.¹ He therefore refuted, at considerable length, the teaching of various contemporaries who claimed that the human soul entered the body after conception.

In chapter 25 of de anima, he demonstrated to pagan philosophers and physicians (who would not have accepted his 'proofs' from Scripture) that the embryo was already alive before birth. He argued that mothers and pregnant women knew perfectly well the embryo had a life of its own;² furthermore, the birth of some children, still-born, proved that others in the womb were alive;³ so did the need for therapeutic abortion.⁴ Proceeding from there, he commented on the resemblance of children to their parents⁵, and on the practices of pagan astrologers⁶ - all to demonstrate that the embryo was in possession of a soul, and implying (without attempting proof at this stage) that the soul was present in the embryo from conception. (The proof of that came in chapter 27).

¹ As later Christian writers recognised; "Pour mieux combattre cette hérésie (i.e. que la vie et l'animation sont deux faits simultanés) les Pères latins distinguèrent entre la conception et l'animation; la conception est l'ouvre des parents, l'animation est le résultat de la création de l'âme par Dieu. Ils firent plus que les distinguer, ils les séparèrent chronologiquement, ils fixèrent à l'animation une date postérieure à la conception et ainsi disparaissait toute possibilité de traducianisme, lequel n'est conciliable qu'avec l'animation immédiate". From the article "Animation" by A. Chollet in Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique, (Paris: Letouzey et Ane, 1903) vol 1, col 1308.

² an hi motus gaudia uestra sint et certa securitas, quo d ita infantem et uiuere confidatis et ludere; an si desierit iniquies eius, illi prius pertimescatis - an 25.3.28-31.

³ Denique et mortui eduntur; quomodo, nisi et uiui? Qui autem et mortui, nisi qui prius uiui? - an 25.4.40-42.

⁴ certi animal esse conceptum atque ita miserti infelicissimae huiusmodi infantiae, ut prius occidatur, ne uiua lanietur ^{an} 25.5.53-55.

⁵ Vnde, oro, similitudine animae quoque parentibus de ingeniis respondemus secundum Cleanthis testimonium, si non et ex animae semine educimure? - an 25.9.87-89.

⁶ Cur autem et ueteras astrologie genituram hominis ab initio conceptus dirigebant, si non exinde et anima est. - an 25.9.89-91.

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

In order better to combat this heresy (that life and animation are two simultaneous facts) the Latin Fathers distinguish between conception and animation: conception is the work of parents, animation is the result of the creation of the soul by God. They did more than distinguish them, they separated them chronologically, they fixed for animation a date posterior to conception and thus disappeared any possibility of traducianism which is only compatible with immediate animation.

(Article in the "Dictionary of Catholic Theology")

Are not these movements a source of joy and an assurance to you that the child within you is alive and playful? Should his restlessness subside, would you not be immediately concerned for him?

And thus by and by infants are still-born, but how so, unless they had life? For how could any die, who had not previously lived?

And all of them were convinced that a living thing had been conceived, since they all feel pity for the poor child who must be killed in the womb to escape being tortured alive.

Pray, whence comes it that from similarity of soul we resemble our parents in disposition, according to the testimony of Celenathes, if we are not produced from this seed of the soul?

Why, indeed, did the ancient astrologers cast a man's horoscope from the time of his conception, if the soul does not exist from that moment?

In chapter 26, to make the same point for the benefit of Christian readers, Tertullian brought forward his 'convincing proofs' from Scripture - the soul was present in the embryos of Esau and Jacob¹ of Jesus and of John the Baptist² and of Jeremiah.³ Then Tertullian turned, in chapter 27, to the more specific assertion that soul and body came into existence simultaneously, viz. at the moment of conception. Immo simul ambas et concipi et confici, perfici dicimus, sicut et promi, nec ullum interuenire momentum in conceptu quo locus ordinetur.⁴

His proof of this proceeded in three parts -

- (1) a syllogism, followed by
- (2) an argumentum ex sensu communi, followed (as was his custom) by
- (3) an argumentum ex scriptura sacra.

1. The syllogism (sections 2-3) can be paraphrased as follows.

- (a) Vita pariter corpori et animae obvenit.
- (b) Vitam a conceptu agnoscimus (nam exinde vita, quo anima, et animam a conceptu vindicamus).
- (c) Ergo vita pariter (i.e. in conceptu) corpori et animae obvenit.

The logic of this has been closely examined by Waszink⁵ and found to be defective - not least because the conclusion omits the important words in

¹ Ecce uiscera Rebeccae inquietantur et longe adhuc partus - an 26.3.6-7; quid ille qui expectabatur, qui adhuc intus detinebatur et foris iam detinebat? an 26.3.17-18.

² sed et illi uiuunt in suo quisque utero. Exultat Elizabeth, Johannes intus impulerat; glorificat dominum Maria. Christus intus instinxerat. an 26.4.26-28

³ Sic et ad Hieremiam legis dei uocem: priusquam te in utero fingerem, nouite. an 26.5.31-32.

⁴ an 27.1.3-5.

⁵ op. cit. p. 346-7.

My view is that both are conceived, formed, and perfected at the same time, just as they are born together, and there is no a moment's interval in their conception by which any priority might be assigned to either one of them.

Argument from common sense.

Argument from Holy Scripture.

- a) Life comes simultaneously to body and soul.
- b) We recognise life from the moment of conception (for life begins in the same instant as the soul, and we assume the soul's existence from the moment of conception).
- c) Therefore life comes simultaneously to body and soul (i.e. in the moment of conception).

See how the very vitals of Rebecca are stirred, though the child is a long way from birth.

How are you going to explain this action of the second child who, while still within the womb, tried to hold onto his brother who was already outside.

But, they were both alive while still in the womb. Elizabeth exults with joy, (for) John had leaped in her womb; Mary magnifies the Lord, (for) Christ had instigated her within.

Accordingly, you read the word of God, spoken to Jeremiah: "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you."

conceptu. However, what Tertullian was trying to say here, fortified by the sections which follow, make clear beyond doubt that he believed uita = anima = uita:-

Porro uitam a conceptu agnoscimus, quia animam a conceptu uindicamus; exinde enim uita, quo anima. ¹

2. The Common Sense Argument (sections 4-6)

These sections contain a detailed examination of what takes place in the act of procreation, when (according to Tertullian) body and soul were implanted together in the womb. The text is only mentioned at this point, because it is more appropriate to examine it in detail in the section on traducianism, I.4 below. Tertullian wrote:

Nam etsi duas species confitebimur seminis, corporalem et animalem, indiscretas tamen uindicamus et hoc modo contemporales eiusdemque momenti. ²

Then following the common sense argument, Tertullian sought, as he often did, to fortify it by reference to Scripture, in particular to the prototype of procreation in Genesis 2:7, which is examined next.

3. The Scriptural Argument (sections 7-9)

Tertullian's argument, that the creation of Adam was both proof and pattern of the simultaneous origin of body and soul,³ is a curious and suspect argument - because there was a lapse of time between the creation of Adam's body and his receiving a soul, as Tertullian himself recognised elsewhere.⁴ However,

¹ an 27.3.11-3.

² an 27.4.19-21.

³ an 27.8.

⁴ e.g. in res 45.2.8-11. In I Marc 24.5.9-11 the very scriptural text used in an 27.7.42 to prove that homo applied only when the body and soul came together, was used to prove that only the body is entitled to the name homo. Furthermore, Tertullian's use here of Genesis 1.28 (an 27.4.25) is very different from the interpretation he gave to it in pud 16.9.21, mon 7.3.21-23 and ex 6.1.6.

conception

Now we believe that life begins at conception, because we contend that the soul begins to exist at conception; for where life is, there must be a soul.

Even although we admit that there are two kinds of seed, the one for the body and the other for the soul, we still declare that they are inseparable, and therefore contemporaneous and simultaneous in origin.

man

it is not necessary to look here at the shortcomings of that particular argument, because Tertullian used Scripture only to fortify what he had already stated unequivocally to be his belief, and it is his belief, not the proof of it, which is investigated here.

Two further passages should be mentioned. After a digression (chapters 28-35) to deal with the migration of souls, Tertullian felt it necessary to take up, yet again, the simultaneous genesis of body and soul. Ostensibly his subject, in chapter 36, was the sex of the soul; Apelles the heretic believed that the soul already possessed a definite sex before it joined the body; others believed that the flesh gave the sex to the soul; Tertullian argued that sex was established when the semen of the body was fused with the semen of the soul - i.e. at conception, no sooner and no later:

Si enim in seminibus utriusque substantiae aliquam intercapedinem eorum, concupetus admitteret, ut aut caro aut anima prior seminaretur, esset etiam sexus proprietatem alteri substantiae adscribere per temporalem intercapedinem seminum. ¹

Chapter 36 gives an important emphasis to this subject, because it is clear that Tertullian was not really concerned to discuss whether or not the soul had a definite sex - he was determined to eliminate any possible opposition to his theory of the simultaneous genesis of body and soul. Because of rival theories, like the one maintained by Apelles (the following section of the same chapter), Tertullian turned his attack on to the Stoics, joining them with Apelles, not because the Stoics ever attributed a definite sex to the soul, but because their doctrine of the introduction of the soul to the body at birth might (in contrast to the view of Apelles) have led to the conclusion that the soul received its sex from the body. Chapter 36 is, therefore, not a discussion in its own right about the sex of the soul, but a fortification of the views already argued by Tertullian

¹ an 36.2.9-13.

Now if, in the semination of these substances, there were any interval of time between their conception, so that either soul or flesh were first implanted, one might ascribe a specific sex to one of them, owing to the difference of time of their impregnation.

in chapter 27 about the simultaneous origin of body and soul.

While there are references to the same concept, outside of de anima,

e.g.:

Atquin Adam nouus totus, et ex nouo uetus nemo. Nam et exinde a benedictione geniturae caro atque anima simul fiunt sine calculo temporis, ut quae simul in utero etiam seminantur, quod docuimus in commentario animae. Contemporant fetu, coetant natu.¹

Tertullian himself, as that passage shows, regarded de anima as his principal argument for the genesis of the soul, with the body, no later than conception. The other main passage in de anima is chapter 19, where Tertullian opposed the view that the intellect and the mind can be introduced into the soul later than conception, but that chapter is more appropriately examined in Section I.5 below.

¹ res 45.4.16-5.20.

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

Yet Adam was wholly new, and no man reverts back from new to old. For ever since the blessing of their procreation flesh and soul come into existence together, without reckoning of time, as things which are simultaneously sown in the womb, as I have taught in my treatise "On the Soul". They are contemporaries at conception, of one age at birth.

I.4 TRADUCIANISM

Tertullian not only rejected the pre-existence of souls and the delayed hominisation of bodies; these were not sufficient in themselves to secure his anthropology. He rejected also the view - later to be known as 'creationism' - that the soul was created by God, de novo and de nihilo, at the time of conception.¹ He advanced the theory known as traducianism - that the soul had been created by God, when He made Adam, and that, once created, souls were passed on by natural course from generation to generation. Adam was the root from which came every propagating branch or 'layer' - tradux² - hence the name traduciansim. The word means the tendril or runner of a vine, passing from pole to pole, which continues the life of the mother plant (matrix) independently and which can also transmit it. Tertullian therefore regarded the soul as "breath and cutting of the (divine) spirit", the underlying concept being

¹ According to 'creationism', the body alone was transmitted from parent to child, and each soul was a direct, new creation of God, created at the very instant in which it was joined to the body. Tertullian did not advance traducianism in opposition to that theory - which he did not even mention - but in opposition to Gnosticism. Chollet claims, in Column 1307 of the otherwise excellent article "Animation" already cited, that later Latin Fathers taught creationism in reaction to the views of Tertullian on traducianism. While it is true that they distinguished conception caused only by the parents, from 'hominisation' caused by the creative intervention of God, and that in order to emphasise the distinction between these two events, they separated them in time, Chollet does not give any proof for his assertion that this was a reaction to Tertullian's traducianism.

² Tertullian frequently used the metaphor of tradux in conjunction with the word anima. The three places where it refers specifically to his distinctive theory of 'traducianism' are an 36.4.29, res 7.2.8 and test 3.2.13. He appears to have taken the phrase tradux animae from the Valentinians, although he adapted it (a) to refute their doctrine of the pre-existence of souls, and (b) to safeguard the equality of all human beings against the gnostic distinction of three classes of men, the elite pneumatics (or gnostics), the middling psychics, the the lowly hylics, the first being destined for salvation, the third for reprobation, and the second oscillating between the two. Itaque dum Demiurgus traducem animae suae committit in Adam, (Val 25.3.1-2). Tertullian's appropriation of the phrase is noted by Heinrich Karpp, Probleme alchristlicher Anthropologie: Biblische Anthropologie und philosophische Psychologie bei den Kirchenvatern des dritten Jahrhunderts, (Gutersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1950) pp 64-65.

new

from nothing

shoot/sprout/branch

parent stem/source/origin/progenitor

soul

transmission of the soul

spiritual - animal - terrestrial

When, therefore, the Demiurge commits to Adam the transmission of his own vital principle ...

"Problems of Ancient Christian Anthropology: Biblical Anthropology and Philosophical Psychology in The Church Fathers of The Third Century." (Book)

that a part of the whole was transmitted every time. As Rondet put it:

Dans la génération humaine, il se passe quelque chose d'analogue à la première création de l'homme. De même que le souffle de Dieu était entré dans le limon pour en faire la chair d'Adam, de même dans la génération de l'homme, l'âme laisse échapper quelque chose de sa substance. La chair et l'âme sont données ensemble, elle grandissent ensemble les passions s'éveillent lorsque l'homme prend conscience de la loi divine. Il se passe en tout homme ce qui s'est passé en Adam et Eve. ¹

Creation as such was, however, a unique event, occurring once only at the beginning of human life of earth: all other humanity was the offspring of Adam.

The implication of this, for the relationship of the embryo to God, is examined in section I.7 below. This section examines the extent to which Tertullian taught the materialistic transmission of the soul from parent to offspring by the physical, organic process of generation. It must, however, be remembered that he believed spiritual qualities were transferred by propagation as well as material ones. The concept of traducianism so dominated his thinking that, because he could not discover in Scripture that Eve had been animated by the breath of God (as Adam had been), he believed that she must have received a tradux of Adam's soul, at the same time as her flesh was taken from Adam's side. ²

Twice he used the metaphor of surculus - once in de anima - cuius anima velut surculus quidam ex matrice Adam in propaginem deducta et genitalibus feminae ³ and the other time in the contemporary treatise de pallio, ut inde uelut ex surculis et propaginibus populi de populis, urbes de urbibus per ubique orbis pangerentur. ⁴ Because propagation was implied as well as

¹ H. Rondet, "Le péché originel dans la tradition Tertullien, Clément, Origène", Bulletin de Littérature Ecclésiastique, 67 (1966), 123.

² an 36.4.22-29.

³ an 19.6.38-39.

⁴ pal 2.6.67-69.

In human generation something similar to the first creation of man occurs. In the same way as God's breath entered the clay to make Adam's flesh, so in human generation, the soul lets some of its substance escape. The flesh and the soul are provided together, the passions awake when the man becomes conscious of the divine law. In each man occurs what has occurred in Adam and Eve.

transmission.

a shoot (agricultural)

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises).

The soul of a child, like a tender shoot, derives from Adam as its stem, and has been propagated amongst his posterity by means of a woman's generative organs.

"On the Cloak" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

So that, from grafts and settings as it were, peoples from peoples and cities from cities might be planted throughout every region of her orb.

"Original Sin in the Tradition of Tertullian, Clement and Origin",
in the Bulletin of Ecclesiastical Literature.

transmission, another appropriate metaphor was that of seed - seed present in the sperm of the father and planted in the womb of the mother at the moment of conception:

(Satanas) per quem homo a primordio circumuentus, ut praeceptum dei excederet, et propterea in mortem datus exinde totum genus de suo semine infectum suae etiam damnationis traducem fecit.¹

A primordio enim in Adam concreta et configurata corpori anima, ut totius substantiae, ita et condicionis istius semen effecit.²

Constitueramus animam in ipso et ex ipso seri homine et unum esse a primordio semen, sicut et carnis, in totum generis examen ³

and Tertullian closed de anima chapter 27, throughout which he had argued for the simultaneous origin of body and soul at conception, by a reference back to the creation of Adam, from whom there had flowed, together, two different seeds; ever after the pattern had been followed pariterque insinuata sulco et aruo suo pariter hominem ex utraque substantia effrutcent.⁴ Whichever the metaphor, Tertullian's objective was plain - uti reddam, quomodo animae ex una redundant, quando et ubi et qua ratione sumantur.⁵

Tertullian taught (as will be examined at Section IV.3 below) that the flesh followed the lead of the soul; it was the soul (alone) which carried the vitium originis, the blemish, the taint which in due course would influence the life and thus the relationship of man to God, and which would cause the flesh to sin. Accordingly, although he made it plain (at least in de anima chapter 27) that body and soul were transmitted together in the act of procreation, he "endangered modesty in the interests of accuracy" by emphasising the transmission of the soul - the body was of less direct concern to him at this stage.

¹ test 3.2.10-13.

² an 9.8.70-73.

³ an 36.1.2-4.

⁴ an 27.8.48-50.

⁵ an 25.1.2-3.

Through him (Satan) man was deceived from the beginning so that he transgressed the commandment of God and on that account was given over to death, and brought it about that the whole race, thus infected from his seed, became a sharer in and transmitter of his condemnation.

The soul which in the beginning took the form of the body of Adam, which grew with its growth, and was moulded after its form, became the germ not only of the substance of every human soul but also of the shape that each one was to bear.

We established that the soul is a seed placed in man and transmitted by him, that from the beginning there was one seed of the soul, as there was one seed of the flesh, for the whole human race.

- and together they are implanted in their appointed seedpot and they both fertilise with their combined vigour the human fruit out of their respective substances.

in order that I may explain how all souls are derived from one, and when and where and in what manner they are produced.

fault of origin

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

Denique ut adhuc uerecundia magis periclititer quam probatione, in illo ipso uoluptatis ultimae aestu quo genitale uirus expellitur, nonne aliquid de anima quoque sentimus exire atque adeo marcescimus et deuigescimus cum lucis detrimento? Hoc erit semen animale, protinus ex animae destillatione, sicut et uirus illud corporale semen ex carnis defaecatione. ¹

It is outside the scope of this section to examine the relationship between that passage and Tertullian's insistence elsewhere that the soul was simple and indivisible. ² If that was so, but if a seed was supposed to flow out of and be separated from the soul of the procreator ex destillatione animae as that passage says, there is surely some contradiction in Tertullian's point of view. (It must be said, however, that he himself did not seem to be aware of any conflict.) What is of more direct benefit to understanding Tertullian's traducianism is a short statement of how he believed conception took place, and this is now examined.

There were, in Tertullian's day, three main theories of how conception took place. ³ They differed chiefly on the contribution which the female made to the formation of the embryo. Tertullian adopted not just one of these theories, but two; they may appear to be mutually exclusive ⁴ but that is not

¹ an 27.6.34-40.

² e.g. an. 14.1.1-3 - Singularis alioquin et simplex et de suo tota est, non magis structilis aliunde, quam diuisibilis ex se quia nec dissolubilis.

³ Two of the theories are mentioned briefly here. The third, which Tertullian did not adopt, (although an 27.5 seems close to it) was taught by the Stoics and the Epicureans. In contrast to the theories of Aristotle and Soranus (mentioned below) the Stoic theory gave an equal place to male and female in the procreation of the soul, and held that the body was provided by the father.

⁴ It is not correct to say that 'Tertullian moved from thinking of the parents as equal to accepting a sire-centered view' - George Huntston Williams, "Religious Residues and Pre-suppositions in the American Debate on Abortion", Theological Studies, 31 (1970), 33, footnote 66 - because one view appears both in the apologeticum and again in de carne Christi, while the other view appears in de anima. The apologeticum is generally dated in the Autumn of A.D. 197, and de carne Christi is either contemporary with, or even slightly later than, de anima, both being in the bracket A.D. 208-211. Therefore Tertullian, far from moving from one view to another, taught the "apologeticum view" not only in A.D. 197 but also contemporaneously with, and perhaps even posterior to, the "de anima view".

Finally, if I may endanger modesty in the interests of accurate proof, is it not a fact that in the moment of orgasm, when the generative fluid is ejected, do not feel that we have parted with a portion of our soul? Do we not feel weak and faint, along with a blurring of our sight? This, then, must be the seed of the soul which proceeds from the dripping of the soul, just as the fluid which carries the bodily seed is a species of droppings from the body.

from the dripping of the soul

The soul then is a single substance, simple, and can be no more said to be made up of parts than it can be divided into parts, since it is indivisible.

"Apology" - "On the Flesh of Christ" - "On the Soul" - (three treatises by Tertullian).

investigated here because both theories (at any rate as Tertullian expounded them) taught the transmission of the soul from the body of the father, and that is the critical point for Tertullian's anthropology.

(a) Galen's theory of procreation

The most popular theory, in Tertullian's day, was the coagulation theory, i.e. the formation of the embryo from the sperm of the father and the blood of the καταμύμνα of the mother. This had originally been expounded by Aristotle,¹ but it was due to the influence of Galen of Pergamos² that it had become the most popular theory in Tertullian's time. Tertullian adopted and expounded this theory in the apologeticum, in de carne Christi and in adversus Marcionem, book IV.³ In this theory, the soul of the embryo came from the father. Because of Tertullian's emphasis on the significance of the soul in all this, it is unnecessary to pursue here another aspect of the Aristot^elean theory, that the mother provided the body, which came into existence by the sperm of

¹ op. cit., Book I, chaps. 19-20.

² Galen welded together most of the biological knowledge of antiquity in his voluminous works, written between A.D. 150-180. He had a very different outlook from Aristotle, and by no means carried on all of Aristotle's teaching, but on the contribution of men and women to procreation, he gave the same answer as Aristotle. Tertullian never once mentioned Galen; this seems a surprising omission, but d'Alès supposed that Galen was too nearly contemporary with Tertullian for his books to be in Tertullian's library. (d'Alès, p 139). Not cited until p 45, footnote 6.

³ Nobis uero homicidio semel interdicto etiam conceptum utero, dum adhuc sanguis in hominem delibatur, dissoluere non licet. - apol 9.8.31-33.

humoris et sanguinis feoda coagula - carn 4.1.5.

Sicut terra conuersa est in hanc carnem sine uiri semine, ita et dei uerbum potuit sine coagulo in eiusdem carnis transire materiam. - carn 16.5.35-38.

materiam seminis, quam constat sanguinis esse colorem, ut despumatione mutatum in coagulum sanguinis feminae. - carn 19.3.21-23.

lege substantiae corporalis ex sanguine et humore - IV.Marc.21.11.1-2.

menstruum.

"Apology" - "On the Flesh of Christ" - "Against Marcion" (three treatises by Tertullian).

We are not permitted to destroy even the foetus in the womb, as blood is still being drawn to form a human being.

The filthy curdling of moisture and blood

As earth was changed into this flesh without a man's seed, so also the Word of God was able, without coagulation, to pass into the material of that same flesh.

(Born of the) material of the seed, which material it is agreed is the heat of the blood, as it were by despumation changed into a coagulator of the woman's blood.

(The Christ of Marcion's) by the law of corporal substance would have been formed from a woman's blood.

the father solidifying the καταμύσιν of the mother. Tertullian, at any rate, seemed to find no incompatibility between the relevant parts of the Aristotlean theory and the relevant parts of the Soranic theory, which is looked at next.

(b) Soranus' theory of procreation

Tertullian made use also of the theory popularised by Soranus,¹ that the father was the sole parent of the embryo, and that the uterus was no more than a 'depository' for the sperm of the male; here the mother contributed nothing more than nourishment for the growth of the embryo - Anima in utero seminata pariter cum carne.² This idea (that the sperm of the father contained all that was necessary for the reproduction of man) accorded well with Tertullian's doctrine of man - indeed, it accorded better than did the Aristotlean theory mentioned immediately above - but the point is of little significance in light of the common ground which he took from both theories. Whether the body of the

¹ Soranus, who lived at Rome from about A.D. 30 until just before the end of the first century, compared the act of procreation to sowing a field. (Gynaecology 1.35.6, 1.36.1): As the farmer's seed drew nourishment from the soil, so the male seed drew nourishment from the body of the woman.

² an 36.2.7-8. Tertullian's argumentum ex scriptura sancta, with which (as was his custom) he followed up the argumentum ex sensu communi briefly quoted, was directed to Adam and Eve and clearly accords with the Soranic rather than the Aristotlean view of procreation - Ceterum et ipsam dei afflatus animasset, si non ut carnis, ita et animae ex Adam tradux fuisset in femina (an 36.4.27-29). The idea that the sperm of the father provided a corporeal substance, viz. humor as well as a psychic one, viz. calor, comes throughout de anima 27 - e.g. Et quando collocabitur corporis semen, quando animae? (27.3.16-17). Nam etsi duas species confitebimur seminis, corporalem et animalem, indiscretas tamen uindicamus et hoc modo contemporales eiusdemque momenti (27.4.19-21). Unico igitur impetu utriusque toto homine concusso despumatur semen totius hominis habens ex corporali substantia humorem, ex animali calorem (27.5.30-32). Hoc erit semen animale, protinus ex animae destillatione, sicut et uirus illud corporale semen ex carnis defaecatione (27.6.38-40) and so (as in chapter 36) to a reference back to the exemplum primordii - the limus and flatus (dei) were prototypes of the humor and calor which constituted the sperm of the male and all human beings owed their entire existence to this sperm - ut et nunc duo, licet diversa, etiam unita pariter effluant pariterque insinuata sulco et aruo suo pariter hominem ex utraque substantia effructicent - an 27.8.47-50.

menstruum.

Since the soul is implanted in the womb at the same time as the body.

argument from Holy Scripture

argument from common sense.

Besides, God's breath would have given her life too, if she had not been in the woman (i.e. received) both soul and body from Adam.

fluidity - warmth

What time can you assign to the bodily seed and what moment can you designate for the conception of the seed of the soul?

Even though we admit that there are two kinds of seed, the one for the body and the other for the soul, we still insist they are unseparated and as such altogether contemporaneous and simultaneous in origin.

By the united impulse of both natures/substances, the whole man is stirred/excited, and his seminal substance is discharged as a product of both, deriving its fluidity from the body and its warmth from the soul.

This then must be the seed of the soul (the soul-producing seed) which proceeds from the dripping of the soul, just as the fluid which carries the bodily seed is a species of drainage from the body.

the example of the first creation

mud/slime

breath of God

Fluidity - warmth

So that even now the two substances, although different from each other, flow forth together in a united channel, and finding their way together into their appointed seed-plot, they fertilise with their combined vigour the human fruit out of their respective natures.

child was derived from the body of one parent or of both parents, Tertullian's writings are unanimous that the soul of the child came from the soul of the father, which had been received from his father, and so back to Adam. Igitur ex uno homine tota haec animarum redundantia, obseruante scilicet natura dei edictum crescite et in multitudinem proficite.¹

In other words, every individual soul was merely a detached portion of the soul of Adam, the source and fountainhead of all human souls. The differences among individual human souls referred only to accidentia - the real nature of the soul was identical with the soul of Adam, as it had been created by God, and as it had fallen into sin. This will be examined in the following section, but meantime it should be noted that it has the most profound implications for Tertullian's view of the relationship of the embryo to God. A new creation would (by reason of its source) be pure, whereas a surculus cut from the parent-stem of Adam's soul and planted out to grow as an independent tree, could (and did) transmit, through father to child, the consequences of the fall of Adam.

The full implication of these texts, for the relationship of the embryo to God, is studied in detail in Section I.7 below. Before that can be done, two further (preliminary) matters should be clarified, viz:

- (a) that although the seed (or shoot) of both body and soul was passed from generation to generation, it was not until they came together, at the moment of conception, that 'man' was formed and a relationship between 'man' and God could begin - this is examined in section I.5 immediately following, and then
- (b) that nothing of the essential nature of man was lacking, at the moment of conception, requiring any new substance to be added, before a relationship with God could begin. This is examined in Section I.6.

¹ an 27.9.52-54.

And so from one man, Adam, flows this whole stream of souls, while nature obeys the command of God: 'Increase and multiply'.

accidentals.

Shoot (agricultural)

I.5 THE POTENTIAL OF THE EMBRYO, FOR A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

Although it was basic to Tertullian's anthropology that neither body nor soul was created de novo at conception, it would be wrong to conclude that no new thing took place when the seed of the soul united with the seed of the body. However complete they may have been in themselves, separately they were not 'man' - 'man' was the unique result of their fusion :

Porro nec anima per semetipsam homo, quae figmento iam homini appellato postea inserta est, nec caro sine anima homo, quae post exilium animae cadauer inscribitur. Ita uocabulum homo consortiarum substantiarum duarum quodammodo fibula est, sub quo uocabulo non possunt esse nisi cohaerentes.¹

Adeo nulla proprietas hominis in choico nec ita caro homo tamquam alia uis animae et alia persona, sed res est alterius plane substantiae et alterius condicionis, addicta tamen animae ut suppellex, ut instrumentum in officia uitae.²

That this fusion took place at conception was illustrated and proved by Tertullian by reference to the creation of Adam and the pattern which it set for the whole human race:

Cum igitur in primordio duo diuersa atque diuisa, limus et flatus, unum hominem coegissent, confusae substantiae ambae iam in uno semina quoque sua miscuerunt atque exinde generi propagando formam tradiderunt, ut et nunc duo, licet diuersa, etiam unita pariter effluant pariterque insinuata sulco et aruo suo pariter hominem ex utraque substantia effruticent.³

That last clause - pariter hominem ex utraque substantia effruticent - is of the utmost importance for this study. As soon as fusion had taken place Tertullian could say - Homo est et qui est futurus; etiam fructus omnis iam in semine est.⁴ While that particular phrase came as part of his repudiation of abortion, which he designated as 'murder' because human life was already

¹ ^{res}
40.3.9-14.

² an 40.3.13-17.

³ an 27.8.44-50.

⁴ apol 9.8.35-36.

new

Now the soul by itself is not man, for the thing formed (by God) was already called 'man' before the soul was threaded into it: nor is flesh without soul man, for after the soul's exile it is unregistered as 'corpse'. Thus the term 'man' is so to speak a pin joining together two inter-threaded substance, and they cannot be described by this term except when they cohere.

Now, the specific characteristic of man is not that he is formed of clay nor is his flesh the human person as if a faculty of the soul and separate person, but it is a thing of altogether different substance and state, joined to the soul, however, as a possession, an instrument for the conduct of life.

In that first creation, therefore, there were two different and distinct elements, slime and breath, which combined in forming the individual man. Thus, by the mixture of the seeds of their two substances, they gave the human race ever after its normal mode of propagation. So, even now, two different seeds flow forth together in a united channel and together they are implanted in their appointed seedplot and they both fertilise with their combined vigour the human fruit out of their respective natures.

With their combined vigour they fertilise the human fruit out of their respective natures.

It is a human being and one who is to be a man; for the whole fruit is already present in the seed.

present,¹ Tertullian made the same point in other contexts.² It was important for him to establish that the union of body and soul, as soon as they were implanted together in the womb, had the potential to develop into man.

Wer die natürliche Einheit der Seele festhält, der muss auch darauf bestehen, dass, sobald die Seele da ist, sie alles das ist, was sie ihrer Wesenheit nach sein muss, und kein substantieller Bestandteil später zu ihr hinzukommt. Kraft ihres Ursprunges ist die menschliche Seele flatus Dei und tritt als solcher mit all ihrer Ausrüstung ins Dasein.³

No new substance required to be added either to body or to soul, before a relationship with God could begin. Meeting the criticism that cripples would not be able to take part in the resurrection, Tertullian stated that etiam si in utero uitemur, iam hominis est passio; prius est genus quam casus⁴ and, summing up of the potential of the soul, concludimus omnia naturalia animae ut substantia eius ipsi inesse et cum ipsa procedere atque proficere, ex quo ipsa censetur.⁵

It is worth examining, in a little more detail, Tertullian's teaching on the potential of the 'two 'component parts' of man,⁶ i.e. body and soul, before drawing the themes together and seeing, in conclusion, that everything which

¹ Whether it is proper to read this text as referring to embryonic life from the moment of conception, as opposed to the later stages of pregnancy only, is examined at Chapter II.4 below.

² e.g. the passage quoted just above concluded "Nihil mirum repromissio segetis in semine" (an 27.9.57) - the future harvest was the human race; the seed was the seed implanted at the moment of conception.

³

⁴ res 57.4.15-16.

⁵ an 20.1.1-3.

⁶ Body and soul as the (only) two component parts of man are examined in the next section, I.7.

Whoever maintains the natural unity of the soul, must also persist with the fact that, as soon as the soul is there, it is everything that it must be according to its essence, and no substantial ingredient is added to it later. Because of its origin, the human soul is "the breath of God" and comes into existence as such with all its equipment.

even if we are crippled in the womb, this happens to one who is already man: the species is there before the accident.

Here, then, we may offer our conclusion that all the properties that are natural to the soul are inherent in it as parts of its substance and that they grow and develop along with it, from the very moment of its own origin at birth.

And this is quite natural, for the promise of the future harvest lies in the seed.

man was to become was potentially in the embryo¹ from the moment of conception.

(a) The potential of the soul

The soul, coming as it did from the breath of God, and possessing from the beginning of its life all its natural faculties, did not alter its essential substance, and no new faculty was added, even although it grew in size along with the body.² Tertullian drew the analogy of a nugget of gold or silver, which, when beaten by a goldsmith, became larger, but without change in its substance.³ So it was with the soul - as it grew, its lustre was enhanced, its

¹ Modern science describes the newly fertilised ovum as 'zygote' for the first fourteen days of its existence, then 'embryo' for a number of weeks, and then 'fetus'. Soranus, from whom Tertullian drew much of his medical knowledge, called the fruit σπέρμα as long as the moulding was not perfected, and after that assumed a stage denoted by φύσις, which in course of time developed into the ψυχή. Tertullian hinted at some distinction when he accused Marcion's Christ of having bypassed the normal processes of conception and birth - non caro habitus ante formam, non pecus dictus post figuram, (IV Marc 21.11.2-3) - but this is examined in chapter II.4 below. The word 'embryo' is, in the meantime, used here for all stages of fetal life.

² The relationship of the soul to the body - described in one place by Tertullian on the analogy of the air blowing through Archimedes' hydraulic organ - is examined briefly at the close of this present section. Tertullian's concern to establish the corporeality of the soul, which enabled him to use metaphors such as beating out a nugget of gold, is not of direct relevance for this thesis. De anima enumerates the arguments of the Stoics (which he adopted) in favour of the corporeality of the soul (chapter 5), refutes the arguments of the Platonists in favour of the incorporeality of the soul (chapter 6) and drives home the point by the Scriptural story - not a parable - of the soul of Dives suffering, with parched lips, in hell (chapter 7). Chapter 8 is devoted to special arguments about the relationship of the corporeal soul to other bodies, to refuting the arguments about the weight of dead bodies and to discussing the invisibility of its corporeal substance. Chapter 9 deals with its shape which must (for the reasons examined at the end of this section) be exactly the shape of the body which it animates. For using the story of Lazarus to demonstrate the corporeality of the soul, Tertullian was severely criticised by Pierre Bouedron in a thesis published in 1861, Quid senserit de natura animae Tertullianus, (Rennes: Charpentier, 1861). From pages 27 to 34, Bouedron takes Tertullian to task for using such figurative references literally.

³ an 37.6-7.

seed

growth/substance

soul/personality

- he was never reckoned to be flesh before he was formed, nor was he called a foetus after his shape was complete.

"On the Soul" (a treatise by Tertullian)

"What Tertullian felt about the Nature of the Soul" (title of thesis)

shape was changed and with age it developed all its latent potentialities,¹ but without any change in the initial substance which it had received when God breathed onto man at the beginning.²

Tertullian had, earlier in de anima, developed the same theme in opposition to those philosophers qui uel modico temporis uiduant animam intellectu. Proinde enim uiam sternunt postea inducendi eius, sicut et animi, a quo scilicet proueniat intellectus.³ Presumably he had Stoics in mind, because it was they who did not credit man with all his faculties even at the moment of birth; they asserted that young children possessed souls but not intellect and so were not able to think. In support of their argument that not everything which lived was capable of thinking, they referred to Aristotle's statement about trees. Tertullian met them head on; he showed that even young trees had their own kind of intellect, so a fortiori young human beings had intellect from the beginning of life, although it was "necessarily concealed in the child."⁴ Tertullian did not, of course, equate "thinking" in tree-life with "thinking" in man, because he often emphasised that only man was rationis capax; nevertheless trees had more to them than mere "uiuere" and he called their creative impulse "scientias et sapientias arborum". Their thoughts were

¹ Ita et anima e crementa reputanda, non substantiua, sed prouocatiua - an 37.7.48-49.

² saluo substantiae modulo, quo a primordio inflata est, paulatim cum carne producitur. - an 37.5.35-36.

³ an 19.1.1-4. It was sufficient, for that particular argument, for Tertullian to demonstrate the presence of intellect from the soul's "birth" without reference to the earlier time of conception.

⁴ It was to establish this important point that Tertullian made his (much quoted) reference to "Seneca saepe noster" - an 20.1.3. What he took from Seneca was "insita sunt nobis omnium artium et aetatum semina magisterque ex occulto deus producit ingenia" (an 20.1.4-6, from Seneca de Benef. IV 6.6) and on that Tertullian himself commented, "ex seminibus scilicet insitis et occultis per infantiam, quae sunt et intellectus" - an 20.1.6-7.

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

who would deprive the soul of the intellect for even a short period of time, thus preparing a basis for the view that the intellect and the mind are introduced into man during childhood.

So-much-the-more

capable of reason

vegetative (without intellectual) life

signs of wisdom and knowledge in plant life/trees (an 19.6.35-36)

In like manner, the growth and developments of the soul are to be estimated, not as enlarging its bulk but merely calling forth its latest potentialities.

without any change in the initial substance which it received by being breathed into the man in the beginning, it gradually developed along with the flesh.

Seneca, whom we so often find on our side.

"The seeds of all the arts and all the ages are implanted in us and God, our Master, secretly produces the qualities of our mind".

that is, through the seeds planted within us in infancy, mainly, our intellect.

not something external but something within them - uiuendi quam sapiendi proprietate ; from the beginning they lacked nothing which belonged to their essential being, and in this capability in the life of plants, Tertullian found an argument for perfection in the embryonic life of man.

Warming to his theme as the chapter went on, Tertullian turned to evidence provided by the human infans. By greeting life with tears at the moment of birth, the child not only proved that it had both sensus and intellectus (section 7), but, tears being prophetic of the miseries of life, the child could prophecy as well (section 8). Then, embellishing this "common-sense" argument, he reminded his critics that children could recognise their mothers and wet nurses, and that they could differentiate between people - so they must have some kind of judgment (iudicium) from the beginning and so an intellect:

Vnde illi iudicium natiuitatis et moris, si non sapit? Vnde illi et offendi et demulceri, si non intellegit? Mirum satis, ut infantia naturaliter animosa sit non habens animum et naturaliter affectiosa sit non habens intellectum. ¹

Tertullian ended up triumphantly, as he usually did in such situations, with an illustration from Holy Scripture :

At enim Christus ex ore lactantium et paruulorum experiendo laudem nec pueritiam nec infantiam hebetes pronuntiatuit, quarum altera cum suffragio occurrens testimonium ei potuit offierre, altera pro ipso trucidata utique uim sensit. ²

These particular arguments are of course directed to proving that the infant had its full complement of faculties from birth, but Tertullian himself assumed that his argument was equally valid at conception. When he summed up de anima chapter 19, he stated (in the words quoted earlier in this section): Et hic itaque concludimus omnia naturalia animae ut substantiua eius ipsi inesse et cum ipsa procedere atque proficere, ex quo ipsa censetur. ³ Later in de anima,

¹ an 19.9.53-56.

² an 19.9.57-60.

³ an 20.1.1-3.

they derive knowledge/intelligence from the same source as they derive life, a source peculiar to their nature

infant

sense and intellect.

judgment

How else but through intelligence should he be able to judge what is unusual or normal? How else would he be capable of being soothed or annoyed? Strange indeed it would be if an infant were without mind, since he is so lively: or so naturally affectionate, without intellect.

Christ has told us that He has 'received praise out of the mouths of babes and sucklings and, hence that infancy and childhood are not dull and stupid. While He was on earth, children, on meeting Him, testified to His divinity: and the innocents who were slaughtered for His sake surely must have known Him.

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

Here, then, we may offer our conclusion that all the properties that are natural to the soul are inherent in it as parts of its substance and they are born and develop with it from the moment it comes into existence.

when he returned to the same theme he could claim:

Quamquam autem et retro praestruxerimus, omnia naturalia animae ipsi substantiae inesse pertinentia ad sensum et intellectum ex ingenito animae censu, sed paulatim per aetatis spatia procedere et uarie.¹

It is true that Tertullian went on to say that children were not in possession of sapientia before the age of fourteen² but the significance of that, for the relationship with God, will be examined in Chapter IV.5 below; for the present, it can safely be concluded that the soul lacked nothing, at least in embryonic form, of the properties which made it capable of a relationship with God.

Individual souls would undoubtedly develop in different ways, dependent (as Tertullian stated in de anima chapter 20) on external influences - he mentioned the variety of places of residence, the influence of bodily organisation, temperaments, national characters, education and instruction, passions, vices and free will. (The latter, according to Christian interpretation, still stood under the influence of the mercy of God on the one hand and that of the snares of the devil on the other.³) All these would produce that infinite variety of talent and disposition which is observable among mankind, but such influences could affect only the accidenta of the soul - its real nature was identical with, and had descended from, the soul of Adam as it had been created by God.⁴ On Tertullian's hypothesis, only those faculties already present in Adam's soul could be regarded as naturalia animae and these, including the capacity for a relationship with God, were passed from soul to soul and so present at the very beginning of every individual existence.

¹ an 38.1.1-4.

² an 38.1.6-10.

³ an 20 passim.

⁴ an 20.6.39-42.

We established, above, the principle that all the natural potentialities of the soul with regard to sensation and intelligence are inherent in its very substance, as a result of the intrinsic nature of the soul. As the various stages of life pass, these powers develop, each in its own way.

discernment

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

accidentals

the natural qualities of the soul

(b) The potential of the body

As metempsychosis compelled Tertullian to write a great deal about the relationship of man to his soul, so false ideas on the resurrection compelled him to write at length about the relationship of man to his body. Hellenic philosophers and Christian heretics both regarded man as essentially a divine being in bondage to matter, so that salvation was the deliverance of the divine part from its captivity. Tertullian answered with a remarkable eulogy of the flesh and devoted no less than six chapters of de resurrectione carnis to vindicating the carnis dignitas. Although de anima is not without some teaching on the flesh - Constitueramus animam in ipso et ex ipso seri homine et unum esse a primordio, semen, sicut et carnis, in totum generis examen¹ - it was in de resurrectione carnis that Tertullian set out to prove in detail that unless the flesh² was given the same rank and dignity before God as the soul, 'man' could not properly be called 'man' -indeed the flesh had the prior right to that name and had at least an equal expectation of his prerogatives.

Hominem autem memento carnem proprie dici, quae prior uocabulum hominis occupauit: Et finxit deus hominem, limum de terra, - iam homo, qui adhuc limus - et insufflauit in faciem eius flatum uitae, et factus est homo, id est limus, in animam uiuam, et posuit deus hominem, quem finxit, in paradiso. Adeo homo figmentum primo dehinc totus.³

(caro) quam deus manibus suis ad imaginem dei struxit, quam de suo adflatu ad similitudinem suae uiuacitatis animauit.⁴

Accordingly, the properties of the human body, even at the embryonic stage,

¹ an 36.1.2-4.

² Caro, as Evans pointed out (Ernest Evans, Tertullian's Treatise on the Resurrection, (London: S.P.C.K, 1960) p 188) had, for the Latins, a less exclusively materialistic sound than 'flesh' has in English. Corpus originally meant a dead body, and hardly ever succeeded in losing all sense of inertness and lifelessness, whereas caro envisaged the presence, actual or potential, of an animating soul.

³ res 5.8.38-9.43.

⁴ res 9.1.1-3.

"On the Resurrection of the Dead" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

the dignity of the flesh. "On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

We established that the soul is a seed placed in man and transmitted by him, that from the beginning there was one seed of the soul, as there was one seed of the flesh, for the whole human race.

And remember that 'man' in the strict sense means the flesh, for this was the first possessor of the designation 'man'. "And God formed man, clay from the earth" - already is he man who is still clay - "and breathed into his nostril the breath of life, and man" - that is, the clay - "became a living soul", and God placed in paradise the man whom he had formed. Thus 'man' is first that which was formed, and afterwards is the whole man.

(The flesh) which God with his own hands constructed in the image of God, which He endowed with life from His own breath "in the likeness" of His own vital force.

flesh.

body.

were important to Tertullian. Adam's body had been created by God de limo (terrae)¹ and Tertullian traced that limus from generation to generation, from the 'seed-plot' to every new conception.² Given time, the embryo would begin to show human features, and in time it would grow into a man, without any new substance having to be added to it. That precious jewel, the soul, needed a suitably noble vessel to contain it, although the flesh was far more than a mere receptacle of the soul - the two were thoroughly intertwined and mingled together. It was by means of the flesh that the soul would enjoy all its honours and would exercise all its functions, so that whatever pre-eminence the soul possessed should be shared by the flesh.³ If the embryo happened to be aborted, it would be given, at the resurrection, the same angelic body as would be given to every other resurrected human being.⁴ If it was not aborted, then body and soul would develop together until birth - developing not in substance, which remained unaltered, but in size and in shape: Societatem carnis atque animae iamdudum commendauimus a congregatione seminum ipsorum usque ad figmenti perfectionem.⁵ After birth, both would continue to grow together, and both would reach maturity (together) at the age of fourteen. It appears then that Tertullian believed the embryo to be homo from the moment of its conception - homo est et qui est futurus. Homo was the fibula which bound together the two constituent parts of man, body and soul. Both were important, even in embryonic form. Sometimes Tertullian emphasised the importance of

¹ an 27.7.40-41.

² an 27.8.44-50.

³ Evans, op cit. p 214. Whether they were as "inter⁺wined and mingled together" as Evans suggests is explored at the end of this section.

⁴ Tertullian's understanding of future events is set out briefly as part of chapter VI.4 below.

⁵ an 37.5.27-29.

from the mud/slime of the earth.

mud/slime.

We have already discussed the close union of soul and body from the moment of the joining of their seeds to the complete formation of the foetus.

man

it is a human being and one who is to be a man

pin

the soul, describing the body as the house in which the soul dwelt, "calix animae, uagina animae, vasculum animae;"¹ at other times (against the prevailing philosophical view) he emphasised the importance of the body;² yet again, his emphasis was on the novelty of the new being which came about by the union of body and soul.³

Related to the above, although it does not directly affect this study, is Tertullian's rather curious understanding of the relationship between body and soul. When God breathed the breath of life into Adam, that breath (he said) was diffused through every part and member of his body, and 'set' like a jelly in a mould, taking its shape from the body. Every soul therefore grew with its body, eye by eye, ear by ear, tongue by tongue, finger by finger and even bosom by bosom:

simulque diuina aspiratione densatum omni intus linea expressum esse, (sc. flatum vitae) quam densatus impleuerat, et uelut in forma gelasse. Inde igitur et corpulentia animae ex densatione solidata est et effigies ex impressione formata. Hic erit homo interior, alius exterior, dupliciter unus, habens et ille oculos et aures suas, quibus populus dominum audire et uidere debuerat, habens et ceteros artus, per quos et in cogitationibus utitur et in somniis fungitur. Sic et diuiti apud inferos lingua est, et pauperi digitus, et sinus Abrahæ.⁴

¹ He described the body as domus animae in an 38.4.36, res 41.3.11, and elsewhere; as calix animae in an 20.2.11 and elsewhere; as uagina animae in res 9.2.8; and as vasculum animae, because it 'receives and contains the soul' in res 16.3.10 and 11.45.

² nec ita caro homo tamquam alia uis animae - an 40.3.14; corporis ... quod et ipsum homo - an 51.4.25; ille scilicet limus, qui prior titulo hominis incisus est - res 16.11.44.

³ For example, his description of man as carnis animaeque textu^{ra}m - res 34.10.45-46 - and the formation of these two substances into a new composition quia duo unum efficiunt - paen 3.4.14.

⁴ an 9.7.61-8.69. Although only Vincentius Victor shared this view (vide Waszink, op. cit. p. 177), it was left to Augustine to point out its inadequacy - Quomodo implebit carnem, quam vivificat, nisi tanto rarior fuerit, quanto grandius, quod animauerit? Timuit enim (Tertullianus) ne deficeret eam minuendo, si cresceret, et non timuit, ne deficeret rareasendo cum cresceret (de Gen ad litt. X, 44.45).

Cover/vessel of the soul, scabbard/sheath of the soul, vessel/capsule of the soul.

By the divine breath it was condensed and took on the lineaments of the body that it filled and, as it were, it was frozen into the exact shape of the body. Thus the corporeal form of the soul was fixed by this condensation and its shape was 'hardened in the mold' of the body. This is the interior man: the other is the outer but together they form one being. The soul has its own eyes and ears with which people must have seen and heard the Lord: it has also other members which it uses in thought and moves in its dreams. Thus, Dives in Hell has a tongue: Lazarus a finger: and Abraham, a bosom.

house of the soul, cover/vessel of the soul, scabbard/sheath of the soul, vessel/capsule of the soul.

not that the flesh is the human person, as if it were some faculty of the soul (but the flesh is a different substance, joined to the soul) ... the body, since the body is a human being ... (the outer man) being in fact the clay which first was engraved with the inscription 'man' (not 'cup' or 'receptacle').

warp and woof of flesh and soul ... because the two (body and soul) make up one.

in-two-ways/in-two-senses one

How will [the soul] fill the flesh to which it gives life, unless it becomes thinner as the body which it animates increases in size? For (Tertullian) was afraid that [the soul] would fail the body by diminishing it if it [the soul] should increase, and he did not worry about the fact that it might fail it by becoming more attenuated when it grew.

Elsewhere Tertullian had described the soul as diffused through the body, pervading the whole frame, as air was diffused through the pipes of Archimedes' hydraulic organ.¹ This followed from his corporeal understanding of the soul, and incidentally strengthened his case against the metempsychosis of Empedocles, mentioned in a previous section^(page 5.) If the soul exactly fitted the human body, how could it fill an elephant or be enclosed in a gnat?² Nevertheless, he apparently assumed that body and soul would remain as two complete and independent substances, - dupliciter unus - which would exist together, but which possessed no unum per se. The soul was able to permeate the whole body without losing its definite individuality:

Ganz nach stoischer Weise nimmt T. die völlige Durchdringung des Leibes durch die Seele an. Die Stoiker lehrten, dass die Seele in feinen Luftströmungen sich durch den ganzen Körper hindurch und in alle Organe hinein ausdehne. Die Verbindung beider wird von ihnen als $\kappa\rho\alpha\sigma\iota\varsigma$, genauer als $\mu\iota\varsigma\iota\varsigma$ zweier ihren Eigenschaften nach gleich bleibender Körper betrachtet, welche sich ebenso durchdringen, wie die Welt von der Weltseele durchdrungen wird.³

On the other hand, Tertullian refuted the suggestion that two bodies could be in the same place at the same time - following the teaching of the Stoics and assuming a complete $\mu\iota\varsigma\iota\varsigma$ of body and soul.⁴ However, his writings do not give a total picture of how he conceived of the presence of the soul in the body, and since (as mentioned) the different viewpoints do not affect the relationship at the embryo to God, further comment is outside the scope of this

¹ Specta portentosissimam Archimedis munificentiam, organum hydraulicum ... Sic et spiritus ... Non ideo separabitur in partes ... an 14.4.25-26 and 29-30.

² an 32.6 58-61. On the other hand, if the soul could not expand or contract to fit various sizes of body without danger to itself (as Tertullian here claimed) how could it grow with the human frame, as elsewhere he insisted it did?

³ Georg Schelowsky, Der Apologet Tertullianus in seinem Verhältnis zu der Griechisch - Römischen Philosophie, (Leipzig: Oswald Mutze, 1901) pp 48-49.

⁴ For the $\mu\iota\varsigma\iota\varsigma$ of body and soul, described in Stoic psychology, and the influence of this idea on Tertullian, see Gothard Rauch, Der Einfluss der stoischen Philosophie auf die Lehrbildung Tertullians, (Halle: Buchdruckerei des Waisenhauks, 1890) pp 27-29.

unity in itself

Quite in the stoic way, Tertullian accepted the complete penetration of the body by the soul. The Stoics preached that the soul spread itself in fine streams of air through the whole body and into all the organs. The connection of both was regarded by them as , more exactly as "mixing" of two similar bodies according to their characteristics, which penetrates just like the world is penetrated by the soul of the world.

mixing

Look at that marvellous instrument of Archimedes, I mean his hydraulic organ ... Likewise the wind ... is not divided into separate 'winds'...

"The Apology of Tertullian in its Relationship to Graeco-Roman Philosophy" (Book).

mixing

"The Influence of Stoic Philosophy on the Life-training of Tertullian"

(Book)

enquiry. What is important is the potential of the embryo, because, consistent with his traducianist understanding of the transmission of individual human life, Tertullian showed how the unique, never-to-be-repeated individual homo, drawn forth from one or both of his parents at conception, was already whatever he was going to become, and his subsequent development was only a process of becoming what in embryo he already was.

man

I.6 THE CONSTITUENT PARTS OF MAN

In the previous section, it was established that Tertullian believed 'man' to be present, in embryonic form, from the moment that body and soul were joined together at conception. It is hardly necessary to emphasise that body and soul were conceived by Tertullian as two substantially different parts of the human being; they were different substances according to their origin, their essence and their essential characteristics.¹ It was not until flesh (from the limus) and soul (from the flatus dei) had been joined together for the first time in Adam than 'man' was formed. The next point to clarify, before the relationship of the embryo to God at conception is examined, is whether there was any other constituent element of 'man' - either present then or to be added later.

The question can be briefly answered and amply illustrated. The nature of man was single, but he was composed of two species, body and soul, which in life were inseparably united. Tertullian did not believe in a trichotomy of body, soul and spirit; man was composed of only two substances, body and soul.² Heresy compelled him to prove that they were distinct and not interchangeable;³ other heresy forced him to investigate the nature of the soul and to establish the resurrection of the body; many passing references make it clear that these were the only two constituents or component parts of man.

¹ E.g. res 14 (the whole chapter).

² Tertullian used several synonyms for anima, which are investigated later in this section. Until then, the quotations from his works are confined to those where anima itself is used.

³ Heretical ideas, especially about the Person of Christ, compelled Tertullian to establish that anima and corpus were distinct substances, not to be confused nor interchanged - carn 10.3.20-21; carn 13.4.23-5.29. There was no third substance in Christ's incarnation, only body and soul - Prax 27.12.68-73 and Prax 27.13.75-84.

mud/slime

breath of God

soul

Soul and body

(i) his definition of the word 'homo'.

Hic cum ex duabus substantiis constet, ex corpore et anima, quaerendum est, ex qua substantiae specie perisse uideatur.¹

Tam enim corpus homo quam et anima, ut non possit altera species admittere aenigmata, altera excludere.²

id est nec altera ex duabus substantiis hominis, caro aut anima?³

dum homo sit, qua caro et anima ⁴

Ionam, cum incorruptus utramque substantiam, carnem atque animam.⁵

si totos, et interiores et exteriores, id est tam animas quam et corpora:⁶

Si enim et Christus, solus uere caelestis, immo et supercaelestis, homo tamen, qua caro atque anima ⁷

Hic erit homo caro atque anima, ⁸

aufferri omnia impedimenta prius, ut munda sit quae remanet domus, caro et anima. ⁹

(ii) his comment that anything else was 'non homo'.

Of Lucanus, a follower of Marcion, Tertullian said sarcastically that he apparently expected to be tertium quiddam resurrecturus, neque anima neque caro, id est non homo.¹⁰ The whole assumption underlying the treatise de resurrectione carnis is that in the resurrection of body and soul, nothing more

¹ IV Marc 37.3.16-18.

² res 32.8.36-38.

³ Scorp 9.7.6-7.

⁴ carn 14.4.31.

⁵ res 32.3.12-13.

⁶ res 43.6.22-24.

⁷ res 49.5.14-16.

⁸ pud 20.12.64-65.

⁹ pud 20.10.53-54.

¹⁰ res 2.12.66-67.

"man"

Since a man consists of two substances, body and soul, the question we must consider is, in respect of which kind of substance he may be supposed to have become lost.

For man is as much body as soul, and consequently it is impossible for one of his constituents to admit of enigmas while the other excludes them.

that is, not even one of the two substances of man, flesh or spirit.

being made man (as being flesh and soul)

Jonah, ... when he is disembarked (from the sea-monster's belly) uncorrupt in respect of both substances, flesh and soul.

if them all, then both inner and outer man, that is, bodies no less than souls.

Christ alone is truly heavenly, nay rather even more than heavenly and yet is man, as being flesh and soul.

This typifies the man, body and soul

remove from the house, which is our person, all impediments, so that the house itself which remains - our body and soul - may be clean.

"not a man"

for he expects to rise again as a third something, neither soul nor flesh, that is, not a man, (but a beast).

"On the Resurrection of the Dead" (one of Tertullian's treatises).

would be needed and nothing would be wanting, for the full redemption of man.

(iii) His references to the creation and reproduction of man.

After the body or flesh of Adam had been formed out of the dust of the earth, God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. Adam then transmitted this nature complete, body and soul, to his offspring; there were only two kinds of seed, a body-seed and a soul-seed, and all men were therefore composed of these two parts only - caro and anima.

Cum igitur in primordio duo diuersa atque diuisa, limus et flatus, unum hominem coegissent, confusae substantiae ambae iam in uno semina quoque sua miscuerunt atque exinde generi propagando formam tradiderunt, ut et nunc duo, licet diuersa, etiam unita pariter effluant pariterque insinuata sulco et aruo suo pariter hominem ex utraque substantia effructicent. ¹

Nam et exinde a benedictione geniturae caro atque anima simul fiunt sine calculo temporis, ut quae simul in utero etiam seminantur, quod docuimus in commentario animae. Contemporant fetu, coetant natu: duos istos homines, sane ex substantia duplici, non tamen et aetate, sic unum edunt, dum prior neutra est. ²

(iv) his reference to death as the separation of these two substances.

There are many references (not detailed here) to the interim fate of the soul and the body, and no mention of any other part of man. On the separation itself, Ita mortuum uocabulum non est nisi quod amisit animam, de cuius facultate uiuebat; corpus est quod amittit animam et amittendo fit mortuum: ita mortui uocabulam corpori competit. ³

(v) his references to Christ's teaching.

Christ's reference to body and soul carries a reasonable inference that there was no third element in man:

¹ an 27.8.44-50.

² res 45.4.17-5.22.

³ V Marc 9.3.21-24.

body and soul

In that first creation, therefore, there were two different and distinct elements, slime and breath, which combined in forming the individual man. Thus, by the mixture of the seeds of their two substances, they gave the human race ever after its normal mode of propagation. So, even now, two different seeds flow forth together in a united channel and together they are implanted in their appointed seedplot and they both fertilise with their combined vigour the human fruit out of their respective natures.

For ever since the blessing of their procreation flesh and soul come into existence together, without reckoning of time, as things which are simultaneously sown in the womb, as I have taught in my treatise "On the Soul". They are contemporaries at conception, of one age at birth. They bring to birth as one these two men, certainly of double substance, though not of double age, since neither is the elder.

intermediate

So then 'dead' can only be that which is deprived of the soul by whose energy it was once alive. It is the body which is deprived of the soul and by that deprivation become dead: so that the term 'dead' applies to the body.

"Nolite timere eos", inquit "qui occidunt corpus, animae autem nihil ualent facere, sed timete eum, qui et corpus et animam perdere potest in gehennam."¹

Sed et praecipit eum potius timendum, qui et corpus et animam occidat in gehennam, id est dominum solum, non qui corpus occidant, animae autem nihil nocere possint, 2

ad quarum tolerantiam aedificans monet non eos timendos, qui solum corpus occidant, animam autem interficere non ualeant, sed illi potius metum consecrandum, qui et corpus et animam occidere et perdere possit in gehennam. 3

(vi) his references to "half salvation".

Nam si caro quoque eius cum anima, quod pecus totum est, humeris boni pastoris aduehitur, ex utraque utique substantia restituendi hominis exemplum est. Aut quam indignum deo, dimidium hominem redigere in salutem.⁴

alios Saducaeos ... ita dimidiam agnoscunt resurrectionem, solius scilicet animae, ita aspernati carnem sicut et ipsum dominum carnis.⁵

scilicet anima tenus saluos, carne deperditos, quae apud illum non resurgit. Vnde haec dimidiatio salutis ...⁶

Is it too literalistic to suggest that the reference to "half-salvation" - as opposed to "one-third salvation" or any other fraction - confirms the two constituent parts of man?

The words which Tertullian used for the body - caro and corpus - present no problem for this chapter, as it is clear to what he refers. It is less obvious, however, that anima, spiritus, mens and animus all refer to only one other 'component' - namely "the soul" - and not to more than one other element in man. This is therefore now examined, and the words are taken in that order.

¹ fug 7.2.26-28.

² res 35.1.1-3.

³ Scorp 9.6.27-02.

⁴ res 34.2.9-3.13.

⁵ res 2.2.7-9.

⁶ I Marc 24.3.22-24.

Does He not tell us: Do not be afraid of those who kill the body, but can do no harm to the soul, but rather be afraid of him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

Moreover his injunction is that he is rather to be feared who slays both body and soul in hell (that is, the Lord alone), not those who slay the body but can do the soul no harm.

and, preparing them for the endurance of these, He reminds them that they must not fear such persons as kill the body only, but are not able to destroy the soul, but that they must dedicate fear to Him rather who has such power that He can kill both body and soul, and destroy them in hell.

For if its flesh along with its soul (and this is the whole animal) is carried on the good shepherd's shoulders this is obviously a precedent of man's being restored in respect of both his substances. Else how unworthy of God, to bring half man back to salvation.

other Sadducees. Just so, they acknowledge half a resurrection, that is, of the soul alone, spurning the flesh as they also spurn even the Lord of the flesh.

for they are saved as far as the soul, (and no more) having perished in the flesh, since according to him the flesh does not rise again. Whence this halving of salvation?

flesh and body.

soul, spirit, mind, intellect/reason.

For Tertullian's pagan contemporaries, anima had no necessary moral or religious connotation. It was the life-principle found in plants and animals as well as in man. For Tertullian, however, the human soul was flatus dei (more correctly, flatus ex spiritu dei factus),¹ and so he could, and did, describe the soul as spiritus - not because of its substance but because God's Spirit had breathed on it. The result was a spiritus in man - the human spirit - not to be identified or confused (as "quidam" did) with the Holy Spirit of God Himself; He was not given to man until baptism.² This spiritus/anima of man could sin and did sin, whereas the Spiritus of God could not; Tertullian had therefore to insist that although God had breathed on Adam, He had not given the Holy Spirit to him.

Inprimis tenendum quod Graeca scriptura signavit, adflatum nominans, non spiritum. Quidam enim de Graeco interpretantes non recogitata differentia nec curata proprietate uerborum pro adflatu spiritum ponunt et dant haereticis occasionem spiritum dei delicto infuscandi, id est ipsum deum. Et usurpata iam quaestio est. Intellege itaque adflatum minorem spiritu esse, ut aurulam eius, et si de spiritu accidit, non tamen spiritum. 3

To avoid such confusion, Tertullian preferred in many contexts to call man flatus dei rather than spiritus dei, although in other contexts he felt free to use anima

¹ an 11.2.13 and 3.27; II Marc 9.7.3. Tertullian's view of the origin of the soul of Adam, from the breath of God, is not explored here. He treated it in detail in a work de censu animae, now lost, (an 1.1.1-3, 3.4.24-31), but there is sufficient in de anima to state with certainty that Tertullian believed the soul of man existed separately and apart from the Spirit of God. He did, however, emphasise its origin ex dei flatus (an 1.1.02, 3.4.26, 4.1.02) as opposed to ex materia (an 3.4.26) or ex nihilo.

² Examined in chapter X.3. It is true that Scripture mentions the Spiritus bestowed on man from time to time, and Adam prophesied through this Spiritus, but these were occasional visits of the Holy Spirit, not a permanent possession and not to all men. an 11.4.33-41.

³ II Marc 9.1.24-3.10. cf an 11.2.10-18 where Tertullian accused Hermogenes in particular of reading "spritus" instead of "flatus" in the passage in Genesis.

soul

breath of God

the breath proceeding from the Spirit of God

human spirit

certain people

human spirit/soul

Holy Spirit

First and foremost we have to insist on the significance of the Greek scripture which says not 'spirit' but 'breath'. For some, when translating from the Greek, fail to reflect upon the difference: disregarding the precise meaning of the words, they substitute 'spirit' for 'breath', and to give heretics the opportunity of sullyng with sin the Spirit of God, which means God himself. The question is by no means a new one. Observe then that breath, though a function of spirit, is something less than spirit - as it might be an exhalation of spirit, not spirit itself.

breath of God

spirit of God

soul

"On the Origin of the Soul" (a lost treatise of Tertullian).

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises).

from the breath of God - from materials - from nothing

Holy Spirit

spirit

breath

synonymously with spiritus,¹ and he opposed certain philosophers who claimed that there was a distinction of substance between them. According to these philosophers, the soul was the vital principle, the principle by which man lived, and the spirit only that by which he breathed. Anatomists, they said, taught that moths and ants and gnats had no organs of respiration; they had the vital principle without the breathing principle - and so these principles were distinct. Tertullian did not accept such reasoning from insect to human life.² The nature of man, as the creation of God, made life and breath inseparable, and the pretended distinction between anima and spiritus was only a distinction of words.

Kann nun die Seele spiritus (πνεῦμα) genannt werden? Ja, aber nur unter der bestimmten Bedingung (certa conditione) dass man die Einheit der Seele nicht aufhebt, und unter der bestimmten Voraussetzung, dass man nicht ihr Wesen, sondern ihre Thätigkeit bezeichnen will. Gegenüber einer Meinung, welche als Prinzip des Atmens eine andere Substanz substituiert als die anima, kann die Seele spiritus genannt werden, weil das spirare eine Thätigkeit der anima ist. 3

Nevertheless, against Hermogenes, Tertullian did distinguish spiritus from anima. The two were not identical as Hermogenes claimed - there was this difference, that anima was the term of substance, spiritus was the term of function:

¹ e.g. he wrote about paradise both as interim refrigerium praeber
animabus iustorum - IV Marc 34.13.11-12 and as locum diuinae amoenitatis
recipiendis sanctorum spiritibus destinatum, apol 47.13.57-58. In de spectaculis
13, spiritus and anima are joined together and (unless the former is intended to
mean the breath) used synonymously - quae non intestinis transiguntur, sed in
ipso spiritu et anima digeruntur. - spec 13.5.17-18. Bouedron, whose thesis is
hostile to much of Tertullian's understanding of the soul, went out of his way to
praise Tertullian for holding that "spiritus" and "anima" were two names for the
same substance, and not two separate substances. op. cit. p 50-52.

² Tertullian distinguished between the vital principle in man, and in all
other created things. Denique arbores uiuere nec tamen sapere secundum
Aristotelen et si quis alius substantiam animalem in uniuersa communicat, quae
apud nos in homine priuata res est, non modo ut dei opus, quod et cetera, sed ut
dei flatus, quod haec sola, quam dicimus cum omni instructu suo nasci. an
19.2.6-11.

³ Gerhard Esser, Die Seelenlehre Tertullians (Paderborn: Ferdinand
Schöningh, 1893) p 92.

human spirit

soul human spirit

Can the soul now be called spirit? Yes, but under the particular condition that one does not abolish the unity of the soul and with the particular prerequisite that one is not designating its essence but its activity. As opposed to an opinion which substitutes another substance for the soul as the principle of breathing, the soul can be called 'spirit' because to breathe is an activity of the soul.

human spirit soul

in the meantime it will afford refreshment to the souls of the righteous ... a place of supernatural beauty reserved/destined for the reception of the spirits/souls of the holy

"On the Shows" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

spirit - soul

(pleasures) which do not pass through the bowels, but which are digested in the very spirit and soul

Trees, for instance, to quote Aristotle's example, have vegetative without intellectual life and others attribute some kind of soul to all beings. This we believe to be the exclusive prerogative of man, not merely as a creature of God, common with all things else, but rather as the breath of God which the human soul alone is, and which we say comes to man at birth with all its faculties.

"The Life of the Souls in Tertullian" (Book)

Sed ut animam spiritum dicam, praesentis questionis ratio compellit, quia spirare alii substantiae adscribitur. Hoc dum animae uindicamus, quam uniformem et simplicem agnoscimus, spiritum necesse est certa condicione dicamus, non status nomine, sed actus, nec substantiae titulo sed operae, quia spirat, non quia spiritus proprie est...

i.e. it was not identical in substance with the Spirit of God.

Ita et animam, quam flatum ex proprietate defendimus, spiritum nunc ex necessitate pronuntiamus. ¹

If, therefore, the soul was to be named according to its essence ("ex proprietate"), then the expression "flatus", sanctioned by the Scriptures, should be used, because that excluded the materialism of Hermogenes and also the spiritualism of the Valentinians:² however, in more general contexts, either animus or spiritus could be used for the life-breath of man, his human spirit, because cum de anima et spiritu agitur, ipsa erit anima spiritus, sicut ipsa dies lux. Ipsum est enim quid, per quod est quid.³

Less need be said of the distinction between anima and mens and animus. The soul included both the vital and intellectual principles, the latter called animus or mens.⁴ They were properties of the anima, quo agit, quo sapit,⁵ so Tertullian sometimes used these words by metonymy for anima itself but always and only as synonyms for the second, never a third, constituent of man.

¹ an 11.1.1-6, and 7-8.

² an 11.3.18-33.

³ an 10.9.73-74.

⁴ Proinde et animum siue mens est νοῦς apud Graecos, non aliud quid intellegimus quam suggestum animae ingenitum et insitum et natiuitus proprium, quo agit, quo sapit, quem secum habens ex semetipsa secum moueat in semetipsa - an 12.1.1-4. Nos autem animum ita dicimus animae concretum, non ut substantia alium, sed ut substantiae officium - an 12.6.38-40. Putabis quidem abesse animum ab anima, si quando, nam ita effici, ut nesciamus uidisse quid uel audisse, quia alibi fuerit animus. Adeo contendam immo ipsam animam nec uidisse nec audisse, quia alibi fuerit cum sua ui, id est animo - an 18.9.72-75. Porro apostolus interiorem hominem non tam animam quam mentem atque animum intelligi mauult, id est non substantiam ipsam, sed substantiae saporem - res 40.4.15-17.

⁵ an 12.1.3.

The nature of our present discussion compels me to say the soul is spirit or breath because the power of breathing is attributed to a substance other than the soul. It is true we claim breathing to be a function of the soul, which we believe to be simple and uncompounded, and we also say that the soul is a spirit, but in a technical sense: not because of its condition, but of its action; not in respect of its nature, but of its operation; because it respire, and not because it is spirit in any especial sense. ... So that we are driven to describe, by the terms which indicates this respiration - that is to say spirit - the soul which we hold to be, by propriety of its action, breath.

from its own quality/peculiar nature

breath

Soul or breath

Whenever question arises as to soul and spirit/breath, the soul will be understood to be itself the spirit, just as day is the light (of day) itself. For, there is no difference between a being and that by which it is a being.

soul and mind and intellect.

(properties of the) soul, by which it acts and by which it gains knowledge.

soul

The next point is with regard to the intellect, or mind, which the Greeks call 'nous'. By 'mind' I mean merely that faculty which is inherent and implanted in the soul and proper to it by birth and by which the soul acts and gains knowledge. The possession of this faculty makes it possible for the soul to act upon itself,

We hold that the soul is so united to the mind that they are not distinct substances, but that the mind is a faculty of the soul.

It would have to be your opinion that soul and mind are separable (i.e. that the mind is absent from the soul on certain occasions) if we are so made and constructed that it is possible to see and hear without knowing it. This is on the hypothesis that the mind was elsewhere at the time. I must therefore maintain that the very soul itself did not see nor hear, since at that given moment it was deprived of its active agent, this is the mind.

But the apostle would rather have 'inner man' understood not as soul but as mind and intelligence, that is not as the substance itself, but as a flavour of the substance.

Like spiritus they were co-existent and consubstantial with the soul, yet distinct from it, being (in their case) the instrument by which the soul acted, apprehended and moved. In common life, people said that a rich man fed so many souls, not so many minds; a dying man breathed out his soul, not his mind; Christ came to save the souls, not the minds of men.¹ That in itself was proof for Tertullian that the vital principle was in the soul, anima, not in the mind, animus or nous.

With that clarification of the words used, it can quickly be established, by a sample only of the available quotations, that Tertullian believed body and soul/spirit to be the only two aspects of man:

Praestringere tamen non pigebit delictorum quaedam esse carnalia, id est corporalia, quaedam uero spiritalia - nam cum ex hac duplicis substantiae congregatione confectus homo sit, non aliunde delinquit quam unde constat -; sed non eo inter se differunt, quod corpus et spiritus duo sunt, atquin eo magis paria sunt, quia duo unum efficiunt,... ut alterum altero leuius aut grauius existimet. ²

Siquidem et caro et spiritus dei res, alia manu eius expressa, alia adflatu eius consummata; ³

Ipse homo, omnium flagitiorum auctor, non tantum opus Dei, uerum etiam et imago est; et tamen et corpore et spiritu descit a suo institutore. ⁴

It is true that on occasion he wrote in a way which, taken on its own, might seem to indicate a trichotomy, and at least one scholar has opined that Tertullian did believe man to be more than body and soul, consisting (he said) of body, soul and spirit.⁵ When Marcion would have it that salvation was of the soul only,

¹ an 13.2.6-3.17.

² paen 3.3.9-4.16.

³ paen 3.5.16-18,

⁴ spec 2.10.44-47.

⁵ Gunther Ludwig, Tertullians Ethik in durchaus objectiver Darstellung, (Leipzig: 1885). (Although I noted Dr. Ludwig's unusual view when reading his book in the Bodleian Library (ref 13111 T e 4), I unfortunately omitted to note the page number).

spirit

soul

intellect or mind

It will not be devoid of interest, however, to touch lightly on the fact that some sins are carnal, that is, sins of the body and others are sins of the spirit, for since man is constituted a composite of these two substances, he does not sin otherwise than through the components of which he is made. But it is not the fact that body and soul are two distinct realities which makes these sins different; rather for this reason, they are the more able, since the two make one.

The fact of the matter is that both flesh and spirit are the work of God, the one formed by His hand, the other brought to its perfection by His breath.

Man himself, the perpetrator of every kind of villainy, is not only the work of God, but also His likeness - yet both in body and spirit he has fallen away from his Creator.

Tertullian's Ethics in an entirely objective presentation.

Tertullian had to prove that salvation and resurrection was for the whole man and he wrote:

sed et sequitur: et integrum corpus uestrum et anima et spiritus sine querela conseruentur in praesentia domini. Habes omnem substantiam hominis saluti destinataam, ¹

quomodo apostolus omnes in nobis substantias certis nominibus distinxit et omnes in uno uoto constituit salutis, optans, ut spiritus noster et corpus et anima sine querela in aduentu domini et salutificatoris nostri Christi conseruentur? Nam et animam posuit et corpus, tam duas res quam diuersas. Licet enim et anima et corpus sit aliquod suae qualitatis, sicut et spiritus, cum tamen et corpus et anima distincte nominantur, habet autem anima suum uocabulum proprium, non egens communi uocabulo corporis, id relinquitur carni, quae non nominata proprio, communi utatur necesse est. Etenim aliam substantiam in homine non uideo post spiritum et animam, cui uocabulum corporis accommodetur praeter carnem. ²

Even if (which is by no means certain) Tertullian here used language which implies a three-fold distinction, because of his anxiety to show the salvation of the whole man, his overall anthropology is so clearly dichotomous that these passages, taken in that context and in the overall context of Tertullian's thought, do not introduce a third 'component' into man as Tertullian understood his essential nature before God.

Following conversion to the Christian faith, and the completion of the baptismal ceremonies, the Holy Spirit came to live in the hearts which had been prepared for him. Tertullian then (following Paul) wrote about the spirit in man in a different sense - the spiritual man in contradistinction from the animal man. Since, however, this study stops at the point of conversion, it would not be appropriate here to investigate the relationship with God which followed the coming of the Holy Spirit to the individual believer.

The final point to be noticed, at this stage, (although it is less relevant for embryonic life than for adolescent and adult life, to be studied later) is the

¹ res 47.18.71-74.

² V Marc 15.7.9-8.21.

Yet he proceeds, "And may your entire body and soul and spirit be preserved blameless in the presence of the Lord". There you have the whole substance of man destined for salvation.

See how the apostle has made distinct reference under definite names to all the substances we consist of, and included them all in one prayer for salvation, desiring that our spirit and body and soul be preserved without complaint at the coming of our Lord and Saviour Christ. He has written both 'soul' and 'body', two things which are not the same thing. For although soul too is body of some sort, having its own attributes, as spirit has, yet when body and soul are spoken of separately, soul has its own particular word, having no need for that common term 'body'. This is left to the flesh, which when not referred to by its own particular term, has to be making use of the common one. In any case, over against spirit and soul I am not aware in man of any other substance except flesh to which this term 'body' can be applied.

close and intimate relationship of body and soul in the composite which made up 'man'. The body was not merely a resting-place for the soul but the latter was "sown into" the body and mixed with it in such a close relationship that Tertullian spoke in places about the body serving the soul and in other places about the soul serving the body.¹ Against the Hellenistic division of human nature, Tertullian insisted on a totus-homo view - God had created the whole man, body and soul; owing to the Fall, the whole man was lost; Christ had come to save the whole man; and at the resurrection, the whole man, body and soul, would appear before God. A few quotations will illustrate the point.

(i) at conception

caro autem, ab exordio uteri consata conformata congenita animae, etiam in omni operatione miscetur illi. ²

(ii) during growth

Societatem carnis atque animae iamdudum commendauimus a congregatione seminum ipsorum usque ad figmenti perfectionem; perinde nunc et a natiuitate defendimus, imprimis quod simul crescunt, sed diuisa ratione.³

(iii) up to conversion (where this study stops)

Etsi sufficeret illi, quod nulla omnino anima salutem possit adipisci nisi dum est in carne crediderit: adeo caro salutis est cardo. De qua cum anima a deo allegatur, ipsa est, quae efficit, ut anima allegi possit a deo. Sed et caro abluatur, ut anima emaculetur; caro unguatur, ut anima consecratur; caro signatur ut (et) anima muniatur; caro manus inpositione adumbratur, ut (et) anima spiritu inluminetur. ⁴

In addition, this theme was developed at length in de resurrectione carnis chapters 14 to 15 and 40, and in de anima chapters 40,41 and 58:

In these passages he asserts that the soul acts in the flesh and with the flesh and through the flesh. Even thought itself is an act of the flesh. The soul has no activity apart from the flesh as long as it is in the flesh, and all that

¹ Examined in chapter IV.3 below.

² res 16.10.40-42.

³ an 37.5.27-30.

⁴ res 8.2.5-3.11.

whole-man

Whereas the flesh, being since its origin in the womb conceived and sinned and brought to birth in company with the soul, is also in every operation commingled with it.

We have already discussed the close union of soul and body from the moment of the joining of their seeds to the complete formation of the foetus. Now, we maintain their intimate conjunction even after they have been born: together soul and body grow, each in accordance with its nature.

For it that no soul can ever obtain salvation unless while it is in the flesh it has become a believer. To such a degree is the flesh the pivot of salvation, that since by it the soul becomes linked with God, it is the flesh which makes possible the soul's election by God. For example, the flesh is washed that the soul may be made spotless: the flesh is anointed that the soul may be consecrated: the flesh is signed (with the cross) that the soul too may be protected: the flesh is overshadowed by the imposition of the hand that the soul may be illumined by the Spirit.

"On the Resurrection of the Body" and "On the Soul" (two of Tertullian's treatises).

the flesh does, it does in company with the soul.¹

So then every new 'homo', implanted in the womb, consisted of body and soul and no other. In the previous section but one, it was established that man transmitted his nature complete, body and soul (or soul at any rate) to his offspring. The implications of the transmission of corrupt human nature, from one generation to the next, is examined now.

¹ Waszink, op. cit., p 588.

I.7 THE IMPLICATIONS OF TRADUCIANISM

As was established in section I.4, Tertullian traced every individual soul back to the soul of Adam, the source and fountainhead of all the human race. This section goes on from there, to consider some of the implications of traducianism, because the corruption of the soul by sin, and the transmission of that corruption through procreation to every new soul, was a concept of the highest importance for Tertullian. What is not so often mentioned by commentators is the corresponding transmission of a remnant of the original goodness of man, a reflection of the divine image, quod enim a deo est, non tam extinguitur, quam obumbratur.¹ In chapter 41 of de anima, Tertullian was very anxious to stress that the devil had not succeeded in destroying totally the image of God in the human soul. What remained might be largely "obscured" by sin, but it was never "extinguished" and occasionally it broke through, like light from a lamp enshrouded with some dense impediment.² (In man, the impediment was removed by baptism.) This native goodness was also transmitted from generation to generation, said Tertullian, in the same way as sin, and side by side with it.

The locus classicus of traducianism is in de testimonio animae chapter 3:-

Satanam denique in omni uexatione et aspernatione et detestatione pronuntias, quem nos dicimus malitiae angelum, totius erroris artificem, totius saeculi interpolatorem, per quem homo a primordio circumuentus, ut praeceptum dei excederet, et propterea in mortem datus exinde totum genus de suo semine infectum suae etiam damnationis traducem fecit. ³

¹ an 41.2.7-8.

² Potest enim obumbrari, quia non est deus, extinguere non potest, quia a deo est. Itaque sicut lumen aliquo obstaculo impeditum manet, sed non comparet, et tanta densitas obstaculi fuerit, ita et bonum in anima a malo oppressum pro qualitate eius aut in totum uacat occulta salute aut qua datur radiat inuenta libertate - an 41.2.8-13.

³ test 3.2.7-13.

that which comes from God is overshadowed, but not wholly extinguished.

"On the Soul (one of Tertullian's treatises).

classic statement

"On the Witness of the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises).

'Satan' is the one whom we call the angel of wickedness, the artificer of every error, the corrupter of the whole world: through him, man was deceived from the beginning so that he transgressed the commandment of God, and, therefore, having been given unto death, made the whole human race, which was infected by his seed, the transmitter of condemnation.

It can be obscured, since it is not God: but it cannot be completely extinguished, since it is of God. For, just as a light is not seen if it is obstructed by some opaque body, yet it is still there, so the good in the soul is still there even though blocked by evil and perhaps totally obscured or only a faint glimmer of its presence seen.

but Tertullian returned to the theme on several other occasions -

Homo damnatur in mortem ob unius arbusculae delibationem, et exinde proficiunt delicta cum poenis et pereunt iam omnes, qui paradisi nullum caespitem norunt. ¹

Ita omnis anima eo usque in Adam censetur, donec in Christo recenseatur, tamdiu immunda, quamdiu recenseatur. ²

Adhuc in Adam deputabatur cum suo uitio. ³

per quam purgarem mortis a primordio causam in me quoque cum ipso genere transductam. ⁴

From these texts it is clear that Tertullian believed all mankind had inherited sin - or at least a sinful nature - his language might have been more precise if he had lived after the Pelagian controversy.⁵ Traducianism linked every new soul with the events of Genesis 3,⁶ and every new soul brought with it the 'infection' of sin; all were thus conceived with an 'Adamic' soul.

Tertullian was at pains to distinguish this pristina corruptio, the state of corruptedness proceeding from original sin, from the actual impurity caused later in every individual life by the influence of the devil and evil spirits, examined in Chapter III.2 below. It is a distinction of great importance for this study. When Tertullian wrote Adeo nulla ferme natiuitas munda est,⁷ he was referring to the customs surrounding the birth of a pagan child, which obviously

¹ I Marc 22.8.5-8.

² an 40.1.1-2.

³ pud 6.15.56.

⁴ jej 3.3.21-22.

⁵ The point was made by John Kaye, Bishop of Lincoln, The Ecclesiastical History of the Second and Third Centuries illustrated from the Writings of Tertullian, (3rd ed; London: Francis & John Rivington, 1845) p 306.

⁶ The responsibility for the original transgression was normally traced by Tertullian to Adam, but in I cult 1.1.11-2.19 and in carn 17.5.31-36 he put the responsibility on Eve. The significance of that is taken up in chapter IV.4 below.

⁷ an 39.3.18-19.

Man is condemned to death for picking from one paltry tree, and out of that proceed sins with their penalties, and now people who have not known so much as one single sod of Paradise are all of them perishing.

Every soul is considered as having been born in Adam until it has been reborn in Christ. Moreover, it is unclean until it has been thus regenerated.

It was still reckoned as being in Adam, sinful: ("cum suo vitio" is a reference to the vitium originis, The original sin which the human race contracted in Adam).

To purge the primordial cause of death - a cause transmitted to me also, concurrently with my every generation:

first corruption

Thus there is hardly a birth that is free from impurity/idolatrous superstition.

did not apply to Christian children. Nevertheless, the children of Christian parents too were immunda, because all human stock was tainted - by reason of traducianism - ex originis uitio antecedit.¹ Every soul was not only sinful through the influence of the devil, but also in consequence of original sin - as is taken up in chapter III.2 below. The evil which afflicted the soul (malum animae²) was no mere superstructure, due to the accession of the evil spirit, but was there already, ex originis vitio. On the other hand, how little Tertullian regarded this original sin as guilt is apparent from his description of children as "innocent"³ and his advice to delay baptism.⁴ Tradux animae might carry tradux peccati, but Tertullian made no attempt to state a case for original guilt. "Cette vue matérialiste rendait facile pour Tertullien la transmission du péché originel (tradux animae, tradux peccati); mais on aurait tort, je crois, d'en chercher la raison dans le désir d'expliquer cette transmission".⁵

What did concern him was to demonstrate that the malum animae was contrary to God's original intention for man. He therefore drew on the Platonic division of the soul into rational and irrational elements, although he explained the distinction in a different manner.⁶ The soul of Adam, as created by God

¹ an 41.1.2.

² an 41.1.1.

³ Examined in chapter IV.5 below.

⁴ Examined in chapter III.5 below.

⁵ J. Bainvel, Article "Âme", in Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique, vol I, (Paris: Letouzey et Ane, 1903), col 991.

⁶ Tertullian's acceptance of irrational elements in the soul, (agreeing with Plato) is found in an 16.1.1-2; his belief that the irrational came from the devil and not from God and so (disagreeing with Plato) were not based in the nature of the soul, follows in an 16.1.2-2.19. d'Alès put it very neatly: "Le traité de anima décrit cette tare héréditaire de l'homme déchu, et l'auteur, sous l'influence de réminiscences platoniciennes, a paru d'abord incliner à seinder l'homme en deux parties: un élément rationnel, qui vient de Dieu, et un élément (continued on next page)

impure

it arises/flows from its corrupt origin

evils which mars the soul

from its corrupt origin

the shoot (transmission) of the soul - transmission of sin

This material view rendered it easy for Tertullian to explain the transmission of original sin (transmission of the soul, transmission of sin); but one would be wrong, I believe, to seek a reason for it in the desire to explain this transmission.

evil which mars the soul

"Soul" in the Dictionary of Catholic Theology.

The treatise 'De anima' describes this hereditary weed of fallen man, and the writer, under the influence of Platonical reminiscences, appeared at first inclined to split man into two parts: a rational element, which comes from God and an irrational element, .!.

and in its original and natural state, was rational. Only the rational belonged to the nature of the soul, because that proceeded from God. The irrational element (not 'part') was a later addition, the irrational qualities being infused by the devil, when he seduced Adam and Eve into transgression.

Inrationale autem posterius intellegendum est, ut quod acciderit ex serpentis instinctu, ipsum illud transgressionis admissum, atque exinde inoleuerit et coadoleuerit in anima ad instar iam naturalitatis, quia statim in naturae primordio accidit. ¹

That overshadowed the divine element, which was the natural element, obscuring and corrupting it; only at baptism was the curtain of primal corruption withdrawn and the soul could perceive its true light. Since every individual soul was, as it were, a surculus, cut from the matrix of Adam and planted out to grow into a separate tree,² every individual soul contained in itself both of these elements, the rational and the irrational, the good and the bad, sic et in pessimis aliquid boni et in optimis nonnihil pessimi....Propterea nulla anima sine crimine, quia nulla sine boni semine.³

Because man was by nature both good and bad, and not wholly bad, sin in the later life of the individual was always the result of his own free choice, for which he was accountable; too much emphasis on tradux animae, tradux peccati would have led to determinism. It is significant that Tertullian did not attempt to relate his teaching on traducianism to such Biblical passages as Genesis 5.3,

Footnote (6) continued from previous page :

irrationnel, qui viendrait de démon. Mais ayant fait réflexion que les mêmes puissances naturelles, y compris l'appétit irascible et concupiscible, existent dans l'âme du Christ, en qui tout est parfaitement rationnel et ordonné, il renonce à cette psychologie et distingue plus sagement entre la nature et le vice de la nature. La nature, même sensible, vient de Dieu: le démon n'a fait qu'y semer le désordre, et porter les facultés sensibles à s'insurger contre la raison. Ainsi tout homme naît enfant de colère, enfant du démon". Adhémar d'Alès, La Théologie de Tertullien, (Paris: Gabriel Beauchesne & Co., 1905), p 265.

¹ an 16.1.7-11.

² Examined at Section I.4 above.

³ an 41.3.14-15 and 19-20.

The irrational element, however, must be thought to have come later, resulting from the suggestion of the serpent and producing the very act of the first transgression. From then on, this irrational element became inherent in the soul, developed with the soul, and, as it happened at the very beginning of the soul's existence, gave every appearance of being a natural element of the soul.

twig/branch

parent-stem

There is some good in the worst of us, and the best of us harbour some evil within us ... So, just as no soul is wholly without sin, so no soul is entirely bereft of some seeds of good.

transmission of the soul, transmission of sin

... which would come from the devil. But having reflected that ^{the} same natural powers, irascible and concupiscible appetite included, exist in Christ's soul, in which all is perfectly rational and ordered, he renounces this psychology and distinguishes more wisely between nature and the defect of nature. Nature, itself sensitive, comes from God: the devil has only sown disorder there, and urged the sensitive faculties to rebel against reason. Thus everyone is born a child of anger, a child of the devil.

Psalm 51.7 or Romans 5.12; the stress by some modern commentators¹ on traducianism in Tertullian as the transmission of sin may reflect the mind of the commentator more than it reflects the mind of Tertullian. Of course all souls were congenitally infected with sinfulness, inherited from the first man, but Tertullian was more concerned to refute the errors of the Gnostics than to establish the status before God of the new-born child. The unity of humanity was an important tenet for him in his struggle against the Gnostics and how better could it be defended than by demonstrating the inborn, "natural" property of every soul ex una redundans?

For the meantime, sufficient foundation has been laid to come to a tentative decision about the relationship of the embryo to God, at the moment of its conception, and this is now taken up.

¹ e.g. "The soul shares in Adam's guilt and every man therefore is under condemnation and is punishable for his inherited guilt quite apart from any actual sins he may commit". Arthur Cushman McGiffert, commenting on Tertullian in A History of Christian Thought, (New York and London: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1933) vol II. p 18.

flowing forth freely from one

I.8 THE RELATIONSHIP TO GOD AT CONCEPTION

One of the criticisms levelled at the theory of traducianism is that it limits God's creative involvement in the realm of the individual human personality. After the initial creation of the soul of Adam, He has no direct concern (it is said) with procreation. Tertullian would not have accepted such a view. Twice he referred to God's participation and activity at the time of conception and as Althaus put it (defending traducianism) "Schöpfung bleibt Schöpfung, auch wenn sie durch den natürlichen Prozess der Fortpflanzung vermittelt."¹ God controlled the very act of procreation, through a power subservient to His will; Omnem autem hominis in utero serendi struendi fingendi paraturam aliqua utique potestas diuinae uoluntatis ministra modulatur, quamcumque illam rationem agitare sortita.²

The participation of male, female, and God in generation was an idea of great antiquity, and Roman superstition assigned special gods to the task.³ Tertullian argued that Christians knew of no divine agencies other than angels, and, furthermore, that they made a better job of it than did the pagan gods. What stamps Tertullian's teaching (over against theories of delayed hominisation) is his insistence that God was present from the outset. Immediately at conception it was God who contributed the body, the soul, the life - it was the breath of God in man which distinguished him from all other creatures: in homine priuata res est, non modo ut dei opus, quod et cetera, sed ut dei flatus, quod haec sola.⁴ As ever, Tertullian was ready to back up his argument with

¹ Paul Augustus Wilhelm Herman Althaus, Die Christliche Wahrheit; Lehr/^{buch} der Dogmatik, (5th ed.; Gutersloh; 1959) p 91.

² an 37.1.1-4.

³ an 37.1.5-8.

Creation is still creation, even if it is mediated by the natural process of propagation.

The whole process of implanting, developing and completing the human embryo in the womb is undoubtedly regulated by some power, some servant of God's will, whatever may be the method which it is appointed to employ.

the exclusive prerogative of man, not merely as a creature of God, common with all things else, but rather as the breath of God, which the human soul alone is.

Christian Truth: Textbook of Dogmatics (Book)

Scripture. When life was there, God was there; when God was not there, life was not present. Commenting on the words which God spoke to Jeremiah - priusquam te in utero fingerem, nouite¹ - Tertullian wrote:

Si fingit deus in utero, et afflat ex primordii forma: et finxit deus hominem et flauit in eum flatum uitae. Nec nosset autem hominem deus in utero nisi totum: et priusquam exires de uulua, sanctificaui te.²

Tertullian had grasped the central question - what takes place at conception? Is the embryo an inanimate speck? No, he said - homo est et qui est futurus. Not only had it a relationship to God, through a power subservient to God's will, which controlled the conception, but the embryo, by virtue of containing the spiritus of God (as defined in section I.6 above) was in some relationship with God from its earliest moment. Traducianism, as Tertullian understood it, did not exclude God's creative activity in the genesis of every new life; God supervised the production of every new body, just as much as He supervised the production of every new soul. The individual was "opus Dei" (in contrast to the soul which was only "flatus Dei"), a work of God of particular excellence, formed by the highest artist in the most ingenious fashion; such is Tertullian's argument in de resurrectione carnis chapters five to seven.

Traducianism did, however, mean that the sin, or at least the sinful nature, of Adam was transmitted to all, through seminal solidarity. As established in the previous section, the soul of the newly created embryo, like every other soul, was immunda, subject to original sin: Ita omnis anima eo usque in Adam censetur, donec in Christo recenseatur, tamdiu immunda, quamdiu recenseatur;³ on the other hand, Tertullian reacted against the suggestion that infant life, just because it was "in Adam" was therefore under the

¹ an 37.5.31-32.

² an 26.5.32-37.

³ an 40.1.1-3.

"Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you"

If God forms us in the womb, He also breathes on us as He did in the beginning: "And God formed man and breathed into him the breath of life". Nor could God have known man in the womb unless he were a whole man. "And before you came forth from the womb, I sanctified you".

It is a human being and one who is to be a man

spirit

work of God

breath of God

"On the Resurrection of the Dead" (one of Tertullian's treatises).

Impure

Every soul is considered as having been born in Adam until it has been reborn in Christ. Moreover it is unclean until it has been thus regenerated.

judgment of God. The 'innocence' of infants, in their relationship to God, will be studied in Chapter IV.5 below, but it is necessary to show briefly here that early embryonic life was included in Tertullian's description of innocence. Dealing with the objection from a (? hypothetical) opponent, that executed criminals should not be granted the privilege of a place in Hades, Tertullian wrote:

Alterum ergo constituas, compello, aut bonos aut malos inferos: si malos placet, etiam praecipitari illuc animae pessimae debent; si bonos, cur idem animas immaturas et innuptas et pro condicione aetatis puras et innocuas interim indignas inferis iudicas? ²

If the soul of an infant, which had been subjected to satanic attack at birth, was still 'pure and innocent', then a fortiori so was the soul of the embryo, which had not known such an attack. There could be no question of any soul, even one conceived of Christian parents, being entirely innocent of sin; up to baptism, every soul was immunda - it was inherent in the soul, quite apart from any actual sin - but such a soul was not under the judgment of God. While the theory of seminal identity of the whole race with Adam led later generations to the doctrine of original guilt, as well as original sin, Tertullian seems (as mentioned in section I.7 above) to have used originis vitium without the concept of original guilt. Only in this way can his references to the deferment of baptism be understood. The souls of those who by their age were necessarily pure and innocent were in such a relationship to God in life that on premature death they (even unbaptised) were 'worthy' of a resting place in the region of Hades reserved for those in a right relationship to God. Later generations wrestled with the problem of the destiny of an embryo which perished immediately after conception - believing that without baptism the soul would be damned forever.² Tertullian had no such problem.

¹ an 51.8.61-66, and see chapter VI.4 (b) below for a brief outline of Tertullian's other references to Hades.

² Footnote overleaf.

You must make clear which of the two regions of Hades you mean: that of the good or that of the bad. If you mean the bad, then that is where evil souls are consigned: if the good, why do you hold the souls of infants and virgins and those who by their age were necessarily pure and innocent to be unworthy of such a resting place?

So much the more

impure

the fault of origin

I.9 ROMAN LAW FOR THIS AREA

The Institutes of Gaius contain not one single reference to embryonic life. However, because Justinian's Institutes and Digest are (and were intended to be) largely excerpts from the works of earlier jurists, some going back to Tertullian's time, they give at least some idea of the law in force in Tertullian's age.¹ The first of the two features of Roman law to be noted in this section is the legal status of embryos, which differed according to the status of the parents. While Tertullian made no distinction in the relationship of the embryo to God by reference to the legal status of either its father or its mother, Roman law was very concerned to know whether the parents of the embryo were lawfully married and whether they were slave or free.

In respect of the former, every child was conceived either 'lawfully' or 'unlawfully' and Roman law clothed the resulting embryo with very different legal rights. A 'lawful' child was one born of a man and a woman united in marriage according to the forms required by the law; an 'unlawful' child was one born of a man and a woman not lawfully married. 'Unlawful' children were further divided into naturales liberi or spurii, according to whether they were the issue of concubinage or of promiscuous intercourse.² Not only the status of

Footnote (2) from previous page:

² This aspect so concerned Anselm, for example, that it drove him to the conclusion that the embryo could not receive a rational soul from the moment of conception, because if it were to perish then, it could not be reconciled with Christ, quod est nimis absurdum. (Liber de conceptu virginali et originali peccato 7 - J.P. Migne, Patrologia cursus completus, series latina. Paris: 1844-1855, vol 158, p 440.)

¹ The difficulty of ascertaining^a Roman law for Tertullian's time and the relationship between Justinian's works and Gaius' Institutes, are examined in Excursus Two.

² Concubinage, the more or less permanent union of a man and a woman not united in marriage, was a recognised Roman legal institution, and the children of such a union were regarded more favourably by the law than were the offspring of casual relationships; that distinction is, however, of no relevance to this study.

status

natural children or bastards

which is exceedingly absurd. ("Book about virginal conception and original sin" - published now in the edition "The Complete Course of Patrology, Latin series".)

the embryo, but also the point in time at which that status was applied, depended on the child being conceived in lawful wedlock. Such children took their status from the status of their father, and took it by reference to his status at the time of conception; 'unlawful' children, whether 'natural' or 'spurious', took their status from that of their mother, and they took it from her status at the time of birth. The implications were enormous. If, for example, a lawfully-married Senator died while his wife was pregnant, the posthumous child would have all the rights and privileges of a Senator's child; if the parents lived in concubinage, not only would the child's status in life be that of its mother, but the status of the mother might have altered considerably for the worse between the conception and the birth, consequent on her "husband's" death.¹

Furthermore, only if a child was born in lawful wedlock, and after the 182nd day,² could its legal existence be reckoned from the date of conception; even such a child had to be born alive, and capable of living, before it was so recognised.³ Capacity for existence in Roman Law was not presumed unless the pregnancy extended to the 182nd day, even although the abortus was born alive.⁴ If the capacity for existence could be legally presumed, the child

¹ There was, however, a tendency to adjust the rule to the point in time most advantageous to the child, whether that was conception, birth or some intermediate point. If, for example, the mother was a slave at the time of birth, but if she had been free at the time of conception, or even at any time during the intervening period, the child was deemed to be free-born.

² This is not the place to enter into the debate about the significance of the 182nd day. Savigny, a noted expositor of Roman Law of the 19th century, argued at length that the 182nd day rule was concerned with paternity, this being the shortest possible time for conception to come to live birth. Savigny's argument is precised in Appendix III of W.H. Rattigan, Jural Relations; or, The Roman Law of Persons as Subjects of Jural Relations; (London: Wildy & Sons, 1884), pp. 284-301.

³ Justinian's Digest, Book 50, Title 16, Fragment 129. (= Digest 50.16.129. The method of citing Gaius and Justinian is set out at the end of Excursus Two, pp. 430-431 below).

⁴ Digest 38.16.3.12.

aborted fetus

was instantly clothed with the rights of man, even though it lived for only a moment. Some jurists were of the opinion that the child must have been heard to cry, but Justinian, adopting the view of the Sabinians (of whom Gaius was one of the latest) enacted:

Si vivus perfectè natus est: licet illico postquam in terra cecidit, vel in manibus obstetricis decessit: nihilominus testamentum rumpi, hoc tantummodo requirendo, si vivus ad orbem totus processit, ad nullum declinans monstrum, vel prodigium.¹

The underlying principle was to safeguard the inheritance of goods. If a succession opened out during pregnancy, which, had the child been born, would have descended to it, the child's right of inheritance had to be preserved until the time of birth. This applied only to the lawfully married, because 'natural' and 'spurious' children had no right of succession to their father; (they succeeded to their mother, to the same extent as her lawful children). Because the child in utero would inherit, provided it came to live birth, the same legal rights as if it were already alive, a curator ventris was appointed where a married man died, leaving his wife pregnant, and the portions of three children had to be set apart for the nasciturus.² The embryo itself had, however, no legal existence in Roman law and no rights under Roman law while in the mother's womb; only when born alive was its legal life dated back to the earliest period of its physical existence: Nasciturus pro jam nato habetur, quando de ejus commodo agitur.³

The provisions of Roman law for the many complexities of life during pregnancy, such as determining the legal status of the offspring of parents of unequal status, need not be examined in detail here, because Tertullian gave no indication that legitimacy or illegitimacy made the slightest difference to the

¹ Code 6.29; likewise the Constitutions 5.3, (for which see Excursus Two.)

² Digest 5.4.3 and 4.

³ Digest 1.5.7.

If a child has been born alive: even though it fell dead to the ground immediately afterwards, or died in the hands of the midwife: a will is nevertheless nullified, with this provision alone, that it has entered the world complete, with no hint of deformity or abnormality.

in the womb

a guardian to the unborn

child-still-to-be-born

A foetus is considered already born, when its monetary value is at issue.

relationship of the embryo to God, nor, on the principles adopted by him, could he have made such a distinction. The position of slaves in Roman law is taken up in detail in Excursus Three, but it is worth noting, at this stage, that Roman law regarded slaves as devoid of legal existence and any child inherited the disability of its mother. The unborn child of a slave was never more than a part of the mother (mulieris portio),¹ but Tertullian made no distinction - as far as the relationship to God was concerned - between the child of free persons and the child of slaves. The only distinction he did make was between a child of pagan parents and a child with one or both parents Christian, which is examined in chapter III.4 below.

The only other area where Roman law might be relevant to this chapter of the thesis is Tertullian's contention that omnis anima eo usque in Adam censetur, donec in Christo recenseatur.² Strangely enough, not one single writer on de anima chapter 40, not even Waszink, in all their comments on the relationship of human nature with Adam, has remarked that censari and recenseri are words from Roman legal usage. Since however, censari describes the relationship in which men stand with Adam, being "registered" in him, and not the relationship directly with God (with which this study is concerned), comment will be postponed until chapter IX.9, when the word recensari will be considered along with a number of other words from Roman law which describe the effect of baptism on the relationship of man to God.

To sum up, then, the main area where Roman law seems to be relevant to this (first) chapter of the thesis, a child had to be conceived in lawful wedlock, had to reach the sixth month of pregnancy, and then had to go on to be born alive, before Roman law would accept that it had been a legal persona during pregnancy; otherwise the embryo

¹ Digest 25.4.1.1.

² an 40.1.1-2.

a part of the mother

Every soul, by reason of its birth, is considered as having been born in Adam until it has been reborn in Christ.

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises).

registered - reborn (reading recenseri = renasce)

personality

was not recognised as such; only when it was actually born, could its legal life be dated back to the earliest period of its physical existence. This contrasts sharply with Tertullian's attitude to embryonic life, as will be brought out in the conclusion which follows.

I.10 CONCLUSIONS FROM CHAPTER ONE

The first aim of this chapter was to discover as fully as possible how Tertullian understood and expressed the initial relationship of a human being to God. The second aim was to identify any words or ideas which either expressed Tertullian's view of that relationship in terms of Roman law or which seemed to contrast with the legal position.

On the first point, Tertullian has left considerable data, express or implied. For him, a new and unique person came into existence at every conception, and it was not (as taught by Roman law) dependent on live birth for its status. The new person was composed of body and soul, without any other constituent part. Neither body nor soul had had any previous or separate relationship with God, although the soul had been handed down, from generation to generation, from the breath of God in the first man. Souls were not addicted to metempsychosis, as the Pythagoreans held, but each individual was a new product, proceeding equally with the body from its parent(s), neither created later nor inserted into the body at birth. God's creation "de nihilo" had finished on the sixth day but since Adam's soul was the result of the divine afflatus, every subsequent soul had within it the power of reproducing itself in further individual souls. This gave rise to Tertullian's distinctive teaching known as traducianism, which had fundamental implications for his understanding of the relationship of the embryo to God. It was not born a tabula rasa, which the experience of life alone would influence; into every newly-conceived soul were infused the spiritual qualities of the parent, not only the universal sinfulness of all the children of Adam but also a remnant of the goodness of the divine image. These two influences would manifest themselves as the child came to understanding and Tertullian was careful not to over-emphasise the effects of traducianism, because he was equally concerned to show that every one was personally responsible for his won sin. For him, traducianism both established the universality of sin, and also

from nothing

breath

smooth writing-tablet (i.e. unwritten on).

preserved the freedom of the will; these points will be taken up in chapter six.

The act of conception was supervised by God, through angelic oversight, which brought together the two seeds containing body and soul. From that moment, nothing of substance required to be added to the embryo - already homo est et qui est futurus. Tertullian would have approved of what Barth wrote:

Das ungeborene Kind ist nämlich vom ersten Stadium an ein Kind, ein noch keimender, noch unselbständig lebender Mensch, aber ein Mensch, kein Etwas, nicht nur ein Teil des Mutterleibes. ¹

As the embryo developed through birth, childhood and adolescence, it would, by natural growth, and without the addition of any new element, be able to enter into a conscious relationship with God. However, even while the embryo was microscopic and totaly unaware of God, He was concerned and He was involved. Even the body, the lower component of man in the eyes of Tertullian's pagan contemporaries, was a divine work of art. As for the soul, it was descended from the very breath of God, so that the human embryo was not merely formed by an intelligent Creator, as other things were, but it was animated from the very substance of God, and was related to Him "ex spiritu Dei", "ex substantia eius", "ex Dei flatus".

Accordingly, for Tertullian, the status of the embryo as a human being was not dependent on its survival to live birth. If it was born before the 182nd day, or if it was still-born, its soul went to Hades to await the resurrection, in its own right; in due course a resurrection body would be provided by God and the embryonic man was already entered in the book of life.² Furthermore, Tertullian made no distinction - as far as the relationship to God was concerned - between a child conceived in lawful wedlock and a child conceived from unlawful

¹ Karl Barth, Die Kirchliche Dogmatik, Band III - Die Lehre von der Schöpfung, (Zurich: A.G. Zollikon, 1951) Teil 4, para 55, p 474.

² an 37.2.11-12 - examined in chapter II.4.

It is a human being and one who is to be a man

The unborn child is from the very first a child. It is still developing and has no independent life. But it is a man and not a thing, nor a mere part of the mother's body.

from the Spirit of God, from the substance of God, from the breath of God.

"Church Dogmatics - Teaching about Creation." (Book)

intercourse. He made no distinction between the embryo in a free person and the embryo in a slave. There is not a great deal of Roman law relevant to this chapter, but where it is, Tertullian actually opposed the civil law of his day. He drew substantially from the Scriptures, and borrowed much common ground from philosophers, but it is difficult to see one single instance, in the events of conception, where the relationship of man to God could be said to be expressed in terms of Roman law.

CHAPTER TWO - THE RELATIONSHIP OF GROWING EMBRYOS TO GOD

II. 1. INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER TWO

As body and soul began to grow, God continued to relate Himself to the embryonic man and to control the pregnancy. In section two of this chapter, certain passages are examined which imply the uninterrupted development of the embryo. Then, in section three, Tertullian's teaching on abortion is examined, to see whether it supports the inference of a settled relationship with God throughout the pregnancy.

In view of Tertullian's traducianism, and in view of his teaching about the nature of the soul, it may seem strange even to ask whether the relationship of fetal life to God could differ at different stages of pregnancy. However, one particular passage in Tertullian's works, and certain scholarly comments on it by Dölger, require the question to be raised, and this is done in section four. In particular, it is necessary to ask whether Tertullian drew a distinction between the formed state and the unformed state of the embryo. In section five, the Roman law for this area is set out and then in section six, certain conclusions are drawn.

II.2 GOD SUPERVISED THE GROWTH OF THE EMBRYO FROM CONCEPTION TO BIRTH

Tertullian made several references to the physical development of the embryo, from the moment of its conception to the time of live birth; in two of these he expressly stated the involvement and responsibility of God. One of these passages has been considered already;¹ the other is particularly in point for this section, because God is portrayed in it as protecting the embryo, while the mother was doing her best to destroy it! Scit Deus quot iam infantes et perfici et perducere ad partum integros duxerit, debellatos aliquamdiu a matribus.² Roman superstition entrusted to a pleiades of divinities to protect every stage of a (wanted) child's conception and growth:

diuidentes omnem statum hominis singulis, potestatibus ab ipso quidem uteri conceptu, ut sit deus Conseuius quidam, qui con (.....) nibis concubitalibus praesit, et Fluuionia, quae infantem in utero nutriet; hinc Vitumnus et Sentinus, per quem uiuiscat infans et sentiat primum; dehinc Diespiter qui puerum perducatur ad partum.³

Tertullian saw this as yet another area⁴ where pagans had chanced upon the truth and then perverted it - the supervision of growth belonged to the Creator God, who delegated it only to His angels and to no other. The whole process of preparing, assembling and shaping the embryo in the womb of the mother was therefore a task carried out under the supervision of God. In the de carne Christi, and again adversus Marcionem, Tertullian went into considerable detail to show that the inconvenience, even the sordidness, of conception, pregnancy and childbearing were sacred things, which Christ Himself did not despise when

¹ Omnem autem hominis in utero serendi struendi fingendi paraturam aliqua utique potestas diuinae uoluntatis ministra modulatur, quamcumque illam rationem agitare sortita - an 37.1.1-4 - examined in chapter I.8.

² Virg 14.4.30-32.

³ II nat 11.2.21-4.4.

⁴ He expressed himself most strongly on the plagiarism of divine truth by pagans, who then corrupted it, in respect of certain philosophical ideas which resembled the teaching of the Old Testament - examined in chapter VI.6 below.

God knows how many infants He has helped to perfection and through gestation till they were born sound and whole, after being long fought against by their mothers!

dividing man's entire existence amongst separate powers, even from his conception in the womb: so that there is a god Consevius, to preside over concubital generation, and Fluvioa, to preserve the growth of the infant in the womb; after these come Vitumnus and Sentinus, through whom the babe begins to have life and its earliest sensation: then Diespiter, by whose office the child accomplishes its birth.

"On the Flesh of Christ" and "Against Marcion" (two of Tertullian's treatises).

The whole process of implanting, developing and completing the human embryo in the womb is undoubtedly regulated by some power, some servant of God's will, whatever may be the method which it is appointed to employ.

taking human form for man's redemption.¹ In similar vein, he tried to make Marcion look ridiculous - reductio ad absurdum being one of his favourite weapons:

Age iam, perora, in illa sanctissima et reuerenda opera naturae, inuehere in totum quod es; carnis atque animae originem destrue; cloacam uoca uterum, tanti animalis, id est hominis, producendi officinam;²

That the relationship to God of the anima infans³ - whatever that relationship might be - was a settled and uninterrupted relationship, is implied by Tertullian's various metaphors for the growth of the soul. In de anima 37, he used the metaphor (examined in chapter I.5 above) of a nugget of gold or silver which, when beaten by goldsmith, became larger, although nothing was added to its substance; its lustre was enhanced, and the only new thing about it was its shape; in the same way, he said, the growth of the soul brought out its latent potentialities but did not affect its substance. While Tertullian's argument in de anima 37 was specifically directed to the growth of the soul after birth, the metaphor seems equally applicable to the development of the soul between conception and birth. Tertullian's object was to refute any suggestion that the growth of the soul could in any way be regarded as an argument for its mortality and so it followed that any alteration in its basic relationship to its Creator was ruled out. Furthermore the metaphors of seed sown, and twigs planted out to grow, noted in chapter I.4 above, all imply that God's concern for and involvement with the embryo was uninterrupted right through the pregnancy. This can be taken a stage further by looking at some of the texts relative to Tertullian's teaching on abortion, which are therefore examined next.

¹ carn 4 (whole chapter); IV Marc 21.10.22-11.10.

² III Marc 21.7.12-15.

³ Footnote overleaf.

reduction to absurdity

Come on then, use all your eloquence against those sacred and reverend works of nature, launch an attack upon everything that you are: revile that in which both flesh and soul begin to be: characterise as a sewer whe womb, that workshop for bringing forth the noble animal which is man.

infant soul

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises).

II.3 THE IMPLICATIONS OF ABORTION

Since induced abortion was both common and widely accepted in Roman society, and had been for generations before Tertullian was born,¹ and since he himself deplored it, it is not surprising that he both mentioned and condemned the practice on several occasions:

Nobis uero homicidio semel interdicto etiam conceptum utero, dum adhuc sanguis in hominem delibatur, dissoluere non licet. Homicidii festinatio est prohibere nasci, nec refert, natam quis eripiat animam an nascentem disturbet.²

Parum humanum sanguinem lambitis, quoniam futurum sanguinem elicitis? Parum infante uescimini, quia infantem totum praecocum perhauritis?³

quae etiam a gentilium plerisque uitantur, quae legibus coguntur, quae parricidiis expugnantur,⁴

and especially for the Christian

Quid ergo facies, si nolens uxorem de tua conscientia impleueris? dissoluas medicaminibus conceptum? Puto nobis magis non licere nascentem necare quam et natum.⁵

In only one case did Tertullian excuse the killing of an infant in the womb. It was a sad exception, about which he wrote with considerable obstetric detail. He was dealing with the dilemma then facing a doctor, (now minimised

Footnote (3) from previous page:

² By entering into an infant body, the soul had itself become infans: "Omnes enim ab infantia imbuuntur, qua infans reuertatur" - an 31.2.8-9. The argument was carried here, as elsewhere, by reference to the entrance of a soul into a new-born child, not into an embryo at conception - cf the references to intellect and mind in an 19. This was, however, to meet the needs of the moment and was not a positive assertion that the soul was implanted at birth, as opposed to conception - which Tertullian taught so positively when it was the issue before him.

¹ The references for these statements are listed in the section on Roman law for this area, II.5 below.

² apol 9.8.31-35.

³ I nat 15.8.10-12.

⁴ I ux 5.2.9-11.

⁵ ex 12.5.33-36.

But, with us, murder is forbidden once for all. We are not permitted to destroy even the fetus in the womb, as long as blood is still being drawn to form a human being. To prevent the birth of a child is a quicker way to murder. It makes no difference whether one destroys a soul already born or interferes with its coming to birth.

Is it, forsooth, only a trifle to lick up human blood, when you draw out the blood which was destined to live? Is it a light thing in your view to feed on an infant, when you consume one wholly before it is come to the birth?

which are avoided even by the majority of the Gentiles, who are compelled by laws, who are decimated by abortions.

But suppose that, in spite of this reluctance of yours, you do cause your wife to conceive. What will you do? Will you interrupt her pregnancy by the use of drugs? I rather imagine that we have no more right to murder a baby before birth than after it.

... an infant: "At their birth, all men are imbued with the souls of infants."

by the Caesarean section) who had to choose between the life of the mother or the life of the child. If the mother's life was endangered by the birth, embryotomy was the only alternative to her death by surgery (to save the child) or her death (and possibly also the child's death) by process of nature. Against that background, Tertullian wrote:

Atquin et in ipso adhuc utero infans trucidatur necessaria crudelitate, cum in exitu obliquatus denegat partum, matricida, ni moriturus.¹

Tertullian's justification of embryotomy started from the supposition that it was already impossible (without surgery fatal to the mother) to save the life of the child - that was the only case where he permitted abortion even to be considered. The child was lying across the exit of the womb; it would be murdering the mother if the child was not dismembered; it was better, then, to kill the child at once, in utero, to save it the suffering which would follow in the struggle for the mother's life.

A very different interpretation was placed on this passage by Noonan:

Although therapeutic and social reasons for abortion were known from the best of doctors and philosophers (of paganism), these reasons were never mentioned (by the early Christians) as justification.²

When faced by a reviewer with the above passage from Tertullian, Noonan wrote:

I don't believe the passage from Tertullian is meant to incorporate a direct moral judgement as he is focusing on another issue, but I think his whole tone is terribly critical and not approving of craniotomy, which he thinks the doctors believe is necessary but which, he, in passing, condemns.³

Noonan stands alone among modern scholars, in maintaining that Tertullian was

¹ an 25.4.42-44.

² John T. Noonan, "Abortion and The Catholic Church: A Summary History", Natural Law Forum 12 (1967) p 97. Noonan published substantially the same article in the Dublin Review 241 (1967/8), under the title "The Catholic Church and Abortion", where the quotation appears at p 312.

³ A letter of 6th May, 1968 from Noonan to Cyril C. Means, quoted by the latter at page 22 of "A Historian's View", in Robert E. Hall, Editor, Abortion in a Changing World (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1970) vol I.

But sometimes by a cruel necessity, whilst yet in the womb, an infant is put to death, when, lying awry in the orifice of the womb, he impedes delivery and kills his mother, if he is not to die himself.

in the womb

not expressing moral judgement on the necessity of embryotomy. The only similar interpretation of Tertullian's view is found in Jacobus Pamelius, where Pamelius rejected the apparent meaning of Tertullian's words, because (it seems) they were counter to the moral theology current in Pamelius' time.¹

The immediate concern of this thesis, however, is with the reason why Tertullian was opposed to abortion - either totally as Noonan thought, or, as seems more likely, in every case except medical embryotomy. Tertullian gave his reason in one simple phrase in the apologeticum - a phrase already noticed in chapter I.5 - homo est et qui est futurus. Having rejected the heathen accusation that Christians killed children during their secret rites,² Tertullian counter-attacked with the words already quoted at the beginning of this section:

Nobis uero homicidio semel interdicto etiam conceptum utero, dum adhuc sanguis in hominem delibatur, dissoluere non licet. Homicidii festinatio est prohibere nasci, nec refert, natam quis eripiat animam an nascentem disturbet. Homo est et qui est futurus; etiam fructus omnis iam in semine est.³

Tertullian therefore consciously enlarged the meaning of the secular words for murder,⁴ to include the destruction of the embryo in the womb. He did so because the embryo was already homo, already under the care and the control of God - in other words, already in some relationship with God.

¹ Adnotationes in Librum Tertulliani de Anima, No. 331 in Q.S.F. Tertullian Carthaginensis Presbyteri Opera, (1584) tom. 111, p 626.

² The secrecy surrounding the Eucharist, to which only the initiated were admitted, aroused suspicion, and evil stories circulated as to what took place. Eating the flesh of Christ and drinking His Blood, which the Christians said they met to do, lent itself to malignant misinterpretation, and they were accused of slaying infants, soaking bread in their blood, and eating infant flesh.

³ apol 9.8.31-36.

⁴ Examined in section II.5 below.

"The Apology" (One of Tertullian's treatises)

It is a human being and one who is to be a man

But, with us, murder is forbidden once for all. We are not permitted to destroy even the fetus in the womb, as long as blood is still being drawn to form a human being. To prevent the birth of a child is a quicker way to murder. It makes no difference whether one destroys a soul already born or interferes with its coming to birth. It is a human being and one who is to be a man; for the whole fruit is already present in the seed.

a human being

"Observations on Tertullian's Book 'On the Soul'", contained in "The Works of the Cathaginian Presbyter, Q.S.F. Tertullian".

II.4 WHETHER THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE EMBRYO TO GOD ALTERED DURING PREGNANCY

Because Tertullian was traducianist, and in view of what has been noted already about the growth of the soul, it may seem unnecessary even to ask whether the relationship of the embryo to God could materially alter during the ten months¹ of pregnancy. However, the phrase non caro habitus ante formam, non pecus dictus post figuram² and one of Tertullian's references to abortion (immediately below) require the question to be asked.

ex eo igitur fetus in utero homo, a quo forma completa est. Nam et Mosei lex tunc aborsus reum talionibus iudicat, cum iam hominis est causa, cum iam illi vitae et mortis status deputatur, cum et fato iam inscribitur, etsi adhuc in matre uiuendo cum matre plurimum communicat sortem.³

It is difficult to reconcile those words - fetus in utero homo a quo forma completa est - with Tertullian's clearly expressed view in the apologeticum that "dum adhuc sanguis in hominem delibatur, dissoluere non licet . . . Homo est et qui est futurus; etiam fructus omnis iam in semine est".⁴ Indeed, Waszink regarded the two texts as "incompatible" and as yet another example of Tertullian dealing with the needs of the moment without reference (in this case without appreciation) of what he had written elsewhere.⁵ Dölger, who wrote a series of articles on the subject in 1934,⁶ believed that Tertullian had

¹ Tertullian regarded birth at the beginning of the tenth month as not only the norm but as symbolic: an 37.4.17-21.

² IV Marc 21.11.2-3. Tertullian was taunting Marcion that his (Marcion's) Christ was unnatural - Non uulva, licet uirginis tamen feminae, coagulatus, et si non ex semine, tamen lege substantiae corporalis ex sanguine et humore, non caro habitus ante formam, non pecus dictus post figuram - IV Marc 21.11.24-03.

³ an 37.2.8-13.

⁴ apol 9.8.32-33 and 35-36.

⁵ Waszink, op. cit.^{pp} 425-6.

⁶ Franz Joseph Dölger. The series is collected under the title "Das Lebensrecht des ungeborenen Kindes und die Fruchtabtreibung in der Bewertung der heidnischen und christlichen Antike", in part 4 of Antike und Christentum (Münster; Aschendorff, 1934), pp 1-61.

- he was never reckoned to be flesh before he was formed,
nor was he called a foetus after his shape was completed

The embryo, therefore, becomes a human being in the womb from the moment when its formation is completed. For the law of Moses imposed punishment in kind for the man who was guilty of causing an abortion, on the ground that the embryo was already the rudiment of a human being, which has imputed to it even now the conditions of life and death, since it has already been entered in the book of fate, although, by living still in the mother, it for the most part shares its own state with the mother.

The embryo in the womb becomes a human being from the moment when its formation is complete.

as long as the mother's blood is still being drawn on to form a human being, we are not permitted to destroy (a fetus) ... It is a human being and one who is to be a man, for the whole fruit is already present in the seed.

He was not conceived in a womb - not even a virgin's, though a virgin is a woman, and even though there were no male seed, yet by the law of corporal substance (he would have been formed) from a woman's blood - he was never reckoned to be flesh before he was formed, nor was he called a foetus after his shape was complete;

"The right to live of unborn children and abortion in the judgment of pagan and Christian antiquity."

deliberately followed Aristotle, and ancient physiology generally, when he wrote de anima chapter 37, and that he had consciously distinguished between a formed and unformed fetus:

Aber Tertullian sagt eben nicht, dass der unausgebildete mit der Seele verbundene menschliche Embryo von Anfang an schon Mensch sei. Mensch wird der Embryo erst mit der Entwicklung zur menschenähnlichen Gestalt. Von diesem Zeitpunkt ab, also von dem vierzigsten Tag nach der Empfängnis an hätte danach die Zerstörung des Embryo nach Tertullian als Menschenmord erscheinen müssen.¹

Two factors must be taken into account, in assessing Tertullian's understanding of forma completa:

(a) that he lived in a society which accepted stages of development in fetal life - in particular, degrees of aliveness as the embryo passed through its various stages, and

(b) that he probably read Exodus chapter 21 (to which he refers) in the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament and not in the Hebrew original.² That is important, because the Hellenistic Jewish translators of the Septuagint in Alexandria had introduced a distinction, not found in the Massoretic text, between an unformed and a formed foetus in the womb.

These two factors are now briefly examined, before an assessment is made.

¹ Dölger, op.cit. part 9, "Embryo-beseelung und Fruchtabtreibung bei Tertullian", pp 36-37.

² That Tertullian did not read Hebrew is implied in Prax 5.1.5-6 and is generally agreed by commentators on Tertullian - e.g. d'Alès, op. cit. p 231; Barnes, op. cit. "Tertullian" p 92; Pierre Monceaux, Histoire Littéraire de l'Afrique Chrétienne. I: Tertullien et les origines, (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1901) p 188; T.P. O'Malley, Tertullian and the Bible: Language - Imagery - Exegesis, (Nijmegen: Dekker & Von de Vegt, 1967) p 134. In any event, he appears to have accepted the Septuagint as 'scriptura', giving the translation the authority of the original text, - "tenedum quod Graeca scriptura signavit" (II Marc. 9.1.25) See J.E.L. van der Geest, Le Christ et l'Ancien Testament chez Tertullien, (Nijmegen: Dekker & Von de Vegt, 1972) p 12-13.

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

Tertullian does not even say that the unformed foetus connected with the soul is already man from the very beginning. The foetus first becomes man with its development into a man-like figure. From this point in time, i.e. from the fortieth day after conception, the destruction of the foetus must, according to Tertullian, appear as the murder of a human being.

completed form (of body)

"Animation of the fetus and abortion in Tertullian's judgment."

Literary History of Christian Africa: Part One - Tertullian and the Beginnings."

We have to insist on the significance of the Greek Scripture.

"Christ and the Old Testament in Tertullian."

(a) Contemporary physiology

From the writings of Galen,¹ it is apparent that contemporary physiology not only accepted different stages in embryonic life, but linked these stages with development from plant life through animal life to human life. The distinction can be traced back to Aristotle, who had taught² that the embryo was first animated by a vegetative soul, then, when the embryo was sufficiently organised to receive it, by an animal (sensitive) soul, these states being common to man and to the lower animals. In the case of man, and man alone, the animal soul was succeeded by a rational (human) soul.

Although Tertullian declared his own interest in medical science,³ it is unthinkable that he had the soul (as opposed to the body) in mind when he wrote fetus in utero homo a quo forma completa est. The texts quoted above at Chapter I.3 established beyond any doubt that immediate hominisation, not just immediate animation, was fundamental to Tertullian's anthropology. However, there is room for enquiry into the development of that other component part of man, the body, of which Dölger wrote:

Erst in einer späteren Stufe der Embryoentwicklung mit der klar in die Erscheinung tretenden menschlichen Gestalt des Embryo sei dieser nicht nur als animal (ζῷον) 'Lebewesen', sondern als Mensch (homo) zu betrachten. Als Zeitpunkt, der hier nicht ausdrücklich genannt wird, gilt in der antiken Physiologie allgemein der vierzigste Tag nach der Empfängnis.⁴

¹ For Galen, see p 17 above, footnote 2.

² op cit., Book 2, chapter 3.

³ Tertullian's words: Sed et medicinam inspexi - an 2.6.53-54 - presumably mean, in context, that he read Soranus' Περὶ Ψυχῆς for the purpose of composing his treatise de anima. Pierre de Labriolle (a Latin philologist) contributed with some diffidence a paper to Archives Générales de Médecine, 83 (1906), on "La Physiologie dans l'Oeuvre de Tertullien", columns 1317-1328, which, no doubt because of its intended readership, is more about Tertullian than about physiology.

⁴ op. cit., p 36.

The embryo becomes a human being in the womb from the moment when its formation is complete.

Not until the later stage of the foetus' development, with the clearly appearing human form of the foetus, is it to be regarded not only an 'animal' (Greek) 'a human ('homo')'. This point in time, which is not expressly mentioned here, is generally considered in ancient physiology to be the fortieth day after conception.

Moreover, I have studied medical science:

"Concerning the Soul" (Soranus' treatise).

"On the Soul" (Tertullian's treatise).

"General Archives of Medicine" (a periodical).

"Physiology in the Work of Tertullian" (name of periodical article).

Although much ridiculed by modern writers,¹ Aristotle's theory that the human soul was infused forty days after conception in the case of the male, and eighty days in the case of the female,² is not so absurd as it appears. He based the distinction on the observable progress of the body. To the naked eye, an embryo, in its early stages, looks no more like man than does a sea anemone. As the embryo develops to the point where it is observable, it does indeed look like any animal embryo. After about forty days, the phallic tubercle makes a male embryo look distinctively human, but the external genitalia of the female are not discernible to the naked eye until about the eightieth day. If, then, Dölger is right, that Tertullian was following contemporary medical physiology when he wrote de anima 37.2, it will be necessary to consider the relationship of the ζῷον to the homo, and of both to God, as the pregnancy passed the six-week period - and to consider whether this involved a change in the relationship of the embryo to God. Before that question can be answered, it is necessary to consider the other background factor - the Biblical text which Tertullian had in mind when he wrote ex eo igitur fetus in utero homo, a quo forma completa est. Nam et Mosei lex tunc aborsus reum talionibus iudicat...³

(b) Exodus 21:22-23

The context of Tertullian's reference to the only abortion text in the Old Testament is of great importance for its correct understanding. In de anima chapter 37, Tertullian was seeking to establish God's involvement with embryonic man, and God's control over the embryo, from the very moment of conception. Having stated the fact, he illustrated it by reference to Exodus 21:22-23. It

¹ For example, Norman St. John-Stevan 'Abortion and the Law', Dublin Review, 241 (1967-8) p 294 and R.F.R. Gardner, Abortion - the personal dilemma, (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1972) p 98.

² op. cit., Book 7, chapter 3.

³ an 37.2.8-10.

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

animal - man

The embryo, therefore, becomes a human being in the womb from the moment when its formation is completed. For the law of Moses imposed punishment in kind, for the man who was guilty of causing an abortion.

seems likely that Tertullian intended the passage to support, rather than to contradict, his teaching that homo est et qui est futurus was present in the embryo from the moment of conception. Taken in that sense, the Old Testament passage suited his purpose admirably. The Mosaic law had provided that if, in a fight between two men, a pregnant woman was injured and an abortion followed, the death of the foetus (at whatever stage of development) was to be dealt with by a standard monetary penalty, provided the mother was unharmed. There was a different (standard) penalty if the mother herself died. There was no reason for the Hebrew text to distinguish stages in the development of the unborn child because in Jewish law the foetus was not regarded as a human being at any stage until the infant had drawn its first breath.¹

However, as mentioned above, the Septuagint translators introduced a distinction, not found in the Massoretic text, between an unformed foetus in the womb and a formed foetus. They deemed it murder, no less, even accidentally to abort a 'formed' foetus:

If...her child comes forth while it is not yet formed (μη̃ ἐξελκονισμένον) then the penalty shall be a money payment...; but if it was formed (ἐξελκονισμένον), then you shall give a life for a life. ²

So there was a capital penalty for the abortion itself, after a certain stage of development had been reached, even if the woman was unharmed.

Dölger, (who dealt with Tertullian's use of the scriptural passage only after he had already expressed a clear view on Tertullian's position by reference to the medical background) understood Tertullian to mean that forma completa was a distinctive stage, post-dating the creation of the foetus at conception.

¹ V. Aptowitz, "Observations on the Criminal Law of the Jews" (part 5, "The Status of the Embryo in Criminal Law"), Jewish Quarterly Review, 15 (1924-25), 85-118.

² Exodus 21:22-23.

it is a human being and one who is to become man

not yet formed - formed

completed form (of body)

However, four reasons, based on the text of Tertullian itself, are here advanced to suggest that Tertullian intended to say, and did say, the very opposite. The four reasons are:

First, the interpretation which Dölger took out of the passage requires the reader to make more of tunc and cum than Latin usage would seem to warrant.¹ He made the passage say that Moses punished abortion in kind "at that stage when it was a matter of a homo" - rather than a mere foetus prior to forma completa. That is by no means the only reading of the passage. Cum iam hominis est causa could equally well mean "since it was already a matter of a homo" and indeed the passage has been rendered by Quain² as "the embryo was rudimentary "man", exposed to the chances of life and death". "Rudimentary man" is perhaps too bold a translation but it does make the point that forma completa, in the quotation from Exodus, does not necessarily post-date the creation of the foetus.

The second problem, for the interpretation proposed by Dölger, is Tertullian's statement that the embryo in matre vivendo was fato iam inscribitur.³ If Tertullian assumed a development in the faculties of the soul,

¹ Because of the importance of this passage, I discussed it at some length, in September 1975, with Professor Jan Waszink, of Amsterdam (author of the monograph 'De Anima'). He was emphatic that 'tunc' did not imply emphasis or contrast, but was used to balance 'cum'. Further, in his view, 'ex eo' was temporal, not causal, and 'igitur' had no more significance than, 'Now the next point in the argument is'.

² Edwin A. Quain, "On the Soul", in Tertullian, Apologetical Works and Minucius Felix Octavius, (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1950).

³ an 37.2.11-12. "The interpretation of fato is not quite certain; the most probable translation seems to be: "when it is already recorded in the book of fate". By this liber fati we may understand the 'book of the living' frequently mentioned in Judaic literature and in the N.T. . . . It should, however, not be forgotten that in this book not all men are registered, but only the faithful (from Tertullian's works cf. cor. 13,9: illius (sc. Christi) es, conscriptus in libris vitae; ad ux 1,4; scorp. 12 = 173,19); hence it might be better to call to mind the pagan conception of the book of Δίκη or the Fata (cf. Ruhl, De mort. iudicio, 101/5), a Christian version of which is found in spect 27. ... Finally, it is not altogether out of the question (cf. 39.2: Fata Scribunda) that the sense is: "when (continued overleaf)

then - when

man

completed form

since it was already a matter of a man

living in its mother

already recorded in the book of fate.

"On the Soul" (Book)

from that - therefore

the book of fate

For you belong to Him, for you have been inscribed in the Books of Life.

Fates

Writing Goddesses of Fate

as did his medical contemporaries, it is strange that he did not say when the embryo was to be entered into the book of fate. The absence of such a reference points to a parallel, not a distinction, between the phrases

et concipi et confici, perfici¹

and

serendi struendi fingendi²

The **third** difficulty, if Dölger is correct, is Tertullian's designation, elsewhere, of all abortion as murder.³ Tertullian was not always consistent, as noted above; nevertheless if he had intended, even in the passing, to make a distinction between the early and the later stages of fetal life, he would surely not have been so definite, in repulsing the criticism of the heathen, that abortion was murder - they could have retorted that he too permitted abortion, at earlier stages. The inference must be that he did not - because he regarded the embryo as sacred at every stage of development.

Fourth, mention can be made here of an aspect which will be explored in more detail in Chapter IV.3 - Tertullian's insistence that the soul took the lead, at all stages of life, and that the body followed. That principle would be breached if the physical development of the body could materially have influenced the relationship of the whole to God - in other words the body would then be giving the lead to the soul.

Footnote (3) continued from previous page:

it is already recorded by the fatum." Waszink, op. cit. p 427. The meaning of "Fata Scribunda", referred to at the end of that quotation from Waszink's work, is taken up in chapter III.2 below, where it is clear that, at least in the pagan understanding, the name was recorded only after birth. Tertullian, in the passage under present discussion, envisages an entry fato before birth.

¹ an 27.1.3-4.

² an 37.1.1-2.

³ The texts were quoted in the previous section, II.3, and the meaning of the various words for murder in Roman law will be examined in the next section, II.5.

conceived, formed and perfected

sowing/implanting, forming/developing, completing/bringing to final
form

fate

Writing Fates

in the book of fate

The distinction which Dölger postulated between a ζῶον and a homo was accepted by Waszink, although for a very different reason - Waszink believed that it was the text of Exodus which influenced Tertullian and he (Waszink) made no reference to contemporary physiology.¹ With the greatest respect to Waszink's erudition, it seems that he too is introducing a distinction which Tertullian did not intend to make, and that he too has overlooked the very positive support which the quotation gave to Tertullian's basic argument. The context is certainly more consistent with Tertullian's previously expressed view - continuity of development - rather with the distinction which Dölger postulated and which Waszink accepted. Waszink's point is that the Septuagint overtones of Exodus 21 caused Tertullian to distinguish a ζῶον from a homo; but Exodus 21:22-23, unless one reads these Septuagint overtones into it, supports what Tertullian had just said - there were sanctions for abortion right from the moment of conception. If the Septuagint distinction is made to govern the text, it contradicts all that Tertullian had taught elsewhere. It seems much more likely that Tertullian quoted from Exodus in order to support his basic case, not contradict it!

If Tertullian did mean what Dölger and Waszink attribute to him, it is another example of Tertullian dealing with the immediate problem, without regard for the wider context. Nowhere else in his writings - especially in chapters 25 and 27 of de anima - did he suggest that the embryo was an animated being but not a human being. However, Tertullian may have given his own answer to the question which has occupied this section. Shortly after he used the phrase homo a quo forma completa est, and as soon as he began to discuss the close relationship between body and soul after birth, he himself used these words:

¹ Waszink, op. cit., p 425.

animal - man

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

human being from the moment when its formation is complete

Societatem carnis atque animae iamdudum commendauimus a congregatione
seminum ipsorum usque ad figmenti perfectionem; ¹

While figmenti perfectio, like Tertullian's use of Exodus 21 is enigmatic, because it could refer back to a quò forma completa est - in which case Waszink's interpretation of the earlier passage is supported, because Tertullian would then be emphasising the close relationship of body and soul from conception until the embryo became homo - in context it seems more likely that figmenti perfectio means birth, because the sentence is the link or transition from a discourse on pregnancy (all ten months of it) to the growth of the soul, with the body, after birth. There is certainly no indication in the passage that when Tertullian wrote Dicam aliquid et de temporibus animae nascentis, ut ordinem decurram, ² he intended to distinguish not only different stages of pregnancy but also different relationships to God.

¹ an 37.5.27-29.

² an 37.3.13-14.

We have already discussed the close union of soul and body from the moment of the joining of their seeds to the complete formation of the foetus.

the complete formation of the foetus

from the moment when its formation is complete

human being

I ought to say something about the period (different stages) of the soul's birth, that I may omit nothing incidental in the whole process of birth.

II.5 ROMAN LAW FOR THIS AREA

Roman law had no concern with the embryo as such, as was noted in Chapter 1.9 - partus nondum editus homo non recte fuisse dicitur.¹ Induced abortion was common² and the only intervention of Roman law was if the life of the adult recipient of abortifacients was endangered³ or if the rights of the expectant father were violated.⁴ It is true that Augustus had introduced legislation on the subject of abortion,⁵ but that was not for any concern

¹ Papinian, cited in the Digest, 35.2.9.1. Ulpian taught much the same - partus enim antequam edatur, mulieris portio est vel viscerum - Digest 25.4.1.1; the unborn child was not yet in rebus humanis - Digest 37.9.7 and 28.6.10.1.

² Classical Roman writers who refer to the frequency of abortion include Seneca, Ad Helviam matrem consolatione 16; Juvenal, Satura 2.29-33; 3.366-368; 6.592-597; Ovid, Amorum 1.2.13; 2.13.1 and 2; 2.14.7,37,40, and 43; Plautus, Truculentus 1.2.99; Tacitus, Annales 14.63 and Historiae 5.5; Suetonius, Domitianus 22; Pliny, Epistularum 4.11; Aulus Gellius, Noctes Atticae 12.1.

³ Digest 48.19.38.5.

⁴ Abortion by a married woman entitled her husband to divorce her, but only because of the breach of her duty to bear him children, not because of any concern for the unborn child. Furthermore, when the Emperors Septimius Severus and Antonius Caracalla decreed temporary exile for any woman who procured abortion, it was to mark disapproval that any woman should be able to deprive her husband of children with impunity - Digest 47.11.4.

⁵ The Lex Julia de maritandis ordinibus (A.D.4) and its amending Act the Lex Julia et Papia Poppaea (A.D.9) were not, as is sometimes stated, the first Roman legislation on the subject of abortion but they were the only legislation in force in Tertullian's day. He referred to it as three occasions - I ux 5.2.10, ex 12.5.31-32 and mon 16.4.22-24. To encourage childbearing, Augustus decreed under the earlier of the two Lex Julia that any man who remained unmarried between the ages of twenty and sixty, and any woman who continued unmarried until fifty, were not entitled to take under a will, whether as a legatee or as heir, of a person to whom they were not related within the sixth degree, unless they married within a certain time after becoming aware of their rights. Furthermore, the Lex Papia Poppaea imposed a similar disability on childless married couples, in that a married man over twenty five or a married woman over twenty could inherit only one-half of what was bequeathed to them by a person outside the sixth degree of relationship, if they had no legitimate children living at the time when the right accrued to them under the testament. A man was exempted from the operation of the Lex Papia Poppaea if he had one living legitimate child; a free-born woman was exempted if she had three, and a freed woman if she had four lawful children. Finally, also under the Lex Papia Poppaea, a husband and wife whose marriage was childless (continued on next page)

A foetus not yet born is not considered to have existed properly.

1. For before a foetus is born, it is part of the mother or her womb. the unborn child was not yet in the human condition.

2. Seneca: To Helvia, his mother, on consolation

Juvenal: Satires

Ovid: Amores or Love poems

Plautus: Truculentus (this is the name of a character in a play
so does not translate)

Tacitus: Annals and Histories

Suetonius: Domitian (a Roman Emperor)

Pliny: Letters

Aulus Gellius: Attic Nights

5. The Julian law concerning marriage arrangements

The Julian and Papian Poppean law

- * [In fact these laws are never referred to in their English form, but are always known in the Latin form. They were laws passed in the reign of Augustus to promote marriage and the family. Papius and Poppeius were the two consuls responsible for the drafting of the second law. Julian in both cases refers to the fact that the laws were promoted by Augustus, Julius being his family name⁷.

about the embryo as such - it was an attempt to halt the decline in the birth rate of the governing classes, who practiced abortion extensively to avoid labour pains and to preserve feminine beauty, to say nothing of concealing the consequences of adultery.¹ When, therefore, Tertullian designated the destruction of the embryo in the womb as 'murder' he was very far from using existing Roman law to express the relationship of embryonic life to God - he was consciously enlarging the meaning of the legal words for murder, to include what he considered to be morally wrong. Beck has surely missed the point in stating that Tertullian:

offenbar an Tendenzen des zeitgenössischen römischen Strafrechts an, das einerseits die von der Ehefrau ohne Einwilligung des Mannes vorgenommene Abtreibung unter dem Gesichtspunkt der enttäuschten spes parentis, andererseits gewisse von Dritten vorgenommene Abtreibungshandlung in Anlehnung an die lex Cornelia de sicariis et veneficis bestrafte.²

That was not the reason at all - Tertullian believed that the embryo in the womb was already 'man', and from that he built his doctrine, (in contrast with the Roman concept of the law), that the killing of the embryo was to be regarded as murder.

The three words which he used were parricidium, latrocinium and a new

Footnote (5) continued from previous page:

could only take under each other's wills one-tenth of what was bequeathed to them. Tertullian naturally did not approve - he pointed out (on 16.4.22-24) the difficulty which this legislation imposed on Christians who wished to practice the celibacy which (in that work) he so much extolled. However, the point for this study is that, at its best, Roman legislation merely encouraged the birth of children and there was no legislation of any sort in force to discourage or forbid abortion per se. In fact, little benefit resulted from these laws, which operated very unequally and sometimes oppressively, and they were frequently defeated by the emperors themselves, who used to give the jus trium liberorum to persons who had no children, and even to some who were not married.

¹ Sciunt etiam obstetrices, quot adulteri conceptus trudicentur -pud 5.11.45-46.

² Alexander Beck, Römisches Recht bei Tertullian und Cyprian, (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1930) p 121.

obviously connected himself with trends of contemporary Roman punitive law which, on the one hand, punished the abortion undertaken by the spouse without the agreement of her husband from the point of view of the disappointed "hope of parenthood" and on the other hand, punished certain actions of abortion undertaken by a third party in connection with "lex Cornelia de sicariis et veneficis".

The Cornelian law concerning murderers and poisoners.

murder (two different words for 'murder').

in itself

law (benefit) of having three children

Midwives, also, know how many adulterous conceptions are slaughtered.

"Roman law in Tertullian and Cyprian" (Book)

word which he himself introduced, infanticidium.¹ The latter had no significance in Roman law, and is not examined here. Parricidium was, in Roman law, any 'unnatural' murder, especially the killing of a close relation, such as a parent or brother, and particularly unpleasant penalties were imposed for it. It did not, however, apply in Roman law to the destruction by a parent of a foetus or new born infant.² Tertullian, nevertheless, regarding all life as inviolate, used the word "parricidium" for not only the murder of a grown near-relative (which Roman law condemned) but also for the interruption of the life-giving process, (with which Roman law had no concern, except to increase the population, as mentioned above). Tertullian used parricidium (or its cognates parricidio and parricidalis) nine times in all,³ and the other references give all the more point to his use of parricidium in the first letter ad uxorem, for those who practiced abortion - parricidiis expugnantur. For expugnantur, Kellner suggested expunguntur, which if correct, graphically pictures abortion procured by the popular method of aeneum spiculum.

Latrocinium, the other legal word used by Tertullian for the destruction of foetal life, was derived from λατρίης, a 'hired servant' or a 'mercenary soldier'. In addition to its specific meaning of 'robbery', it came to mean villainy or criminality, often with the implication of secrecy. The word was used by Tertullian in de anima 25.5.49, where he described in detail the instruments used

¹ Tertullian was the first writer to use the words infanticidium (used six times) and infanticida (twice)

² See W.W. Buckland, A Textbook of Roman Law from Augustus to Justinian, (2nd ed.; Cambridge: University Press, 1932) p 103, and Theodore Mommsen, Römisches Strafrecht, (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1889) p 613. It was not until A.D. 318, under Constantine, that Roman law made infanticide the crime of parricidium - Codex Theodosianus 9.17.1. The meaning of the word parricidium in Roman Law is discussed by H.F. Jolowicz, Historical Introduction to the Study of Roman Law, (2nd ed.; Cambridge: University Press, 1954) p 328.

³ apol 9.4.15; apol 9.6.24; apol 35.11.51; II nat 7.7.28; II nat 12.13.20; II nat 14.9.5; pud. 14.27.118; scorp 7.2.3; I ux 5.2.10-11.

infanticide

murder

"To His Wife" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

they rid themselves (of the "burden") by resorting to murder of their own flesh and blood

they prick out

a sharp-pointed bronze instrument

"Roman Criminal Law" (Book)

in the destruction of the child in its mother's womb, which he called caecum latrocinium.

On four of the other five occasions, when Tertullian used the word,¹ it bore its ordinary meaning of robbery or banditry, except on one occasion, when it referred directly to the murder of an adult. The use of such a word for abortion, taken with Tertullian's other uses of the same word, gives point (as with parricidium) to the strength of his feelings about the status he gave to the embryo before God, even if it did not come to live birth. Roman law had no such concern with the embryo; it had no legal existence and no rights while in the mother's womb. When it was actually born, its legal life was dated back to the earliest period of its physical existence, but its capacity for rights originated only with birth. Until then, an unborn child was considered as no more than a part of its mother, mulieris portio,² and not as a homo.³

¹ II cult 2.4.30; res 16.4.15; res 16.7.26; pud 4.3.11; spec 20.3.10.

² Digest 25.4.1.1.

³ Digest 35.2.9.1.

black murder

murder

part of its mother

human being

II.6 CONCLUSIONS FROM CHAPTER TWO

While it would be unfair to press the text of Tertullian too closely for a definite answer on the relationship of the developing embryo to God, certain fundamental principles emerge:-

(1) The formation of the embryo in the womb was watched over by a power subservient to God's will and the embryo developed, under the supervision of God, from the moment of conception to the moment of birth. Where Tertullian's pagan contemporaries assumed the existence of a special goddess, Alemona, whose function was to nourish the embryo, and of two other goddesses, Nona and Decima, to watch over "the critical months", Tertullian insisted that Christians knew of no supervision other than the angels of God and they were actively involved on His behalf:-

Omnem autem hominis in utero serendi struendi fingendi paraturam aliqua utique potestas diuinae uoluntatis ministra modulatur, quamcumque illam rationem agitare sortita. Haec aestimando etiam superstitio Romana deam finxit Alemonam alendi in utero fetus et Nonam et Decimam a sollicitioribus mensibus. ¹

(2) Although Tertullian distinguished stages of development - serendi, struendi, fingendi are mentioned in the passage just quoted and there are other references - there is no evidence that he distinguished stages in the relationship of the embryo to God. On the contrary, Tertullian's traducianism and his implacable opposition to delayed hominisation made him insist that all the potential of the soul was present in the foetus from the moment of conception; it was the soul which governed the basic relationship of the embryo to God, not the physical development of the embryonic body.

Foetus perfectus may not have been present until the later stages of pregnancy, but the presence or absence of foetus humanus did not depend on

¹ an 37.1.1-6.

The whole process of implanting, developing and completing the human embryo in the womb is undoubtedly regulated by some power, some servant of God's will, whatever may be the method which it is appointed to employ. All these stages were noticed by the Romans, who in their superstition designated the goddess, Alemona, to nourish the fetus in the womb: they appointed Nona and Decima to watch over the critical months.

sowing/implanting, forming/developing, completing/bringing to final form

A completed embryo

hominisation (i.e. a human fetus)

that. The controlling principle was foetus animatus = foetus humanus, or, as Tertullian preferred to call it, homo totus. Si fingit deus in utero, et afflat ex primordii forma: et finxit deus hominem et flauit in eum flatum uitae. Nec nosset autum hominem deus in utero nisi totum.¹ It would have defeated the argument of de anima 26.5 if homo totus had not applied throughout the pregnancy. Obviously, homo totus was not the same as foetus perfectus, and Tertullian said as much in the words which followed. Having emphasised that God could enter into relationship with embryonic life simply because homo totus was already^d present, he went on, in answer to his own question as to how this could be, to explain that the formation and perfection of the embryo were still to come - body and soul were simul ambas et concipi et confici, perfici.²

(3) In his metaphors of growth, examined in Chapter I, Tertullian made no mention of any further intervention by God, altering God's relationship to the growing seed, until He brought the seed to fruition.

(4) Tertullian's condemnation of induced abortion followed from his belief that the embryo was already a person in the sight of God and should be allowed to live. If the embryo came to full term, and was born alive, a new set of circumstances would govern its relationship to God - examined in Chapter III below. In the meantime, what 'now is' had yet to 'come into being', but paradoxically Tertullian could say that it 'already was'. There is no indication that at any time 'dum sanguis delibatur' the embryo could be treated as less than homo. It would come to full term in due course, but the important point was not to deny it a relationship to God from the beginning, because homo est et qui est futurus was already in the womb. It was in consequence of the divine presence and supervision that the embryo was becoming man, and there was no defined

¹ an 26.5.32-35.

² an 27.1.3-4.

a fetus with a soul = a human fetus

a whole human being

If God forms us in the womb, He also breathes on us as He did in the beginning: 'And God formed man and breathed into him the breath of life'. Nor could God have known man in the womb unless he were a whole man.

"On the soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

a perfected foetus.

Both conceived, formed and perfected at the same time.

while blood was being drawn (from the mother)

a human being

it is a human being and one who is to be a man

point, after conception, where the relationship could be said materially to alter.

(5) Tertullian's writings do not record what pastoral comfort, if any, was given by him, or by the Church at Carthage, to mothers of miscarried or stillborn infants. However, if they had asked him about the fate of their children, their hope of resurrection, their place (if any) in eternal life, it seems likely (for the reasons^{to be} examined in chapter IV.5) that Tertullian would have assured them the embryo was not under the judgment of God, ~~but~~ that it was assured of an eternally good destiny, even if it had not come to full term and live birth. It was iam fato inscribatur.

already inscribed in the book of fate

CHAPTER THREE - THE RELATIONSHIP OF INFANTS TO GOD

III.1 INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER THREE

Tertullian believed that in addition to the inheritance by every child of the sinful nature of Adam by traducianism (examined in Chapter I.7), every child, or at least every pagan child, was subject to satanic attack at birth. In consequence, the endowments which the soul had received from nature were further corrupted and obscured. The significance of this, for the relationship of the infant to God, is examined in the second section of this chapter; the accountability of the infant to God for its corrupted nature is examined in Chapter IV. 5.

Tertullian's references to infant mortality are noted in section three. He had more than ample opportunity to comment on any difference in the relationship of the infants to God, different that is from the relationship of embryos on the one hand or of children on the other, because at least 25% of the children born at Carthage in Tertullian's day died in infancy and a further 25% did not reach puberty. Infants of Christian parentage had certain advantages over pagan infants, not necessarily physical but in their relationship to God; these are examined in section four; they were not exposed to the superstitious practices which surrounded pagan birth, (which practically invited the devil to enter the new-born soul), and from their early years they were made aware of their parents' faith. How their relationship to God differed from infants born into pagan homes, and the implication of every soul being immunda until baptism, is also examined in section four.

Section five takes up the important question of the extent to which baptism in infancy could affect the relationship of the child to God. While Tertullian strongly urged the postponement of baptism until later life, for the reasons examined in that section, his high view of the significance of baptism must mean that original sin was washed away, even in the case of an infant. In section six, several words from Roman Law are found to be relevant to this chapter, and then conclusions are drawn in section seven on the relationship of infants to God.

impure

III.2 THE DEVIL'S ATTACK ON INFANT SOULS

The devil¹ cast an envious eye on every newly-born soul, and the superstitious practices which surrounded a pagan birth - Tertullian mentioned the ribbons taken from idols, the prayers to Lucina and Diana, the table set for Juno, the Fata Scribunda, the lock of hair dedicated to sin, and the assigning of a genius² - practically invited the devil to enter the infant soul at birth.

Cui enim hominum non adhaerebit spiritus nequam ab ipsa etiam ianua natiuitatis animas aucupabundus, uel qua inuitatus tota illa puerperii superstitione? 3

In consequence, all the natural faculties of the soul, were (according to Tertullian) further⁴ obscured and corrupted by the devil:

Quae omnia natiuitus animae conlata idem, qui in primordio inuidit, nunc quoque obumbrat atque deprauat, quominus aut ultro prospiciantur aut qua oportet administrentur. 5

There does not appear to be any significance for this study in Tertullian's crediting the soul with these endowments at 'birth'. Apart from his clear teaching that the soul was present from the initial conception, there is no suggestion anywhere in his works that a new development took place in either

¹ The word "devil" is here used to designate not only satan as an individual (princeps huius mali generis - apol 22.2.7) but also to designate (as Tertullian himself did) the sum total of all lesser demons and fallen angels. No attempt is made in this section to distinguish demons from fallen angels, although some commentators have suggested that Tertullian believed the demons inhabited the earth whereas the devil's angels stayed in the air -the relevant passage is apol 22.6.25-8.39. The devil's angels were the fallen angels who, according to Genesis 6.1, fell in love with mortal women and from that union were born the demons. The whole matter is discussed and summed up by Jan H. Waszink, "Pompa Diaboli", Vigiliae Christianae, 1 (1947), 13-41, especially at pp 18-21.

² an 39.2.6-3.18.

³ an 39.1.4-6.

⁴ Tertullian used the same verbs "obumbrat" and "deprauat" to describe the effect of original sin on the soul, as set out in chapter I.7 above.

⁵ an 39.1.1-4.

The Writing Goddesses of Fate

For the devil lies in wait to trap every human soul from the moment of its birth, to which he is invited to assist by all the superstitious practices which surround childbirth.

All the endowments which the soul received at birth are obscured and corrupted by the devil, who from the very beginning cast an envious eye on them, so that they are not properly cared for nor perform their functions as they ought.

the prince/leader of this wicked race

"The Pomp of the devil" (periodical article)

are darkened/obscured - are disfigured/corrupted/depraved

soul or body, at the moment of birth, which altered the relationship to God, except that the devil stepped in further to corrupt the infant soul. Because of that, Tertullian could say nulla ferme nativitas munda est, utique ethnicorum.¹

That this impurity was additional to the vitium originis which already marred the infant soul was emphasised by Tertullian and was important to him. He made a clear distinction between original sin and this new source of sin caused by the invasion of an evil spirit; he discussed the former at length in de anima chapter 40 and 41 and distinguished it from the latter, which he had just discussed in chapter 39.

Malum igitur animae, praeter quod ex obuentu spiritus nequam superstruitur, ex originis uitio antecedit, naturale quodammodo. 2

In other words, the invasion by the devil, at the moment of birth, produced in the soul an additional kind of evil, different from the vitium originis of the soul and with its own consequences for the child. The evil which resulted from original sin was a second nature to the soul - (it too was attributed by Tertullian to the 'author of all corruption'³) - and it lived in every soul until baptism washed it away. Tertullian did not, however, think of original sin as an evil spirit actually dwelling in man;⁴ it was only at birth, when the devil stepped in to be ready to influence the child to commit actual and specific evil deeds as the child grew older, that the devil took up residence in the soul.

¹ an 39.3.18-19.

² an 41.1.1-3.

³ an 41.1.3-5.

⁴ The de anima 39.4 passage does not describe 'Satan dwelling in unbaptised children' as Schwane thought it did; Joseph Schwane, Dogmengeschichte der vornicanischen Zeit, (2nd ed.; Freiburg (Schweiz): Theologische Bibliothek, 1892) I, 342. Dölger corrected him, pointing out that the devil was not indwelling, but was only now endeavouring to catch the infant souls. (Franz Joseph Dölger, Der Exorzismus im altchristlichen Taufritual, Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Altertums, Band III, Heft 1/2 (Paderborn: 1909) p 342).

There is hardly a birth that is free from impurity, at least among the pagans.

fault of origin

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

Beside the evil that mars the soul as a result of the machinations of the devil, still another evil has previously affected it, and this is in a certain sense natural to it, since it flows from its origin.

"The History of Dogma of the ante-Nicene time."

"Exorcism in ancient Christian baptismal-rite", Studies in the History and Culture of Antiquity.

82
82

This satanic attack on the soul at birth seems to have had little, if any, immediate significance for Tertullian, respecting the relationship of infant life to God. Having devoted de anima chapter 39 to the 'invasion' of the soul at every pagan birth, he declared, at the opening of the following chapter, that every soul was considered to be born in Adam until it had been re-born in Christ, and every soul was immunda until it had been thus regenerated; in other words, the relationship to God of the infant soul depended on its inherited characteristics, not on the satanic invasion at birth. Although the sinfulness caused by evil spirits led Tertullian to declare (as mentioned already) that nulla ferme natiuitas munda est, utique ethnicorum,¹ it was in fact already immunda, by virtue of original sin. The words at the end of chapter 39 are closely linked in Tertullian's thought to the words at the beginning of chapter 40, as is evident from his discussion on purification from sin through baptism - but the status of the soul before God, at least as Tertullian expressed it here, was determined by the transmission of its original nature, not by the impurity caused by the devil, about which he had been speaking. The emphasis may not have been without its own significance to him, because he was concerned to show Christian parents, who had shunned the pagan customs which attracted the evil spirits, that even for them every soul was immunda until baptism; this he could do only by tracing the immunda back to original sin, and not just to the devil's attack on pagan souls at birth.

Tertullian's list of the actual ceremonies at and following birth in a pagan household is not (with one exception) explored here, because it does not assist in understanding the infant's relationship to God. Brief mention should, however, be made of the second last ceremony on the list, namely that after a table had been set for a week in honour of Juno, dum ultima die Fata Scribunda

¹ an 39.3.18-19.

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises).

impure

hardly a birth is free from impurity, at least among the pagans.

On the final day, the 'Writing Fates' are invoked.

advocantur;¹ this merits attention, because Tertullian had already stated² that the embryo was fato iam inscribitur and the significance of the 'Fates' should be established.

Tertullian's reference to invoking the Fata Scribunda a week after childbirth is the only mention of the 'Writing Fates' in all extant Latin literature, secular or religious. Weisweiler took the view that Tertullian was referring simply to the "fate" of the newly-born child and that capital letters were inappropriate for the words in the text.³ However, as Breemer and Waszink remarked, "the circumstance that these Fata form part of an enumeration of female divinities connected in some way with human birth, and, moreover, the verb advocantur, make it perfectly certain, that they too were regarded by Tertullian as divine beings."⁴ In fact, Tertullian referred to some kind of petition on the eighth day after birth to these "Writing Goddesses of Fate" (taking "Scribunda" as meaning "scribentia"). Since it was on the eighth day (the "dies lustricus") that Roman children received their praenomen, it seems a reasonable inference that the Fata Scribunda were not invoked until the ultimus dies (i.e. the dies lustricus)⁵ because children lacked something at birth which they had to have before the Fata Scribunda could be addressed - viz. a praenomen. This is not entirely conjecture, because the Romans regarded the giving of the praenomen as entitling the child to an independent existence. The choice of the eighth day was connected with the fact that the umbilical cord

¹ an 39.2.11.

² an 37.2.11-12.

³ J. Weisweiler, "Zur Erklärung der Arvalacten," Neue Jahrbücher für Philologie und Paedagogik, 139 (1889), 39.

⁴ S. Breemer and J.H. Waszink, "Fata Scribunda," Mnemosyne, 3rd series, 13 (1947), 254.

⁵ Breemer and Waszink demonstrate their equivalence at op. cit., p 258-259.

already inscribed in the Book of Fate

Writing Fates

invoked

the day of purification (when a sacrifice was made and the child received its name).

pre-name

final day

"In explanation of the Arval Brethren"

periodical article in "New Annals for 'Philology and The History of Literature' and the 'Science of Education'"

"The Writing Fates" (periodical article)

usually falls off about the seventh day; after that, the child could be regarded as no longer forming a part of the mother, but as possessing an independent existence, which justified its receiving a name of its own and therefore a fate of its own. At that ceremony, the Fata Scribunda were called on to "take notes", just like a scriba or a notarius. Since Tertullian regarded all the gods of Roman superstition as manifestations of the devil's deception, here was yet another invitation by the pagans to the devil to take up his residence in the life of the newly-born child.

The attacks of the devil assumed even greater significance for Tertullian as life went on - diabolo tamen captante naturam, quam et ipse iam infecit delicti semine inlato¹ - but this will be examined in chapter IV.2. In the meantime, the relative importance of the two satanic influences on infant life, that is original sin and the invasion of the soul by the devil at birth, can be examined by reference to those who died under the disability of the first before they were old enough to respond to the influence of the second.

¹ V Marc 17.10.21-22.

"Writing Fates"

an official writer or a shorthand writer

While yet the devil still has designs upon nature, which he has already corrupted by injecting the seed of sin.

III.3 INFANT MORTALITY

Infant mortality, even among the free Roman population in the healthier parts of Africa, was as high as 200 to 250 per 1000 live births;¹ in the pestilential city of Carthage and with infant mortality among the slave population added, the percentage must have been horrifyingly worse. Tertullian's writings record nothing about individual children who died in infancy, but he used the concept of infant mortality on one occasion to illustrate his teaching on the abode of the soul between death and resurrection - ecce obiit uerbi gratia infans sub uberum fontibus.² The soul of such an infant, although already possessing all its faculties, would not (Tertullian insisted) develop any further - in particular it would not develop any further relationship with God. He had to insist on that to avoid the absurdity, at the resurrection, of joining a soul with eighty years of experience to the body of an infant which had died at one month. Since the soul was going to enter the very same body as it had left at death - and Tertullian meant that, quite literally: corpora eadem recepturas in resurrectione animas in quibus discesserunt³ - the soul must remain at the same age, and have the same experience, as the body from which it had temporarily departed.

His only other direct reference to the relationship of infant life to God came later in the same chapter, where he wrote about the presence, in the "good" part of Hades, of animas immaturas . . . puras et innocuas.⁴ It is

¹ These statistics were excerpted from an article by A.R. Burn, "Hic Breve Vivitur: A Study in the Expectation of Life in the Roman Empire", Past and Present, (November 1953), 14.

² an 56.5.33. A brief outline of Tertullian's understanding of life after death is set out in chapter VI.4 below.

³ an 56.5.38-39. When this view was questioned, he stated "habes scriptum: Et mandabo piscibus maris et eructabunt ossa, quae sunt comesta, et faciam conpaginem ad conpaginem et os ad os" - res 32.1.2-4.

⁴ an 56.8.64-65. The background to this passage was set out briefly at chapter I.8 above.

Let us suppose the case of an infant who dies while still being nursed at his mother's breast ...

we will at the resurrection be restored to the bodies in which we died

the souls of infants ... those who were pure and innocent

"Life here was short" (periodical article)

You have the Scripture: "I will command my fishes, and they will belch up the bones that have been eaten and I will put joint to joint and bone to bone."

significant for this study that de anima chapter 56, which was not really concerned with infants, contains the only two references in all of Tertullian's works to the fate of the infant soul. With the incidence of infant mortality by natural causes, by calamity and by infanticide,¹ the relationship of infants to God must have been widely discussed - whether they should have been baptised, where their souls had gone, and similar questions. Yet it was only in de anima 56, which was written to deal with misunderstandings about the interim fate of the adult soul, that Tertullian even mentioned the relationship to God of a child which had died in infancy.

Although an argument from silence is normally precarious, it seems justified here. The relationship of infants to God cannot have been of any real significance for Tertullian, and this will become even more evident when the question of infant baptism is considered in section III.5 below. It does however seem reasonable, even at this stage, to infer that Tertullian made no comment, despite the many opportunities for doing so, because he had nothing distinctive to say about the relationship of infants to God - nothing, that is, which he had not already said about the relationship of fetal life to God (examined in Chapter II) or the relationship of older children to God (to be examined in Chapter IV).

¹ Infanticide was still practiced at Carthage, Tertullian claimed, by exposure, drowning and other unpleasant methods - I nat. 15.3.21-4.28. Tertullian there commented on the absence of any effective laws against infanticide, and his reference to Roman Law is examined in Section III.4 below. He referred to infanticide also in the parallel passage of apol 9.3.8-11 and 7.28-31.

"On the Soul (one of Tertullian's treatises).

87

intermediate

III.4 WHETHER CHRISTIAN PARENTAGE AFFECTED THE RELATIONSHIP

Tertullian went straight from his general statement - Adeo nulla ferme natiuitas munda est, utique ethnicorum¹ - to contrast birth of pagan parentage with birth where one or other or both of the parents were Christians:

Hinc enim et apostolus ex sanctifi cato alterutro sexu sanctos procreari ait, tam ex seminis praerogatiua quam ex institutionis disciplina. Ceterum, inquit, immundi nascerentur, quasi designatos tamen sanctitatis ac per hoc etiam salutis intellegi uolens fidelium filios, ut huius spei pignore matrimonii, quae retinenda censuerat, patrocinaretur. Alioquin meminerat dominicae definitionis: nisi quis nascetur ex aqua et spiritu, non inibit in regnum dei, id est, non erit sanctus. 2

Then, as if he felt that even in that he might have conceded too much, he went on with the all-embracing statement that

omnis anima eo usque in Adam censetur, donec in Christo recenseatur, tamdiu immunda, quamdiu recenseatur. 3

From that passage, two complementary principles seem to emerge -

- (a) there were two definite advantages of being born with Christian parentage - whether only one or both were Christian. First, because of Christian origin (seminis praerogatiua) such children were not to be considered altogether impure, because they were destined to be pure (designati sanctitatis); second, such children would, as they grew older, receive Christian instruction (ex institutionis disciplina) and so because of the sanctifying influence of Christian parentage in the home, they would learn naturally to grow into the way of sanctification. 4

¹ an 39.3.18-19, examined at II.2 above.

² an 39.4.19-28.

³ an 40.1.1-3, examined at I.7 and III.2 above and mentioned at I.8 above.

⁴ Tertullian placed considerable importance on this. When he laid down the rule in de idolatria that Christians should not in any circumstances be teachers, he did not forbid them to be pupils. Apart from the obvious reasons for that - dum docet, commendat, dum tradit, affirmat, dum commemorat, testimonium dicit (idol 10.5.20-22) - Tertullian appears to have assumed sufficiently sound Christian instruction in the home to safeguard the pupil from the dangers of pagan schooling.

There is hardly a birth that is free from impurity, at least among the pagans.

This is the reason why the apostle (Paul) said that, when either of the parents was sanctified the children were born holy, as much from the privilege of Christian birth as from the discipline of the institution (i.e. Christian education and baptism). For, he says: 'Otherwise they would have been born unclean', as if he meant us to understand that the children of believers were in some sense destined for holiness and thereby for salvation; in the pledge of this hope he supported marriage, which he wished to continued. In general, of course, he was mindful of the words of Christ: 'Unless a man be born of water and the Spirit, he will not enter into the Kingdom of God; in other words, he cannot be holy.

Every soul is considered as having been born in Adam until it has been reborn in Christ. Moreover, it is unclean until it has been thus regenerated.

the privilege of Christian birth

destined for holiness

the discipline of the institution (i.e. Christian education and baptism).

"On Idolatry" (one of Tertullian's treatises).

In teaching them (idols), he commends them; in handing them on, he confirms them; in mentioning them, he bears testimony to them.

(b) on the other hand, all children, Christian parentage or not, were impure (immunda) until they had been baptised.

What these principles meant, in practical terms, for the relationship of infant life to God, is less easy to determine. If infants were not exposed to the superstitious practices which surrounded and followed pagan birth, the devil did not receive the open invitation to enter and so to obscure the infant soul. While pagans were invoking Farinus and Locutius to preside over the infant's speech, and Cunina to protect the child's slumber, and while Potina and Edula were being invited to supervise the child's eating and drinking, Statina to teach it to stand, and Adeona and Abeona to lead its footsteps to and fro,¹ the child in a Christian home was being taught Christian character, Christian language, and Christian practices, it would therefore be more natural for the infant, as it grew into childhood, to adopt a similar character, similar language and eventually to accept Christian practices. But such infants were still immunda in the sight of God, and, as examined in section III.2, this, rather than the activity of the devil, went to the root of their standing before God. What then was the difference, in their relationship to God, of children of Christian parentage?

Paul's aim in I Corinthians 7.14 (the passage quoted by Tertullian) was to encourage the Christian partner in a mixed marriage to remain in family with the other, partly for the spiritual good of the children of the marriage and partly because Paul wished marriage itself to endure. By saying what he did about sanctification, Paul did not intend, protested Tertullian, in any way to undermine the need for baptism for forgiveness of sin and Tertullian wished that Paul might have said so a little more clearly! Then on the other occasion when he took up Paul's use of the Corinthian passage, Tertullian was again defending Paul against misinterpretation - this time against the view that Paul had encouraged

¹ II nat 11.7.8-9.15.

impure/unclean

Christians to marry pagans.¹ What Paul intended to say, argued Tertullian, was that one spouse, converted to Christianity from paganism, should not desert the other. By remaining in family, sanctificatur enim infidelis uir a fideli uxore et infideli uxor a fideli marito; ceterum immundi essent filii uestri?²

Patently and unarguably, Tertullian did not mean that the marriage relationship of a pagan to a Christian could make the former into a Christian - yet, he said, the pagan sanctificatur. It seems a reasonable inference that when, in the passage in de anima, Tertullian said children were sanctos.. ex sanctificato alteruto sexu - privileged on account of their origin and their Christian instruction - the word was used in the same sense. In other words, without that privilege, children born of Christian parents or mixed marriages would be on a level with pagans. They were not - they were destined to be saved, but (like the spouse of a Christian) they would attain this salvation only by their own baptism in due course.

What then, was the relationship to God of an infant of a Christian parent? On the one hand, there was a statable difference from an infant born into a pagan home; on the authority of 1 Corinthians 7:14, Tertullian argued that such children were not altogether impure - they were destined for salvation. On the other hand, Tertullian was as much concerned to stress their need of baptism, in due course, as he was to define the nature of their privilege from Christian parentage. He expressly distinguished this inherited sanctification from that which would be accomplished at a later period through baptism, namely regeneration. In chapters 39 and 40 of de anima, he affirmed the 'Adamic', unclean, sinful condition of every soul that was not 'enrolled in Christ'. He left his readers in no doubt that all mankind had inherited sin, or at least a

¹ Hanc monitionem fors de fidelibus infidelibus iunctis simpliciter intellegendo putent etiam infidelibus nubere licere - II ux 2.2.12-14.

² II ux 2.1.10-12.

"for the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the believing husband, otherwise your children should be unclean."

is sanctified

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

holy ... when either of the parents was sanctified

This directive, which is meant for those of the faith, who are actually married to pagans, they understand, possibly, in an unrestricted sense, as also conveying permission to contract marriage with pagans.

sinful nature; he was at pains to stress that Christian parentage did not remove that disability. The privileges attaching to Christian parentage were put firmly back into the context of Tertullian's underlying and fundamental proposition:

Ita omnis anima eo usque in Adam censetur, donec in Christo recenseatur, tamdiu immunda, quamdiu recenseatur, peccatrix autem, quia immunda, recipiens ignominiam et carnis ex societate. ¹

The evil which afflicted the soul (malum animae) was no mere superstructure due to the invasion of the evil spirit in pagan children only, but was there by fault of origin (ex originis vitio antecedit). The basic corruption of every nature was indeed a second nature, and nothing except baptism would tear away the curtain of primal corruption. What then would be the relationship of the child to God if the parents presented the child for baptism in its infancy? That important question is examined next.

¹ an 40.1.1-4.

Every soul is considered as having been born in Adam until it has been reborn in Christ. Moreover it is unclean until it has been thus regenerated. It is sinful, too, because it is unclean, and its shame is shared by the body because of their union.

the evil which mars the soul

since it flows from its fault of origin

III.5 WHETHER BAPTISM IN INFANCY AFFECTED THE RELATIONSHIP

A comparatively recent (and much-acclaimed) survey of the literature dealing with the fate of unbaptised infants assumed that Tertullian believed those who died unbaptised, even in infancy, could not be saved.¹ The author cites no evidence for this assumption, and indeed none exists, yet another recent article attributed to Tertullian anachronistically a place in limbo for such children.²

Although Tertullian's writings contain the first explicit reference to infant baptism in the Fathers, there are persistent suggestions in scholarly works that in advising against the baptism of infants, Tertullian was expressing a personal or minority view.³ While this study is primarily concerned with the views of Tertullian, and not with the views of commentators of him, it must be

¹ Peter Gumpel, "Unbaptised Infants: May they be saved?", The Downside Review, (Autumn 1954), 342-458 (the entire volume), supplemented by 'Unbaptised Infants - A Further Report', ibid, (Autumn 1955), 317-346.

²
(Cyril J. Means, op. cit., p 20.

³ "It is plain that Tertullian is using his own private scruples against what was then a prevalent practice, and that this ch. cannot be quoted as early testimony against the use." Lupton, op. cit., pp 49-50.

"He could hardly have taken this attitude (apparently in opposition to what was already common enough church practice) unless he had held lightly to the doctrine of original sin." Ernest Evans, Tertullian's Homily on Baptism, (London: S.P.C.K., 1964) p 101.

"In his objection to the baptism of infants Tertullian is evidently protesting against a custom which (with or without apostolic authority) was already taken for granted", ibid, p 104.

'The only opponent of infant baptism among the Fathers is the eccentric and schismatic Tertullian of North Africa'. Henry Hart Milman, The history of Christianity from the birth of Christ to the abolition of paganism in the Roman empire, (Revised edition; London: J. Murray, 1867) I, 261.

"It is well worth noting that Tertullian is the first opponent of Infant Baptism on record, and that he opposed it simply from the standpoint of his theory of Baptismal regeneration. But "his protest", as Dr. Schaff says "fell without an echo." We hear no more of opposition to infant Baptism until the Anabaptists arose in the sixteenth century." D. Douglas Bannerman, Difficulties about Baptism, (prepared at the request of The Publications Committee of the General Assembly of The Free Church of Scotland) (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1898) p 82.

said that even he could hardly have advocated a delay in baptism in the terms which he did, not only for infants and children, (paruuli) but also for bachelors and (presumably young) widows, if infant baptism had been regarded by the rest of the Church as an apostolic institution. As it was, Tertullian not only encouraged the practice of deferring baptism until the candidate could appreciate the significance of what he was doing, but he encouraged deferment until the candidate had sown his wild oats and had settled down to a Christian life-style. This followed logically from Tertullian's teaching that for post-baptismal sin there might be no remission, and, if there was, it was at the expense of long and humiliating public paenitentia.

After arguing that the baptisms of the Ethiopian eunuch and Paul ought not to be taken as precedents for hasty baptism, Tertullian went on to say:

itaque pro cuiusque personae condicione ac dispositione, etiam aetate cunctatio baptismi utilior est, praecipue tamen circa paruulos. Quid enim necesse, si non tam necesse est, sponsores etiam periculo ingeri qui et ipsi per mortalitatem destituere promissiones suas possunt et prouentu malae indolis falli? Ait quidem dominus: Nolite illos prohibere ad me uenire. Veniant ergo dum adolescunt dum discunt, dum quo ueniant docentur; fiant Christiani cum Christum nosse potuerint! Quid festinat innocens aetas ad remissionem peccatorum? Cautius agetur in saecularibus, ut cui substantia terrena non creditur diuina credatur? Norint petere salutem ut petentibus dedisse uidearis! 1

This advice on the deferment of baptism caused concern to certain adolescent catechumens, who feared they might be martyred, unbaptised. They no doubt recollected that Perpetua and her companions were still unbaptised catechumens at the moment of their arrest; they knew Tertullian's 'standing rule': Cum uero praescribitur nemini sine baptismo competere salutem ex illa maxime pronuntiatione domini qui ait: Nisi natus ex aqua quis erit non habebit uitam.²

That this 'standing rule' was taken seriously, is seen from the assurances which

¹ bapt 18.4.22-5.34.

² bapt 12.1.1-4.

children

penance

It follows that deferment of baptism is more profitable in accordance with each person's character and attitude, and even age: and especially so as regards children. For what need is there, if there really is no need, for even their sponsors to be brought into peril, seeing they may possibly themselves fail of their promises by death, or be deceived by the subsequent development of an evil disposition. It is true our Lord says, 'Forbid them not to come to me'. So let them come, when they are growing up, when they are learning, when they are being taught what they are coming to: let them be made Christians when they have become competent to know Christ. Why should innocent infancy come with haste to the remission of sins? Shall we take less cautious action in this than we take in wordly matters? Shall one who is not trusted with earthly property be entrusted with heavenly? Let them first learn how to ask for salvation, so that you may be seen to have given to one that asks.

Now there is a standing rule that without baptism no man can obtain salvation. It derives in particular from that well-known pronouncement of our Lord, who says, 'Except a man be born of water he cannot have life'.

Tertullian gave to those who might die a martyr's death before baptism.¹ Yet there is no record in any of Tertullian's works of corresponding concern for youngsters who might die from natural causes or who were weakly, or who were exposed to danger. If, during their childhood or adolescence, they had stood in danger of the judgment of God, if indeed they were to be damned by reason of original sin, would Tertullian have discouraged their baptism in infancy? Was it not, as Refoulé commented on Tertullian's treatise on baptism, that "même dans ce traité il ne semble pas que les enfants avant le baptême soient 'possédés par le démon' "".²

Reference to the influence of the devil in infant life³ prompts the question of whether Tertullian's teaching on baptism differed between the children of those who were themselves coming to faith for the first time - a whole family, for example, of first generation converts - and children born into an existing Christian home. Jeremias believed that Tertullian's advice to postpone the baptism of children "referred to the children of pagan parents and to them alone";⁴ although it is a point much emphasised in modern debate, Tertullian drew no such distinction. In addition to the text quoted at the beginning of this section, there is the passage de anima chapters 39-40 (examined in the last section), where Tertullian followed Paul in stating that the children of Christian parents were privileged in their relationship to God. As they were, he

¹ bapt 16.1.1-2.10.

² Evans (op. cit., p 102) quotes Fr Refoulé in these words and adds his own approval. I cannot find the quotation in Refoulé's Traité du Baptême and Evans does not indicate the source of the quotation.

³ As seen in the previous section, the foothold gained by the devil in infant life was greater for children of pagan parents because of the superstitious practices which surrounded pagan childbirth.

⁴ Joachim Jeremias, Die Kindertaufe in den ersten vier Jahrhunderten, (Gottingen: 1958) - English translation by David Cairns, Infant Baptism in the First Four Centuries, (London: S.C.M. Press, 1964) p 86.

even in this treatise it does not seem that infants before they were baptised were 'possessed by the devil'.

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

Treatise on Baptism (Commentary by Refoulé on Tertullian's treatise)

"Infant Baptism in the First Four Centuries."

might have been expected to encourage Christian parents to have their children baptised; instead of that, Tertullian emphasised to them the malum animae of all, whatever their parentage. This evil could be removed only by baptism, and that once only - hence Tertullian's advice (to Christian parents) that deferment of baptism was both proper and profitable.

That does not, of course, answer the question of whether baptism in infancy would, if administered, have altered the relationship of the infant to God. As Jeremias put it, he did not challenge "the legitimacy, but only the expediency, of their baptism."¹ It was one of Tertullian's basic beliefs that nothing except baptism (or martyrdom) could take away the corruption of original sin: Ita omnis anima eo usque in Adam censetur, donec in Christo recenseatur, tamdiu immunda, quamdiu recenseatur.² On the other hand, it was another of Tertullian's beliefs (and an equally basic one) that baptism without faith was of no avail for the remission of sin:

Lauacrum illud obsignatio est fidei, quae fides a paenitentiae fide incipitur et commendatur. Non ideo abluimur ut delinquere desinamus sed quia desiimus, quoniam iam corde loti sumus.³

Anima enim non lauacione, sed responsione sancitur.⁴

The relationship between faith and baptism is explored in chapter VIII.6, but for the present it may be said that when two principles conflict, the higher principle must prevail. In view of that, there can be no doubt that, if the point had been put to Tertullian, he would have agreed that the baptism, even of an infant,

¹ op.cit., p 98 - * ↓

² an 40.1.1-3.

³ paen 6.16.60-63.

⁴ res 48.11.51-52.

* / Sie bestreiten nicht prinzipiell die Legitimität, sondern nur die Opportunität ihrer Taufe: cunctatio baptismi utilior est.

evil of the soul

Every soul is considered as having been born in Adam until it has been reborn in Christ. Moreover, it is unclean until it has been thus regenerated.

That cleansing water is a seal of faith, and this faith has its beginning and finds its reward in genuine repentance. We are not baptised so that we may cease committing sin, but because we have ceased, since we are already clean of heart.

For the soul is sanctified, not by the washing, but by the profession of faith.

washed away its sin. He would no doubt have counselled the parents or 'sponsors'¹ to postpone the baptism, because of his concern that it should not be entered into until the candidate had matured and settled down. Furthermore, Tertullian was concerned about (what he regarded as) the dangerous and growing laxity of church discipline, and he was in favour of more rigorous discipline even before he became a Montanist. Baptism was the gateway to the church and was the obvious place for strictness to be inculcated; to bring children to baptism at an age when they could not be established in the Christian life-style would tend to undermine the discipline for which he was so much concerned.

On the other hand, when all that has been said, 'Quid festinat innocens aetas ad remissionem peccatorum?' must mean that an infant, thus baptised, had a new and different relationship with God - it had the forgiveness of original sin. The sponsors of the child then became responsible for guiding the child until it was able itself to live a life free from the sins which could undo the efficacy of baptism. There could be no second (water) baptism, and Tertullian's concern, which he expressed here as an argument against infant baptism, was that the sponsors might be prevented from fulfilling, either by their own death or by the untoward conduct of the child, the obligation which an early baptism had placed on them and on the child. The use of festinare seem to indicate that that some people hurried their children to baptism without stopping to consider the significance of baptism and the responsibilities it placed on those who brought them forward. Tertullian gave no indication at all whether infants or children who were (contrary to his advice) baptised at a young age - for evidently the children in question were not necessarily 'infants' - received water-baptism only or whether they were completely initiated, like adult candidates, at the same time.

¹ Tertullian said nothing about the exact duties which devolved on the sponsor, nor did he indicate who normally acted in that capacity. He did, however, state that sponsorship carried with it both responsibility and a continuous interest in the infant for whom the answers had been made - bapt 18.4.25-27.

Why should innocent infancy come with haste to the remission of sins?

to hasten

III.6 ROMAN LAW FOR THIS AREA

When Tertullian contrasted pagan parentage with Christian parentage, saying that the children of the latter (including children of a mixed marriage where one was a Christian) were (sanctos) ex seminis praerogativa . . . designatos tamen sanctitatis . . . huius spei pignore, whereas the children of the former were by the idolatry surrounding childbirth geminina sua daemoniorum candidata profitentur, he used several words taken from Roman law - praerogativa, designatos, pignore and candidata. However, looking at the context, it seems clear that Tertullian simply used words which he found useful to set down concepts already in his mind - or in the mind of the apostle Paul; there is no indication that the ideas behind these words from Roman law shaped his thinking, on any aspect of the relationship of the infant to God. When he indignantly repudiated the charge made by the heathen against the Christians, that they practiced infanticide, he lamented the ineffectiveness of Roman law to deal with what he, as a Christian, believed to be God's will for infant life:

infantes editos enecantes legibus quidem prohibemini, sed nullae magis leges tam impune, tam secure sub omnium conscientia unius aeditui tabellis eluduntur Atquin hoc asperius, quod frigore et fame aut bestiis, si exponitis aut longiore in aquis morte, si mergitis. ¹

Mommsen ² identified this as a reference to a law of the pre-republican days, which punished the abandonment of children, but this law had fallen into desuetude by Tertullian's day. Obviously he wished that it had not - and that the law would support his condemnation of infanticide.

While that passage from ad nationes illustrates how little Tertullian had in common with current legal thinking, relative to the importance of infant life, another passage, from the apologeticum, highlights even more the gap between

¹ I nat 15.3.22-25 and 4.26-28.

² op. cit., p 619.

holy ... by the prerogative of (Christian) seed ... destined for holiness ... by the pledge of such a hope

declare their offspring to be consecrated to demons

prerogative - destined - pledge - candidates (for office)

although you are forbidden by the laws to slay new-born infants, it so happens that no laws are evaded with more impunity or greater safety, with the deliberate knowledge of the public, and the suffrages of this entire page, ... you make away with them in a more cruel manner, because you expose them to the cold and hunger, and to wild beasts, or else you get rid of them by the slower death of drowning.

"To the Gentiles" and "Apology" (two of Tertullian's treatises)

Roman law and Tertullian's position as a Christian. He accused the pagans of not only sacrificing children to Saturn, down to fairly recent times, but that parents had sacrificed their own children: quos quidem ipsi parentes sui offerebant, et libentes respondebant et infantibus blandiebantur, ne lacrimantes immolarentur. Et tamen multum homicidio parricidium differt!¹ The last sentence repudiates, with that irony of which Tertullian was such a master, the pretended "justification by ownership". For Tertullian, parenthood gave no right to dispose of infant life - it was already sacred to God and in a relationship to Him. The depth and the passion of the irony are underlined a little later on - Sed quoniam de infanticidio nihil interest, sacro an arbitrio patretur, licet de parricidio intersit, convertere ad populum.²

The position of the paterfamilias who had the right of life or death over his offspring, will be taken up in detail in chapter VII. 5, where the question is explored as to how far Tertullian saw the relationship of man to God in terms of the filius/paterfamilias relationship. For this present section, it is sufficient to note that if a child was born alive but weakly, or with any abnormality, Roman law and society took it for granted that the parents could destroy or abandon the child at birth.³

For the other two main areas which have been covered in this chapter, namely the invasion of the infant soul by the devil and the extent to which the relationship of the infant to God depended on parentage and baptism, Roman law seems to point to the very opposite of what Tertullian taught. At the moment of birth, and by the mere fact of birth, the legitimate child took on the legal status of its father and inherited the rights of its father under the law. Roman

¹ apol 9.4.13-15.

² apol 9.6.23-25.

³ Seneca, de Ira 1.15 and Ad Helviam 16.1 Suetonius, Gaius Caligula 5.30, in De Vita Caesarum.

and their own parents offered them to him, were glad to respond, and fondled their children that they might not be sacrificed in tears. And between murder and sacrifice by parents - oh! the difference is great!

But since there is no difference as to baby-killing, whether you do it as a sacred rite or just because you choose to do it (though we must grant a difference between murder and killing your own child), I will turn to the people.

head of the family

son/head of the family

law regulated the capacity and responsibility of the child on a graduated scale according to age. First of all, the law recognised the age of infancy, the limit of which was defined by the inability to speak. During this, approximately the child's first two years, the child was infans, qui fari non potest, and because of this, the infant had no legal capacity of any description. The infant then moved into a second period, childhood, from the time when the faculty of speech accrued and this lasted up to the age of puberty. Still there was no persona, necessary for the accomplishment of the acts of civil law, but, with the assistance of a tutor, the child over two years old could act, because the authority of his tutor completed his persona. The law presumed that if the infant could utter the necessary words, the tutor could be his auctor and between them they could carry out the acts required by civil law; indeed an impubes who had completed his seventh year was capable of juristic acts if they were to his own advantage.¹ Then, thirdly, came puberty, the exact date of which was in theory indefinite as regards the individual (because it depended on the physical fact, the generating faculty) but by Tertullian's time some jurists, from motives of decency, had fixed the date for females at the precise age of twelve years, and for males at fourteen years.² Children were called impubes before this period, and pubes as soon as they had reached it. Fourthly, came majority - fixed at the age of twenty-five years, when full moral development was assumed, and full maturity of judgment. A man could no longer be protected against the consequences of his own acts by the intervention of the prætor, at least under ordinary circumstances. Finally came old age (senectus), for which Roman law fixed no precise term, but which, as far as regards exemption from public duties, began at the age of seventy.

¹ Institutes I.21. pr.

² The jurists are named, and the matter discussed further, at the end of chapter IV.6 below.

an infant, who could not speak

legal person

spokesman

"under-age" (below puberty)

grown-up (youth)

Magistrate

old age

Tertullian made no reference at all to these convenient distinctions of age and responsibility, in connection with the relationship of the individual to God. When he dealt with puberty, he expressly repudiated the influence of Roman law, as will be examined in chapter IV.5 below. As for the rest, he used the "ages" of man only to illustrate the revelation of God to successive generations, from the creation of the world until the coming of the Paraclete, and not for the growth of the individual in his relationship to God. Against Marcion (who claimed to find differences between the old law and the new), against the Jews (who would not recognise God's revelation in Christ) and against Catholics (who would not accept his understanding of the discipline of the Paraclete), Tertullian used a variety of metaphors to show the progressive revelation of God, appropriate to every successive period from the beginning of the world until his own time. His metaphors of vegetable growth are not relevant to this present section, but in de virginibus velandis Tertullian set out the analogy of biological growth to demonstrate that 'righteousness' was both progressive and at the same time continuous.¹ Four stages could be distinguished:

The original state (<u>rudimenta</u>)	=	Man's natural fear of God
Children (<u>infantia</u>)	=	The Mosaic Law and the Prophets
Youth and manhood (<u>iuventus</u>)	=	The Gospel preached by Christ
Mature age (<u>maturitas</u>)	=	The Paraclete

¹ Sic et iustitia (nam idem Deus iustitiae et creaturae) primo fuit in rudimentis, natura Deum metuens; dehinc per legem et prophetas promouit in infantiam, dehinc per euangelium efferbuit in iuuentutem, nunc per Paracletum componitur in maturitatem - virg. 1.7.46-50.

"On the Veiling of Virgins" (one of Tertullian's treatises).

So, too, righteousness for the God of righteousness and of creation is the same - was first in a rudimentary state having a natural fear of God: from that stage it advanced through the Law and the Prophets to infancy: from that stage it passed, through the Gospel, to the fervour of youth: now, through the Paraclete, it is settling into maturity.

Labriolle detected something of a "point de vue legaliste" here, and wrote:

La révélation divine lui apparaît donc sous les espèces d'une législation qui se modifie, se corrige, et surtout se resserre progressivement. Il n'est pas plus étonné d'en constater l'évolution qu'il ne s'offense des promulgations de lois nouvelles ou des abrogations de lois anciennes dans les Codes humains.¹

Be that as it may, Tertullian did not use the categories of human biological development, important as they were in Roman Law, to suggest any distinction in man's relationship with God (except at puberty, where he denied any influence on him by Roman Law).

¹ Pierre de Labriolle, "Tertullien Jurisconsulte", Nouvelle Revue Historique de Droit Français et Étranger, 30 (1906), 15.

legalistic point of view

The divine revelation then appears to him like a legislation which modifies, corrects, and in particular, narrows itself, progressively. He is no more surprised at its evolution than he is offended by the promulgations of new laws or abrogations of old laws in the human Codes of Law.

"Tertullian the Lawyer" (periodical article in the "New Historical Review of French and Foreign Law").

III.7 CONCLUSIONS FROM CHAPTER THREE

On the basis of Tertullian's contention that it would be absurd for an eighty year old soul to return to an infant body, mentioned in section III.3, it may be concluded that the soul, by joining with the body, had itself become infans, and indeed Tertullian said as much elsewhere.¹ Whatever knowledge the bodily senses may have had of God, whatever the relationship of the body to God, that determined, for the time being, the relationship of the soul to God. Yet, alongside the illustration about the absurdity of a mature intelligent soul in the body of an infant, must be set the passages where Tertullian specifically refuted Aristotle's view that infants had no capacity to think. The soul of the child was born with not only sense but with intellect, created by God and for God, and equipped, not with a ready-made understanding of God, but with the ability, through the evidence which would later be presented to it, of coming to an understanding and knowledge of God. The relationship of the infant soul to God was therefore the relationship of the infant body to God - on God's part, care, concern, and supervision; on the part of the infant, ignorance of God's existence. In other words, the love of God and the care of God was manifest to the infant, but the infant had as yet no appreciation of it.

The infant, newly arrived in the world, might be possessed of two separate kinds of evil - certainly of one. Children born to Christian parents, (or even children of a mixed marriage where only one parent was a Christian but the home observed Christian practices, not heathen), were spared the immediate invasion of satanic influence, and so were in a slightly different position than children in a pagan home. Tertullian did not, however, make much of that, because they too were immunda, by virtue of original sin. The almost total

¹ an 31.2.8-9 - Omnes enim ab infantia imbuuntur, qua infans reuertatur.

an infant

impure

All men are imbued with the souls of infants at their birth.

silence, throughout Tertullian's works, on the relationship of infants to God leads to the reasonable inference that he had nothing distinctive to say on the topic. In addition to the argument from silence, there are four positive factors which seem to confirm that the relationship of infants to God was a quietly developing relationship, and not one with distinctive features of its own.

(a) The fact that soul and body grew together, obviously not yet at the stage of a conscious relationship with God, but with no new factor to be added to them before they developed and matured to the point where a conscious relationship was possible - examined in chapter I.6 above.

(b) The presence of the departed infant (soul) in the 'good' part of Hades, without definition of the years of innocence - animas immaturas . . . et pro condicione aetatis puras et innocuas,¹ examined in chapter I.8 above.

(c) The advice to defer baptism, not just beyond infancy and childhood, but until years of discretion - examined in section III.5 above.

(d) The invasion of the soul by sinful desires at the age of fourteen, without further classification or distinction below that age - to be examined in chapter IV.5 below.

As for Roman Law, it is difficult to see any instance in this chapter where Tertullian could be said to have expressed the relationship of infants to God in terms of Roman law or to have had his thoughts shaped by it.

¹ an 56.8.64-65.

the souls of infants ... and those who by (the condition of) their age were pure and innocent.

CHAPTER FOUR - THE RELATIONSHIP OF CHILDREN TO GOD

IV.1 INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER FOUR

Satan's attack on the individual human soul, which had begun, for the pagan at any rate, at the moment of birth, continued and intensified as the child grew older. Tertullian gave less emphasis to the spiritual battle in heavenly places than he did to the practical outworking of that battle in the lives of individuals. This topic obviously goes beyond childhood and into manhood (which is studied later in the thesis) but the opportunity is taken, in section two of this chapter, to look at all the texts relevant to the devil's bid to win the lives of men, up to their baptism (where this study stops).

One of the fundamental tenets of Tertullian's anthropology was that the soul gave the lead to the body, in all the important decisions of life. Although this too is obviously of greater significance for the period after children had come to adolescence and manhood, the whole topic is taken together at this point in the thesis, and section three deals with the texts showing the initiative taken by the soul. Section four takes up the topic - also relevant throughout the thesis - of whether Tertullian made any significant distinction between male and female in their relationship with God. Section five reverts to the specific subject-matter of this chapter, the relationship of children to God, and examines Tertullian's assertion that children were innocent of the knowledge of good and evil until the age of fourteen. That leads naturally to an examination of the Roman law for this area - which Tertullian expressly contrasted with his own teaching. Conclusions are then drawn in section seven.

IV.2 THE DEVIL'S BID FOR THE SOUL

Satan's attack on the individual soul, which commenced with the pagan birth-ceremonies,¹ continued and intensified as the child grew older. Although it is no part of this study to investigate the relationship between the growing child and the devil,² except insofar as it illustrates the relationship of the child to God, it should be noted that Tertullian saw the whole of the Roman educational system, based as it was on the customs of the pagan world, undermining the 'good' which God had implanted in the soul. The pagan gods were demons³ - Hinc prima diabolo fides aedificatur ab initiis eruditionis.⁴ Tertullian believed (although he had to be careful not to give any encouragement to gnostic dualism⁵) that the devil was in direct rivalry with God for the souls of men - one of his most frequent description of satan was aemulus dei.

super haec, si et aliquae praesunt potestates. Enimuero praesunt, secundum nos quidem deus dominus et diabolus aemulus, 6

¹ Examined at chapter III.2 above. Apart from specific attacks, then and later, Tertullian was not unmindful that Satan had already corrupted every newborn child through original sin, but that was not enough for satan - diabolo tamen captante naturam, quam et ipse iam infecit delicti semine inlato - V Marc 17.10.21-22.

² Tertullian, like many other ancient Christian writers, described man as the praeda (booty) or the captive slave of satan, from which captivity he could be freed only by the sacrament of baptism - e.g. Liberantur de saeculo nationes, per aquam scilicet et diabolum dominatorem pristinum in aqua obpressum derelinquunt - bapt 9.1.7-8; cf. Jean Rivère, "Tertullien et les droits du démon," Recherches de Science Religieuse, 6 (1926), 199-216.

³ apol chapters 22 and 24.

⁴ idol 10.6.24.

⁵ A point emphasised by Christian Baur, Die christliche Lehre von der Versöhnung, (Tubingen: 1883) p 52.

⁶ an 20.4.32-5.34. Aemulus, as (Prax 1.1.2) noun, adjective or in verbal form (e.g. varie diabolus aemulatus est veritatem), appears 94 times in Tertullian's works. The devil was God's only aemulus. Alterius enim esse non possunt, si dei non sunt, quia aemuli sint necesse est, quae dei non sunt, alius autem praeter diabolum et angelos eius aemulus dei non est - I cult 8.3.11-14.

Hence a child's belief is built up for the devil from the beginning of its education.

the rival of God

To all of which may be added the influence of higher powers. For, according to our teaching, such higher powers are: the Lord God and His enemy, the devil.

The devil still has designs upon nature, which he has already corrupted by injecting the seed of sin.

booty.

The Gentiles are set free from this present world by means of water and leave behind, drowned in the water, their ancient tyrant the devil.

"Tertullian and the rights of the devil" (periodical article in "Researches of Religious Science").

"The Christian Teaching on the Atonement." (Book)

rival

In manifold ways, the devil has shown his hostility to the truth (Prax 1.1.2).

There is no other whose they can be if they are not God's. What is not God's must necessarily be His rivals; and, except the devil and his angels, rival of God there is none.

aëre isto potitus, sicut dicere eum propheta refert: ponam in nubibus thronum meum: ero similis altissimo. Hic erit diabolus, quem et alibi, si tamen ita et apostolum legi uolunt, deum aevi huius agnoscemus. ¹

Although the 'powers' were in 'heavenly places', Tertullian saw the real battleground in the minds of men - quaedam ratio aemulae operationis insequitur, hoc primum agens, ut homines nolint scire pro certo, quod se nescire pro certo sciunt. Ideo et credunt de nobis quae non probantur. ² The antithesis apparently intended, in that rather confused sentence, is that quædam ratio aemulae operationis (i.e. satan and his rebel angels) would try to prevent men (who knew themselves to be ignorant about Christianity) from enlightening their minds by acquiring any knowledge about it: ille scilicet spiritus daemonicae et angelicae paraturae, qui noster ob diuortium aemulus et ob Dei gratiam inuidus de mentibus uestris adversus nos proeliatur occulta inspiratione modulatis. ³

From the very beginning, the devil had tried to destroy mankind, individually, and once he had gained a foothold in the mind of man, the whole of life was at risk:

Operatio eorum est hominis euersio; sic malitia spiritalis a primordio auspicata est in hominis exitium. Itaque corporibus quidem et uoletudines infligunt et aliquos casus acerbos, animae vero repentinos et extraordinarios per uim excessus. Suppetit illis ad utramque substantiam hominis adeundam mira subtilitas et tenuitas sua. Multum spiritalibus uiribus licet. ⁴

While much of Tertullian's teaching about the wiles of the devil lies outside the scope of this study - relating as it does to his desperate attempts to re-capture those who had become Christians ⁵ - Tertullian had quite a bit to say

¹ V Marc 17.8.28-9.4.

² apol 2.18.98-19.101.

³ apol 27.4.13-16.

⁴ apol 22.4.14-5.20.

⁵ e.g. paen 7.7.23-9.34; II ux 4.1.1-4; ex 2.7.42,43; an 47.2.13-16; some reference to this will be made when the final preparations for baptism are examined in chapter VIII.5. It is no part of this study to consider Tertullian's teaching that persecution was willed by God and permitted by God, the devil being only the instrument of persecution not its author - fug 2.1.1-12 and 2.2.18-25.

Having taken possession of this air, as the prophet reports that he says: "I will set my throne in the clouds, I will be like unto the Most High". And this must be the devil, whom again in another place - if at least they consent to the apostle being read in this form - we shall recognise as the "god of this world".

This name (i.e. the Christian name) a certain power of a rival agency (i.e. satan and rebel angels) persecutes, making this its first and foremost aim, that men may be unwilling to know for certain what they certainly know they do not know. So they believe things about us which are not proved.

a certain rational agency, rival in its operation

Actually, that spirit endowed with the nature of devils and angels, our rival because we are severed from him, our enemy because God gives us grace, wars against us, using as its battleground your minds which have been attuned to him by his secret insinuations.

Their business is to corrupt mankind: thus, the spirit of evil was from the very beginning bent upon man's destruction. The demons, therefore, inflict upon men's bodies diseases and other bitter misfortunes, and upon the soul sudden and extraordinary outbursts of violence. They have their own subtle, spiritual properties for assailing each part of the human nature. Much power is allowed their spiritual faculties.

about the strategy of the devil on impressionable minds. Tertullian may not have been writing with children in mind, but since this section covers satanic influence for the whole area of the thesis, and since Tertullian's references to the tactics and tricks of the devil are relevant for all ages of man, two points can conveniently be made at this stage.

First, the devil's campaign for the influence and capture of the mind included the use of dream-oracles, which pretended to offer cures, warnings and prophecies to the unwary:

dum per ea quae iuuant ab inquisitione uerae diuinitatis abducunt ex insinuatione falsae? Et utique non clausa uis est nec sacrariorum circumscribitur terminis; uaga et peruolutica et interim libera est. Quo nemo dubitauerit domus quoque daemoniis patere nec tantum in adytis, sed in cubiculis homines imaginibus circumueniri. ¹

si multa miracula circulatoriis praestigiis ludunt, si et somnia immittunt habentes semel inuitatorum angelorum et daemonum adsistentem sibi potestatem. ²

Second, the devil offered a parody and counterfeit of the true relationship between man and God, making it all the more difficult for the impressionable to distinguish between truth and error. He (the devil) twisted the true interpretation of scripture and mimicked^k the way of salvation:

A diabolus scilicet, cuius sunt partes interuertendi ueritatem qui ipsas quoque res sacramentorum diuinorum idolorum mysteriis aemulatur. Tingit et ipse quosdam utique credentes et fideles suos; expositionem delictorum de lauacro repromittit; et, si adhuc memini Mithrae, signat illic in frontibus milites suos. ³

Hic quoque studium diaboli recognoscimus res dei aemulantis cum et ipse baptismum in suis exercet. Quid simile? immundus emundat, perditor liberat, damnatus absoluit! Suam uidelicet operam destruet diluens, delicta quae inspirat ipse! ⁴

¹ an 46.12.80-86. The classification of dreams which followed this, and the influence of good dreams, is taken up in chapter V.7 below.

² apol 23.1.3-5.

³ p^ares 40.2.2-47.

⁴ bapt 5.3.16-20.

They hope to harm us when seeming to help us, and by their good deeds to distract us from the investigation of the true God by suggesting a false one to our minds. This vicious power is not restricted to the precincts of their shrines, but it roams all over with complete freedom. There is no doubt that the doors of our homes are open to such spirits and they impose on in our bedrooms as well as in their own temples.

If, with quacking jugglers' tricks, they try to imitate many miracles, if they even send dreams to people, having always at hand to assist them the power of angels and demons whom they have solicited.

The devil, of course, whose business it is to pervert the truth, who even apes the divine sacraments in the idol-mysteries. For he too baptises certain persons - his own believers and faithful ones: he promises a putting away of sins by means of the laver: and if my memory serves me, Mithras seals there on their foreheads his own soldiers.

Here too we observe the zeal of the devil rivalling the things of God, while we find him, too, practising baptism in his (subjects). Yet how unlike. Does the unclean make clean, the destroyer set free, the condemned acquit? If so, he will be pulling down his own work, and washing away the sins he himself inspires.

As d'Ales summed it up:

Tentateur, père des hérésies, il exerce sous mille formes diverses sa néfaste influence. Prince de l'air, il règne sur ceux que l'incrédulité lui asservit. Dieu de ce monde, il a rempli le siècle du mensonge de sa propre divinité. Doués d'un certain empire sur la nature matérielle, les démons en usent pour gâter les moissons, jeter dans l'air le germe de maladies contagieuses, engendrer des songes trompeurs. Parfois ils s'introduisent dans les corps et en disposent à leur gré. Nuire aux hommes est le but de toutes leurs impostures, de ces prodiges par lesquels ils accréditent de faux dieux. Toutes les formes de divination leur sont bonnes: évocations de morts, sacrifices d'enfants, prestiges, chèvres parlantes, tables parlantes, etc. - Artifice d'autant plus perfide qu'il emprunte le masque de la religion. Il n'y a pour ainsi dire pas un trait du christianisme que ces esprits menteurs n'aient tenté de s'approprier. L'anthropomorphisme païen est une caricature anticipée de l'Incarnation. Les oracles et la magie sont une contrefaçon de la prophétie et du miracle. L'enseignement des philosophes a dénaturé bien des dogmes: ils ont pris à l'Ecriture le jugement, l'enfer de feu (Pyriphlegethon), le paradis (Champs-Élysées). Et comme on rit de ces fables, le ridicule rejaillit sur la vérité. Les cérémonies païennes copient les sacrements divins: le diable a, dans le culte de Mithra, son baptême, avec promesse de rémission des péchés; il a son signe, dont Mithra marque au front ses adeptes. ¹

In consequence of this, the natural man, growing up in a world of idolatry and unaware that he was being 'manipulated' by the devil, was drawn steadily away from a right relationship with God.

Nemo negat, quia nemo ignorat, quod ultro natura suggerit, Deum esse uniuersitatis conditorem eamque uniuersitatem tam bonam quam homini mancipatam. Sed quia non penitus Deum norunt nisi naturali iure, non etiam familiari, de longinquo, non de proximo, necesse est ignorent, qualiter administrari iubeat quae instituit, simul quae ui sit aemula ex aduerso adulterandis usibus diuinae conditionis quia neque uoluntatem neque aduersarium noueris eius quem minus noueris ²

Tertullian never minimised or attempted to discredit the current and popular Christian belief that the devil actively opposed the search of the natural man for God. He was the first Latin writer to use the description "interpolator" for satan,³ whose 'acting power' was all too evident in the world around. While therefore the passages just quoted were not written with children in mind,

¹ d'Ales. op. cit., pp158-9.

² spec 2.4.19-5.27.

³ Jacques Fontaine, "Sur un titre de Satan chez Tertullien: Diabolus Interpolator", Studi di onone di Alberto Pincherle, 38 (1967), 198-199.

Tempter, Father of heresies, he exercises under a thousand different forms his harmful influence. Prince of the air, he rules over those whom incredulity enslaves. God of this world has filled the age with the deceit of his own divinity. Endowed with some empire over material nature, demons make us of it to spoil harvests, to release in to the air the germ of contagious illnesses, to bring about deceiving dreams. Sometimes they enter bodies and control them at their pleasure. To harm men is the goal of all their deceptions, of these wonders by which they gain credence for false gods. All forms of divining are to them good: evocations of the dead, sacrifices of children, marvels talking goats, talking tables, etc. A stratagem all the more treacherous in that it borrows the mask of religion. There is not to speak thus a trait of Christianity that these lying spirits have not tried to usurp. Pagan anthropomorphism is a caricature anticipating the Incarnation. Oracles and magic are a counterfeit of prophecy and miracle. The teaching of the philosophers greatly distorted some dogmas: they took from Scripture judgment, hell-fire (Pyriphlegethon), paradise (Elysian-Fields). And as one laughs at these fables, the ridicule rebounds on to the truth. Pagan ceremonies imitate the divine sacraments: the devil has, in the cult of Mithras, his baptism, with promise of delivery from sins: he has his sign, which Mithras marks on the brow of his initiates:

No one denies - because nobody is unaware of it and even nature tells it to us - that God is the creator of the universe, and that the universe is good and has been made over to man by its creator. But because they have no real knowledge of God - knowing Him only by natural law and not by right of friendship, knowing Him only from afar and not from intimate association - it is inevitable that they prove ignorant of how He bids or forbids the things of His creation to be used. They are also unaware of the rival power that by its hostile actions seeks to pervert to wrong uses the things of divine creation. For with such defective knowledge of God, one cannot know either His will or His adversary.

corrupter

"On a title of Satan in the works of Tertullian" (article in book, "Studies in honour of Alberto Pincherle").

Tertullian would no doubt have applied them to the earliest years of life, if he had been asked, because he complained bitterly of how easily people fell into the snares which the devil set, and how the devil drew them away from contemplation of the true God.

Cur non agnoscamus uersutias satanae, qui quod ore nostro perficere non potest, id agit, ut suorum ore perficiat per aures inferens nobis idololatriam? ¹

Et quae illis accuratior pascua est, nisi ut hominem a recogitatu uerae diuinitatis auertant praestigiis falsae diuinationis? Quas et ipsas quomodo operentur expediam. ²

The detailed explanation offered by Tertullian is outside the scope of this section, but, to borrow the phraseology of de spectaculis, every man had been ensnared by the devil, turned away from his correct relationship to God, and only by coming to know the Lord could he combat the wiles of the devil in the struggle for the soul.

Nos igitur, qui Domino cognito etiam aemulum eius inspeximus, qui institutore comperto et interpolatorem una deprehendimus, nec mirari neque dubitare oportet: cum ipsum hominem, opus et imaginem dei, totius universitatis possessorem, illa uis interpolatoris et aemulatoris angeli ab initio de integritate deiecerit, uniuersam substantiam eius pariter cum ipso integritati institutam pariter cum ipso in peruersionem demutauit aduersus institutorem. ³

In that connection, brief mention can be made of Tertullian's argument in the apologeticum that the presence of Christians provided some protection for the non-Christian: Quis autem uos ab illis occultis et usquequaque uastantibus mentes et ualeitudines uestras hostibus raperet, a daemoniorum incursibus dico, quae de uobis sine praemio, sine mercede depellimus? ⁴ That was, of course, just to score a point in the debate because by that stage in life the pagan was

¹ idol 21.2.30-32.

² apol 22.7.31-33.

³ spec 2.12.59-67.

⁴ apol 37.9.41-44.

Why cannot we recognise the tricks of Satan who, when he is unable to do it by his own mouth, contrives by the lips of his servants to introduce idolatry to us through our ears?

And what field of operation is more carefully watched for their benefit than by false sleights to turn man aside from contemplation of true deity? These tricks of deception I will explain, and how they work them.

"On Spectacles/Shows" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

We, then, in knowing the Lord, have learnt to recognise His rival: in learning the Creator we have detected the perverter too: so we need feel neither surprise nor doubt. Man himself, God's handiwork and image, lord of the whole universe, was hurled down in the very beginning from his state of innocence by the power of that angel, perverter of God's creation and His rival: and at the same time he changed the whole material world, his possession, created like man for innocence: he changed it along with man to be perverted against the Creator:

"Apology" (one of Tertullian's treatises).

But who would rescue you from those secret enemies that everywhere lay waste your minds and your bodily health? I mean, from the assaults from demons, whom we ward off from you, without any reward, and without any pay.

well and truly ensnared by the devil, and nothing but conversion to the Christian faith would restore him to a proper and right relationship with God. The emphasis placed by Tertullian on the struggle for the soul (as opposed to the body) was not accidental - it was from the soul that he believed the initiative would come, for good or for evil. That important point, namely that the soul was the decision-making partner in man, is therefore examined next.

IV. 3 THE SOUL TOOK THE LEAD

A dominant theme in Tertullian's writings is that whenever a moral decision had to be taken, the lead came from the soul - at least until baptism, when the Spirit was wedded to the soul¹ and He then gave the lead.

la chair n'est qu'une servante, ou plutôt un instrument. Chair coupable, sans doute; mais dont la faute se borne à exécuter des ordres: si parfois l'Écriture s'en prend à la chair, ce n'est que pour atteindre plus gravement, dans un subalterne, l'âme qui a commandé. Le désordre, ou la contre-nature, d'origine diabolique, se transmet d'âme en âme, comme un chancre héréditaire: le traducianisme de Tertullian se prête parfaitement à cette conception. La nature primitive et divine demeure, jusqu'au baptême, obscurcie et voilée; au jour du baptême, le voile tombe: en ces noces mystiques avec l'Esprit-Saint, l'âme revoit la lumière de sa céleste origine; la chair elle-même passe, comme un esclave dotal, au service du même Esprit-Saint. Noces bienheureuses, si l'âme est fidèle! 2

The point is fundamental to understanding the relationship of the child (and indeed of the man) to God. The body could be guilty before God only if it was led into sin by the soul. While the soul could perform "actions" by itself, (because Scripture taught that sins committed in thought were equivalent to evil deeds,³) the converse was not true and Tertullian nowhere held the body responsible to God for deeds of its own.

Quid nunc, si et in carnalibus⁴ prior est quae concipit, quae disponit, quae mandat, quae impellit? Et si quando inuita, prior tamen tractat quod per corpus actura est; nunquam denique conscientia posterior erit facto. 5

¹ Excipitur etiam a spiritu sancto, sicut in pristina natiuitate a spiritu profano. Sequitur animam nubentem spiritui caro, ut dotale mancipium, et iam non animae famula, sed spiritus - an 41.4.23-26. To follow through the relationship of body, soul and Holy Spirit, which applied only after conversion, is outside the scope of this study.

² d'Ales, op. cit. p 266.

³ Tertullian said that specifically in an 40.4.21-23; an 58.6.34-36 and paen 3.13.50-52; elsewhere, he made a number of references to sins of thought, which he did not (in those places) regard as equivalent of 'actions' and punishable as such, but which were nevertheless sins even although not translated into deeds - e.g. paen 3.9.33-37; 3.12.45-48; 3.15.57-16.61.

⁴ "in carnalibus", as Waszink pointed out (op. cit., p 591) is a short way of saying "in iis operibus in quibus anima carne eget".

⁵ an 58.7.40-44.

the flesh is only a servant, or rather an instrument. A guilty flesh, without doubt; but whose fault is restricted to carrying out orders: if sometimes Scripture blames the flesh, it is only to reach more seriously, in a subordinate, the soul which gave the order. The disorder, or un-nature, of devilish origin, transmits itself from soul to soul, like a hereditary tumour: Tertullien's traducianism lends itself perfectly to this conception. Early and divine nature remains, until baptism, obscured and veiled; on the day of baptism, the veil falls: in these mysterious weddings with the Holy Spirit, the soul receives the light of its heavenly origin; the flesh itself passes, like a dowry slave, into the service of the same Holy Spirit. Happy marriages, if the soul is faithful!

Besides, even in actions which need the assistance of the body, it is the soul which first conceives, plans, orders, and carries out the acts in question. And, although sometimes it is unwillingly to act, the soul always deals first with the matter which the body is going to accomplish and it never happens that an act is performed without previous consciousness..

Then is it welcomed by the Holy Spirit as, as its physical birth, it was met by the evil spirit. The flesh naturally follows the soul which is now wedded to the Spirit and, as part of the wedding dowry, it is no longer the slave of the soul but the servant of the Spirit.

"in the flesh" - "in those actions in which the soul needs the assistance of the body"

Sed delicta sicut in carne non conparent - quia nemo super cutem portat maculas idolatriae aut stupri aut fraudis -, ita et eiusmodi in spiritu sordent qui est auctor delicti: spiritus enim dominatur, caro famulatur. Tamen utrumque inter se communicant reatum, spiritus ob imperium, caro ob ministerium. ¹

The close union of body and soul, and their relationship to each other, was set out in some detail above² and will not be duplicated here, except to stress that the closing point in that last quotation was very important for Tertullian. The flesh was not just an instrument, exempt from any praise or blame, even if it was the soul which had commanded and the flesh had only followed. Tertullian recognised, as he wrote de resurrectione carnis, that his opponents could well have fastened onto his stress on the initiative of the soul, agreed with it, and then claimed that the flesh was only a tool, not a free agent, and so not answerable to God. Accordingly, Tertullian set out a lengthy argument,³ which occupies all of chapters 15 to 17 of de resurrectione carnis, to show the joint responsibility of soul and the body for good acts or bad, without, however, conceding that the body was the initiator of moral action.

If (as will be examined in Section IV.5 below) the soul was counted innocent by God until the age of fourteen, then it would seem to follow logically (although Tertullian has left no explicit statement one way or the other) that the flesh could not, and would not, be judged by God for the consequences of original sin. Sin (said Tertullian) did not attach itself to the flesh, which was only the 'servant'; it attached itself to the soul, and he established this in de anima

¹ bapt 4.5.27-32.

² Chapter I, sections 5 and 6.

³ The details of the argument are not important to this study - only its theme. The three points which Tertullian made were: (a) that if the flesh was entirely innocent, then God would be obliged in all circumstances to save it; (b) that, in any event, in the normal run of human affairs, it was not true that instruments were exempt from approval or disapproval; and (c) that the flesh was not an instrument or tool acquired by the soul from without, but since the moment of conception the two had been intimately entwined together and neither without the other deserved the name 'man' - indeed, on the narrative of creation, the flesh had the prior right to the name.

But as sins committed in the flesh do not show themselves in our flesh (in as much as no one carries on his skin the stains of idolatry, adultery or embezzlement), so people of this sort are filthy in their spirit, which is the author of sin: for the spirit is the master, and the body servant. Yet each of these imparts guilt to the other, the spirit by its directive, the flesh by service rendered.

"On the Resurrection of the Body" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

chapter 40. If the flesh was not in itself sinful (section 2 of that chapter, quoted below ¹); then Scriptural sanctions on the flesh for certain (named) evil deeds were in reality a condemnation of the soul (section 3, quoted below ²). The merit of any good deeds was not attributed in the first instance to the body, so neither, in the first instance, was the consequence of evil deeds (section 4, not quoted). Censure of the flesh served only to point more clearly to the charge against the chief offender, the soul. As Tertullian put it, in concluding chapter 40 of de anima, the soul guaranteed the ignominy of sin for the flesh as well as for itself.

Accordingly, as the child began to grow, and to think for itself, and to exhibit the consequences of fallen nature, the body was not (on the above hypothesis) under the judgement of God, because it was only the instrument of the soul. The soul had inherited the corruption and the soul had the seeds of evil in it; it was here, then, that the devil launched his attack. Another phrase which Tertullian used, to express the same thought in a different context, was auriga corporis, spiritus animalis ³ - a common enough metaphor, which had probably originated with the Pythagoreans ⁴ and come down through Plato. The responsibility in Roman law of 'servants' for the misdeeds of their 'masters' is taken up in section IV.6 below.

¹ Nam etsi caro peccatrix, secundum quam incedere prohibemur, cuius opera damnantur concupiscentis aduersus spiritum, ob quam carnales notantur, non tamen suo nomine caro infamis. Neque enim de proprio sapit quid aut sentit ad suadendam uel imperandam peccatellam. Quidni? quae ministerium est, et ministerium non quale seruus uel minor amicus, animalia nomina, sed quale calix uel quid aliud eiusmodi corpus, non anima. Nam et calix ministerium sitientis est; nisi tamen qui sitit calicem sibi accommodarit, nihil calix ministrabit - an 40.2.4-13.

² Adeo nulla proprietas hominis in choico, nec ita caro homo tamquam alia uis animae et alia persona, sed res est alterius plane substantiae et alterius condicionis, addicta tamen animae ut suppellex, ut instrumentum in officia uitae. Caro igitur increpatur in scripturis, quia nihil anima sine carne in operatione libidinis gulae uinulentiae saeuitiae idolatriae ceterisque carnalibus non sensibus, sed effectibus - an 40.3.12-20.

³ an 53.3.25.

⁴ Phaedrus 246A.

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

the charioteer of the body - the vital spirit of man -

Now, although the flesh is sinful and we are forbidden to walk in accordance with it, and since its works are condemned for lusting against the spirit, and men therefore marked as carnal, still the body does not merit this disgrace in its own right. For, it is not of itself that it thinks or feels anything toward urging or commanding something sinful. How could it, when it is only an instrument? And, an instrument not as a servant or a friend - they are human beings - but rather as a cup or something like that; it is body, and not soul. Now, a cup may serve the need of a thirsty man, but, unless he lifts the cup to his lips, the cup is no servant of his.

Now, the specific characteristic of man is not that he is formed of clay nor is his flesh the human person as if a faculty of the soul and separate person, but it is a thing of altogether different substance and state, joined to the soul, however, as a possession, an instrument for the conduct of life. Hence, the flesh is blamed in the Scriptures because, without the flesh, the soul is unable to accomplish anything in the pursuit of passion, such as gluttony, drunkenness, cruelty, idolatry, and other works of the flesh, perfections which are not merely internal sensations but result in external actions.

IV.4 NO SIGNIFICANT DISTINCTION BETWEEN BOYS AND GIRLS

Tertullian was not unaware that growing boys and growing girls required to be treated in some respects in different ways - pueris praetexta concedi et puellis stola, natiuitatis insignia nec potestatis, generis, non honori⁵, ordinis, non superstitionis;¹ - but nowhere did he hint that there was any significant distinction in their relationship to God. However, in view of the comments of so eminent a scholar as Monceaux:

Tertullien est le premier des grands chretiens misogynes. Avant les theologiens du Moyen-Age, il considere la femme comme le principal obstacle du salut. Il lui refuse tout role actif dans l'Eglise, et pretend l'enfermer au logis. Il la rappelle durement a la modestie, au sentiment de sa faiblesse et de son eternelle misere, qui la rend a jamais responsable du malheur de l'humanite:²

and in view of the conclusion of a recent study that "Tertullian is no ordinary misogynist",³ it is necessary to examine carefully just what Tertullian did say⁴ about feminae.⁵

The locus classicus of Tertullian's alleged misogyny is the opening paragraph of de cultu feminarum:

¹ idol 18.3.27-28.

² Paul Monceaux, op. cit. p 387. The closing words are based on I cult 1.1.11-12 - ignominiam dico primi delicti et inuidiam perditionis humanae.

³ George Tavard, Woman in Christian Tradition, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1973) p 59. Such comments ignore other passages where Tertullian displays a remarkable sympathy and tenderness for woman.

⁴ His extant words addressed specifically to women are four - cult, mon, ux and virg. Whether Liber ad amicum philosophum de molestiis nuptiarum (or de angustiis nuptiarum) was an actual book now lost, or whether Jerome was referring (Epistulum ad Eustochium de Custodia Virginitatis 22.22 and Adversus Jovinianum 1.13) to passages in other and extant works of Tertullian is not of direct relevance to this section. There is a very full note on it and an attempted reconstruction in Barnes, "Tertullian", pp 250-253.

⁵ Tertullian considered this the most appropriate general word to use - Naturale uocabulum est femina. Naturalis uocabuli generale mulier. Generalis etiam speciale uirgo uel nupta uel uidua uel quot etiam aetatis nomina accedunt - virg 4.4.38-41.

(So we Christians may, if necessary), allow the bordered toga to the boys and the stole to the girls as marks of birth, not authority, of family, not office, of rank, not religion.

Tertullian is the first of the great Christian misogynists. In advance of the medieval theologians, he considers woman as the principal obstacle to salvation. He refuses her any active role in the Church and claims that she should be kept at home. He reminds her sternly of modesty, of the feeling of her weakness and her eternal misery, which makes her forever responsible for the unhappiness/misfortune of mankind.

women

the classical passage/the stock quotation

"On Woman's Apparel" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

the ignominy, I mean, of the first sin and the odium of being the cause of the fall of the human race.

A Book addressed to a Philosophic Friend on the straits of matrimony.

Epistle to Euctochium on the care of virginity and Against Jovinianus

The natural word is 'female'. Of the natural word, the general word is 'woman'. Of the general, again, the special word is 'virgin' or 'wife' or 'widow' or whatever other names, even of the successive stages of life, are added hereto.

et Euam te esse nescis? Viuit sententia dei super sexum istum in hoc saeculo: uiuat et reatus necesse est. Tu es diaboli ianua, tu es arboris illius resignatrix, tu es diuinae legis prima desertrix; tu es quae eum suasisti, quem diabolus aggredi non ualuit; tu imaginem dei, hominem Adam, facile elisisti; propter tuum meritum, id est mortem, etiam filius dei mori habuit: 1

From that passage and in particular from the phrase "tu es diaboli ianua", it has been claimed ² that Tertullian saw women - at any rate Christian women - in a different relationship with God than men, and that he believed their natural status to be inferior to men: "Elle ne peut espérer son pardon et son salut, qu'à la condition de renoncer aux grâces de son sexe. Et l'homme, s'il veut plaire à Dieu, doit autant que possible se séparer de la femme". ³ It is of course true that Tertullian objected to women officiating at Church functions such as teaching or baptising, and that he opposed their ordination to any Church office such as the priesthood, which he believed to belong exclusively to men. ⁴ However, these passages relate to the status of women in the Church, after their conversion. When it is suggested that this affected a woman's relationship to God, at all stages and in all aspects of life, the passage from de cultu feminarum must be put into its context.

¹ I cult 1.1.14-2.20.

² For example by Nancy van Vuuren, The Subversion of Women as practiced by Churches, Witch-hunters, and Other Sexists, (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1973) p 29 and Rosemary Ruether, "Misogynism and Virginal Feminism in the Fathers of the Church", in Rosemary Ruether, editor, Religion and Sexism: Images of Woman in the Jewish and Christian Tradition, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974) p 157.

³ Monceaux, op. cit., p. 388.

⁴ Non permittitur mulieri in ecclesia loqui, sed nec docere, nec tinguere, nec offerre, nec ullius uirilis mulieris, nedum sacerdotalis officii sortem sibi uindicare...mulier permittitur. - virg 9.1.4-6. Quam enim fidei proximum uidetur ut is docendi et tinguendi daret feminae potestatem qui nec dicere quidem constanter mulieri permisit? Taceant, inquit, et domi uiros suos consultant! bapt 17.4.28-32. He brought it as a reproach against women belonging to heretical sects that they even ventured to baptise: Ipsae mulieres haereticae, quam procaces! quae audeant docere contendere, exorcismos agere, curationes repromittere, fortasse an et tingere - praes 41.5.13-15. Tertullian rejected the suggestion made in the Acts of Paul and Thecla that Paul allowed Thecla to baptise - bapt 17.5.24-25.

Do you not believe that you are (each) an Eve? The sentence of God on this sex of yours lives on even in our times and so it is necessary that the guilt should live on, also. You are the one who opened the door to the devil, you are the one who first plucked the fruit from the forbidden tree, you are the first who deserted the divine law: you are the one who persuaded him whom the devil was not strong enough to attack. All too easily you destroyed the image of God in man. Because of your reward, that is death, even the Son of God had to die.

You are the gateway of the devil (the one who opened the door to the devil).

She cannot hope for her forgiveness and her salvation except on the condition of renouncing the graces of her sex. And man, if he wishes to please God, must separate himself as much as possible from woman.

"On Women's Apparel" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

It is not permitted to a woman to speak in the Church and neither is it permitted her to teach, nor to baptise, nor to celebrate the Eucharist, nor to claim the performance of any man's duties, far less sacerdotal functions.

For how credible would it seem, that he (Paul) who has not permitted a woman even to learn by her own right, should give a female the power of teaching and of baptising! "Let them be silent", he says, "and at home consult their own husbands".

As for the women of the heretics, how forward they are! They have the impudence to teach, to argue, to perform exorcisms, to promise cures, perhaps even to baptise.

Tertullian was about to draw a startling picture of the luxury, the display and the extravagance of Carthaginian society - a picture which made his editor Rhenanus apologise for Tertullian's language by explaining "Sexus mulierum in luxum valde propensus est, et natura philocosmos". Be that as it may, certain of the churchwomen of Carthage, ignoring the good example of their husbands and brothers, who dressed soberly and without display, were vying with the heathen in ostentation and amusement. While the prosperity of the times and the peace of the Church may have contributed to this result, it must have been very painful to a moral teacher like Tertullian to see his choicest arguments rebutted by the wives of his colleagues in the Church. Tertullian's object, therefore, in de cultu feminarum, was to persuade these Christian women to dress more modestly. The passage in question comes in the exordium of the book, which was, as Sider pointed out in another context, an attempt to set the audience in a receptive mood by an immediate appeal to considerations of an ethical and emotional character.¹ In order to capture his audience and to establish the salvific importance of his subject, Tertullian found it convenient to refer them back to Eve.

Her complicity in the fall is then utilized to produce upon his listeners the desired effect, which he provokes by means of a pointed and highly rhetorical ad feminam argument. While details of his invective cannot be attributed entirely to rhetorical invention, one must always keep in mind that in Tertullian a given problem, such as the fall, may be adapted freely to the requirements both of subject and of audience.²

Later in the article from which that quotation is taken, the author (Church) maintained that Tertullian, as a traducianist, could not seriously have intended to trace the sinfulness of mankind back to Eve, as opposed to Adam, because his anthropology depended on totum genus de suo semine infectum suae etiam

¹ Robert Dick Sider, Ancient Rhetoric and the Art of Tertullian, (Oxford: University Press, 1971) p 21.

² F. Forrester Church, "Sex and Salvation in Tertullian", Harvard Theological Review, 68 (1975), 86.

The sex is extremely addicted to luxury, and naturally fond of adornment.

"On Women's Apparel" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

preface

to the woman, personal

the whole race, thus infected from his (Adam's) seed became a sharer in and transmitter of his condemnation.

damnationis traducem fecit.¹ Church pointed out, in support of his argument, that the "gateway" passage is the only place in all Tertullian where the exclusive culpability of Eve is spelled out;² in this he is supported by Turcan, who noted that in every other instance, "C'est toujours Adam qui est sur la sellette".³

It does seem that Tertullian's exhortation to dress in the garb of penitance ex quo deum uiuum cognouisset et de sua, id est de feminae condicione didicisset,⁴ was in support of a specific argument, and was not intended to place all females - certainly not those below the age of puberty - in a relationship with God different in principle from that of males. Jesus Christ had given his life equally for men and for women - Qui tamen et uiri caput est et feminae facies, ut uir ecclesiae, Christus Iesus, quale, oro te, sertum pro utroque sexu subiit?⁵ The distinction of sex would not affect their status in eternity, because, shortly following on the "gateway" passage, Tertullian wrote Nam et uobis eadem tunc substantia angelica repromissa; idem sexus qui et uiris eandem iudicandi dignationem pollicetur.⁶ Presumably Tertullian did not intend that to mean that in heaven women would become men, any more than that in the spiritual realm both would become angels: it means that in the spiritual realm, Tertullian was less concerned to differentiate men from women, than he was to differentiate men and women who remained in Adam from men and women who had come to new life in Christ.

¹ test 3.2.12-13.

² Church, op. cit., p 86.

³ Marie Turcan, Tertullien: La toilette des femmes (De cultu feminarum), (Paris: Les editions du Cerf, 1971) p 37.

⁴ I cult 1.1.6-7.

⁵ cor 14.3.14-16.

⁶ I cult 2.5.43-45.

overleaf]

It is always Adam who is on the stool of repentance

from the time when you came to know the living God and recognised your own state, that is, the condition of being a woman,

To what kind of crown, I ask you, did Christ Jesus submit for the salvation of both sexes, He who is the Head of man and the Glory of woman and the Husband of the Church.

You realise, of course, that the same angelic nature is promised to you, women, the selfsame sex is promised to you as men, and the selfsame high position as judge.

"Tertullian - The Apparel of Women" (in French and in Latin) (Book)

The distinction between the Eastern and Western worlds, in the place assigned to women, was pronounced, and in this respect Carthage was wholly Western. The prominent part taken by women in social life at Carthage may have led Tertullian into some of the statements which commentators have found paradoxical - for example Theodor Brandt, in his book Tertullians Ethik:

Schon hier sind zwei Gedanken wirksam, die nicht ohne Spannung sich gegenüberstehen: Schuld and Schwäche auf der einen Seite, Schöpfung und gleiches Sittengesetz auf der andern.¹

and Stucklin:

"Hinsichtlich der Stellung der Frau in der Gemeinde nimmt Tertullian eine Stellung ein, die wiederum von zwei Faktoren bestimmt ist: Einerseits anerkennt er die Frau als gleichwertige Glaubensschwester, andererseits scheint ihm das weibliche Geschlecht besonders schuldbeladen, da alle Frauen an der Ursünde ihrer Stammutter Eva teilhaben."²

However, if one is not misled by taking the passage from de cultu feminarum out of its context, it seems clear that Tertullian saw women as possessing, no less than men, a nature created in the image of God and answerable to the same moral law of God. This invested them with a dignity and with rights which cut across the subordinate status and capacity of women in the ancient world as a whole, particularly the East but to a lesser extent in the West also. How far Tertullian's teaching on the religious capacity of women differs from their legal capacity will be examined in section IV.6.

¹ Theodor Brandt, Tertullian's Ethik, (Gutersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1929) p 194.

² Christoph Stucklin, Tertullian - De virginibus velandis, (Frankfurt/M: Peter Lang; Bern; Herbert Lang, 1974) p 205.

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Here two thoughts are already effective which do not confront each other without tension: guilt and weakness on the one side, creation and similar ethics (equal moral law) on the other.

As regards the position of the woman in the community, Tertullian adopts a stance which is determined by two factors: on the one hand he accepts the woman as an equally worthy fellow-Christian (sister in faith), on the other hand it seems to him that the female sex is particularly laden with guilt, since all women share the original sin of their progenitrix(of mankind) Eva.

"On Women's Apparel" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

IV. 5 CHILDREN COUNTED INNOCENT UNTIL PUBERTY AT 14

Whenever Adam and Eve were able to discriminate between good and evil, they became aware also of certain physical impulses which made them desire to cover their bodies.¹ Tertullian turned the equation round, and taught that when every individual boy or girl reached that same stage of physical development (puberty of the body) he or she underwent a corresponding puberty of the soul and could discriminate between good and evil. In consequence, every individual adolescent left the paradise of innocence in which he or she had lived as a child and individual souls were invaded by sinful desires, desires which had not come from nature.² These new desires made the individual accountable in the sight of God.

nunc societatem pubertatem quoque animalem cum carnali dicimus conuenire pariterque et illam suggestu sensuum et istam processu membrorum exurgere a quarto decimo fere anno ... Si enim Adam et Eua ex agnitione boni et mali pudenda tegere senserunt, ex quo id ipsum sentimus agnitionem boni et mali profiteamur.³

Tertullian was at pains to stress, in introducing the simultaneous puberty of body and soul, that it did not conflict with his earlier teaching.

omnia naturalia animae ipsi substantiae inesse pertinentia ad sensum et intellectum ex ingenito animae censu, sed paulatim per aetatis spatia procedere et uarie per accidentia euadere pro artibus, pro institutis, pro locis, pro dominatricibus potestatibus, quod tamen faciat ad carnis animaeque propositam nunc societatem, pubertatem quoque animalem cum carnali dicimus ...⁴

¹ In addition to the passage from de anima, to be quoted in part below, Tertullian made the same point in pal 3.4.34-40; mon 17.5.24-28; virg 11.2.9-13; and orat 22.8.60 (quoted later in this section). He regarded the fig leaves of Adam and Eve as symbols of a depraved life, (where Irenaeus had regarded them as signs of penitence, adu. haer. 3.23.5.) The matter was discussed at length by Hugo Koch, Tertullianisches IV.8: "Die Feigenblätter der Stammelterne bei Irenäus und bei Tertullian und die Nachwirkung ihrer Erklärungen", Theologische Studien und Kritiken, 104 (1932), 39-50.

² Tertullian appears to have defined this first outworking of the vitium originis in terms which nowadays would be called 'lust'.

³ an 38.1.7-10 and 38.2.12-14.

⁴ an 38.1.2-8.

We now wish to affirm that the puberty of the soul coincides with that of the body; at about the age of fourteen years, puberty comes to the soul through the development of the senses and to the body of the growth of its organs ... If Adam and Eve felt it necessary to clothe themselves once they had come to the knowledge of good and evil, then we claim to have the same knowledge once we first experience shame.

all the natural properties of the soul with regard to sensation and intelligence are inherent in its very substance, as a result of the intrinsic nature of the soul. As the various stages of life pass, these powers develop by a gradual growth, each in its own way, under the influence of circumstances, whether of education (according to men's means and arts), environment, or under the influence of the supreme powers. At this point in our discussion of the union of soul and body, we now wish to affirm that the puberty of the soul coincides with that of the body;

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

About Tertullian: The Fig Leaves of the First Parents in Irenaeus and in Tertullian and the Consequences of their Explanation. (Periodical article in Theological Studies and Reviews)

fault of origin

Despite Tertullian's own caution in the matter, Waszink took the view that Tertullian, far from being consistent with his own earlier teaching, had here changed his argument to suit the needs of the moment. He pointed out that Tertullian, having in de anima 19 established that the soul had its full complement of faculties, both sensation and intelligence, from the moment of conception, here turned round and argued the very opposite:-

"We must also discuss a view upheld by some people, viz. that neither the intellectus nor the mind are inherent in the soul from the moment of birth, and so must have been introduced into it afterwards (de anima 19.1)...Holy Scripture, too, furnishes an argument: for the children killed at Bethlehem and those who ran to meet Jesus must certainly have possessed sensus and intellectus (section 9)"

The view combatted here by Tertullian can be no other than that of the Stoics, who did not credit man with all faculties at the moment of birth. ...In 38, I Tertullian quietly adopts the contrary view held by Stoics and Asclepiades ...who declared that man is not in possession of the sapientia before the age of fourteen (cf. especially the words: quia Asclepiades inde sapientiam supputat). Moreover, the adaptation of the material is in perfect accordance with Tertullian's usual method: 1

With the greatest of respect to Waszink, Tertullian is disagreeing with Asclepiades, not agreeing with him! Tertullian chose the age of fourteen because of the development of the senses and of the bodily organs, not (he expressly said) because Asclepiades inde sapientiam supputat. It was Waszink who introduced sapientia to the soul at the age of fourteen, not Tertullian. ² Tertullian here repeated the earlier teaching that sensus and intellectus were present from the beginning and there is not inconsistency, far less "a contrary

¹ Waszink, "De Anima", p 268-269.

² Waszink's other criticism of this passage is even more difficult to understand -in his preface to de anima 31 he wrote:- "his own statements are highly inconsistent, as they are always modified by the context in which they occur; in 38.1/2 he mentions a 'puberty of the soul', whereas in 56.5 he says: aetatem...non potest (sc. anima) capere sine corpore, quia per corpora operantur aetates)." Waszink, "De Anima", p 378. With great respect to Waszink, the two statements seem entirely compatible - the point of the passage in chapter 56 was that unless there was a body to age along with the soul, the soul could not grow older - and in chapter 38 he spoke about both body and soul coming together to the age of puberty.

"On the Soul (one of Tertullian's treatises)

intellect

sense

wisdom

because Asclepiades sets that as the age of reason

the age of reason

the senses

intellect

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

The soul cannot grow older without a body because the body is the thing that ages. (literally "by the body the period of life transacts its duties and labours")

view", in asserting that although the soul had been born complete, furnished with all its powers, and that the growth of the soul did not affect its substance, there came a point in time when the knowledge of good and evil, coming through the development of the senses, led the adolescent into thoughts by which de paradiso integritatis educit.¹

That Tertullian believed in principle in accountability, dependent on age, it illustrated by one of his replies to Marcion, who had claimed:

ecce Christus diligit paruulos, tales docens esse debere qui semper maiores uelint esse, creator autem ursos pueris inmisit, ulciscens Heliseum propheten conuicia ab eis passum.²

Tertullian's reply to Marcion was that he had drawn a

Satis impudens antithesis, cum tam diuersa committit, paruulos et pueros, innocentem adhuc aetatem et iudicii iam capacem, quae conuiciari poterat, ne dicam blasphemare.³

God (the true God) had here demonstrated that He was just, because such gross disrespect to old age was blameworthy; the same God had also demonstrated His kindness to the paruulos by protecting the Egyptian midwives who were responsible for their safe arrival, when they were threatened by Pharaoh's edict⁴ - in the one case they were morally blameworthy and deserved punishment, in the other case they were morally innocent and deserved protection.

Whether or not the children who mocked the prophet Elisha had attained the age of fourteen is not stated, but elsewhere (apart from de anima) Tertullian regarded puberty as the point where innocence passed into accountability, not

¹ an 38.2.18.

² II Marc 23.4.19-22.

³ IV Marc 23.5.22-25 - Tertullian made passing reference to the incident also in II Marc 14.4.2-4 - Impendit et ipsum populum, sed ingratum. Inmisit et pueris ursos, sed inreuerentibus in prophetam. Vindicanda erat procacitas aetatis uerecundiam debentis.

⁴ IV Marc 23.5.2-3.

he is driven out of the paradise of his innocence and chastity.

Christ loves the little ones and teaches that all whoever wish to be the greater, need to be as they: whereas the Creator sent bears against some boys, to avenge Elisha the prophet for mockery he had suffered from them.

Fairly reckless antithesis, when it sets together such diverse things, little children and boys, an age as yet innocent, and an age now capable of judgment, which knew how to mock, not to say, blaspheme.

little children

"On the soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

He afflicts even Israel, because they are ungrateful; He sent bears against certain children, but they had been showing disrespect to a prophet. The shamelessness of a reprehensible epoch had to be punished.

only in the ordinary affairs of the world, but in the sight of God:

Excusetur nunc aetas, quae sexum suum ignorat (simplicitatis priuilegium teneat: nam et Eua et Adam, ubi eis contigit sapere, texerunt statim quod agnouerant), certe in quibus iam pueritia mutauit, sicut naturae, ita et disciplinae debet aetas esse munifica. Nam et membris et officiis mulieribus resignantur. ¹

Iam et uox obsolefacta est, et membra completa sunt, et pudor ubique uestitur, et menses tributa dependunt, ac tu mulierem negas quam muliebria pati dicis? ²

Tempus etiam ethnici obseruant, ut ex lege naturae iura sua aetatibus reddant. Nam feminas quidem a duodecim annis, masculum uero a duobus amplius ad negotia mittunt, pubertatem in annis, non sponsalibus aut nuptiis decernentes. ³

If it is accepted, then, on these texts, that Tertullian counted the (soul of the) child innocent until the age of fourteen, and since it was established clearly in section IV. 3 above that the soul took the lead, and that the body could not in itself initiate a sinful action, this section can be concluded with a further brief reference to the standing of the "flesh" before God.

When, in de resurrectione carnis chapter 18, Tertullian examined Romans 8: 8-13, he commented that while the apostle regularly condemned the works of the flesh, he always showed by the context that it was not the flesh itself which was being condemned, but the deeds of the flesh - discas opera carnis damnari, non ipsam . ⁴ If sin did dwell in the flesh, it was because it was already dwelling in the soul; Tertullian had continually to be alert for dualistic heresies, which taught the soul was tainted merely by contact with the body. This was not so, he argued; the soul acquired actual sin only at a certain point in its progress through life - at the fourteenth year. If until then the soul was counted innocent before God, it could not be the body which made the soul guilty.

¹ orat 22.8.60-65.

² virg 11.4.38-40.

³ virg 11.6.48-52.

⁴ res 46.8.27.

Granted that at the moment that period of life which is unaware of its own sex should be excused. (Granted that it should retain the privilege of its innocence: for both Eve and Adam, when realisation came to them, immediately covered what they had come to be aware of. At any rate, in the case of those who have left childhood, as their years involve the functions of nature, so ought they to involve those of discipline. For women are revealed by their members and duties.

Already her voice has changed, her limbs fully formed, her "shame" everywhere clothing itself, the months paying their tributes; and do you deny her to be a woman whom you assert to be undergoing womanly experiences?

Time even the heathens observe, that, in obedience to the law of nature, they may render their own rights to the different ages. For their females they despatch to their business from the age of twelve years, but the male from two years later: decreeing puberty to consist in years, not in espousals or nuptials.

"On the Resurrection of the Body" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

You may learn once more that it is the works of the flesh that are condemned, not the flesh itself.

The innocence of children before God, up to the age of fourteen, does not depend only on the texts quoted in this section. In chapter III.3 reference was made to the presence of animae immaturae in the 'good' part of Hades; with them (whatever age that covered) Tertullian included animas ... innuptas et pro condicione aetatis puras et innocuas.¹ The souls of those who by their age were necessarily pure and innocent were apparently in such a relationship to God in life that, on premature death, they (even unbaptised) were worthy of a resting place in the region of Hades reserved for those in a right relationship to God.

The next point which Tertullian made was also explored in section III.3 above - that when a person died, the soul, although already possessing all its faculties, did not develop any further - in particular, it did not develop any further relationship with God. Tertullian mentioned, in that context, puer inuestis, in addition to infans sub uberum fontibus, and then went on to the next category, uesticeps,² all of whom would not grow older without a body. One final relevant point, in considering the relationship to God of children under fourteen, is Tertullian's advice (considered in chapter III.5) to defer baptism, not just until puberty but until the candidate had settled down. In view, however, of the importance and significance of baptism it must be said that the innocence of children under the age of fourteen was not 'absolute'. They were, until baptised, subject to the presence of original sin, but nevertheless, Tertullian could speak of their childhood as a time of 'innocence'.

It is both significant and consistent with his general attitude toward sin that he regarded children, who had not the understanding to obey or to disobey the divine law, as innocent. Accountable sin had its seat in the will not in the

¹ an 56.8.64-65.

² an 56.5.33-34.

the souls of infants

the souls ... of virgins and those who by their age (literally "condition in life") ^{were} pure and innocent

an immature boy ... an infant still being nursed at his mother's breast ... a youth arrived at puberty

flesh and therefore not in the soul before the age of puberty. The essence of sin was disobedience to the divine law, and eternal death was not the natural fruit of corruption but the penalty for guilt. Because of this personal notion of sin, Tertullian could consistently uphold both his doctrine of original sin, by virtue of traducianism, and at the same time say children under fourteen were not under condemnation and not punishable for inherited guilt. Unless and until they could be held responsible for any actual sins they might commit, they were 'innocent' in the moral sense and innocent in the sight of God.

IV. 6 ROMAN LAW FOR THIS AREA

Three sections of this chapter require further examination in the light of Roman Law. First, when Tertullian was dealing with the respective responsibilities of the soul and the body (section three), he twice referred to the degree of blame which attached to accomplices and to servants and to instruments, in the commission of crime. To take the latter analogy first, Tertullian compared the body to a cup, used by a poisoner to administer the fatal dose; the human body was, in one sense at least, like a calix in respect of the initiative taken by the soul. It was a useful point to make in the context of resurrection; if in law an instrument was regarded as innocent, then it deserved to be saved:

Venenum dare scelus est, calix tamen, in quo datur, reus non est. Ita et corpus carnalium operum uas est, anima est autem, quae in illo uenenum alicuius mali facti temperat. Quale est autem ut, si anima, auctrix operum carnis, merebitur dei regnum per expiationem eorum, quae in corpore admisit, corpus, ministrum solummodo, in damnatione permaneat? Venefico absoluto calix erit puniendus? ¹

uasculum uero ipsum non esse sententiae obnoxium, quia nec calicem damnari, si quis eum ueneno temperarit, nec gladium ad bestias pronuntiari, si quis eo latrocinium fuerit operatus. ²

Since, however, that analogy could be deliberately misunderstood by his opponents and used against him, Tertullian safeguarded his position by contrasting the Roman legal position with what he really wanted to say - the body, although in some respects like a calix and so deserving of resurrection if the (more guilty) soul was to be resurrected, did share some degree of guilt or innocence. It was not really like an instrument, certainly not like an instrument detached in some way from the person acting; it was an integral part of the moral being. In other words, Tertullian took the vasculum/calix argument, which he himself had introduced, out of the area of strict law and back into the wider

¹ V Marc 10.13.2-9.

² res 16.4.12-15.

To administer poison is a felony, yet the cup in which it is administered is not brought under accusation. So also the body is the receptacle of carnal acts, but it is the soul which in the body mixes the poison of this or that evil deed. If then the soul, the author of the works of the flesh, is to be counted worthy of the kingdom of God through the cleansing of the sins it has committed in the body, how can it be that the body, a mere servant, is to continue under condemnation? Shall the poisoner be acquitted and the cup punished?

The receptacle itself is not liable to sentence, since neither is a cup condemned if someone has mixed poison in it, nor does a sword receive capital sentence if someone has committed highway-robbery with it.

cup

receptacle/cup

field of common sense and experience.

Nostris quoque sordibus nubilum uel non pro animo temperatum elidere solemus, quo magis puero irascamur At enim et calix bene sibi conscius et de diligentia ministri commendatus de coronis quoque potatoris sui inornabitur aut aspergine florum honorabitur. ¹

In the same passage he showed how men gave an honourable place in the home to a sword which had brought them battle honours, but Gladium uero latrociniiis ebrum quis non a domo tota, nedum a cubiculo, nedum a capitis sui officio relegabit, praesumens scilicet nihil aliud se quam inuidiam animarum somniaturum urgentium et inquietantium sanguinis sui concubinum? ² In answer to the (hypothetical) opponent who then asked, Estne ergo et in uascula et in instrumenta sententiam figere, ut dominorum et auctorum meritis et ipsa communicent?, ³ Tertullian deliberately ignored the implications of Roman Law, which knew nothing about deodand, and maintained that the body was not really an instrument; in other words, Roman law was useful, but only up to a point.

Tertullian's use of Roman Law here, to illustrate the relationship between body and soul, is a good example of his opportunism in argument. When he wanted to emphasise the importance of the body, as in de resurrectione carnis chapters 16 and 17, he used the analogies of servant and accomplice to serve that end. He showed, in chapter 16, how the flesh was like a servant, capable of legal responsibility for a deed imposed by its master; the two were accomplices and so jointly responsible for their deeds. In chapter 17 he set out the legal relationship between the intention and the act, demonstrating the responsibility of the flesh for carrying out what the soul had planned. When, however, he wanted to minimise (not maximise) the responsibility of the body, he employed

¹ res 16.6.24-26 and 8.30-32. The striking expression bene sibi conscius for a cup that had never been used for the mixing of poison was remarked on by Heinrich Hoppe, Syntax und Stil des Tertullian, (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1903) p 179.

² res 16.7.26-30.

³ res 16.9.35-37.

Even one that is clouded with our own filth or that is not mixed to our taste, we are wont to smash, to signify more clearly our annoyance with the pageboy.... On the other hand, a cup with a good conscience, which has been praised because of the servant's care, will also be adorned from the garland of him who drinks from it, or honoured by the strewing of flowers.

as for the sword that is drunken with murders, who will not banish it from his whole house, not to speak of his bed-chamber or his pillow, taking the view, of course, that he would dream of nothing else than the reproaches of souls that are pressing on and disturbing the bed-fellow of their own blood?

Is it possible therefore to attach *sentence* even to receptacles and tools, that they too may share in the merits of their owners and principals?

deodand - in old English law, a personal chattel which had been the immediate, accidental cause of the death of a human being, was forfeited to the Crown to be applied for pious purposes.

"On the Resurrection of the Dead" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

(a cup) with a good conscience.

"Syntax and Style of Tertullian" (Book)

the same analogies entirely the other way:

Sed et si carni delicta reputantur, praecedit animae reatus et culpae principatus animae potius adscribendus, cui caro ministri nomine occurrit. Carens denique anima caro hactenus peccat, ¹

and even more so in de anima chapter 40:

non tamen suo nomine caro infamis. Neque enim de proprio sapit quid aut sentit suadendam uel imperandam peccatellam. Quidni? quae ministerium est, et ministerium non quale seruus uel minor amicus, animalia nomina sed quale calix uel quid aliud eiusmodi corpus non anima. Nam et calix ministerium sitientis est; nisi tamen qui sitit calicem sibi accomodarit, nihil calix ministrabit. ²

However much Tertullian may seem to deny in one place the validity of the very analogy which he himself had used in another, it seems clear that here he drew on his knowledge of Roman law to illustrate his theology. What makes the analogies even more significant is that they appear to be Tertullian's own; in Waszink's detailed commentary on de anima, chapter 40 is one of the few places where Waszink can find no other source for Tertullian's argument.

The second main area, where Roman Law is relevant to this chapter, is for section four, which looked at the respective positions of men and women in their standing before God. Roman law severely restricted the capacity of women, on account of their sex and its presumed weakness of disposition. ³ To take but three examples, Roman law forbade women to fill any publica munera or to act as magistrate, judge, advocate, or procurator; ⁴ women could not in general act as tutors to pupil children who were sui juris and they were not permitted to be sureties for anyone; ⁵ and until the time of Diocletian and Maximian (i.e. until

¹ I Marc 24.4.29-02.

² an 40.2.6-13.

³ Gaius, Institutes, 1.190.

⁴ Digest 59.17.2.pr; Code 2.13.4; 2.13.18; Paul, Sent. 1.2.1.

⁵ By the senatus consultus Vellæanum, A.D. 46.

Also even if the flesh has sins accounted to it, the soul's guilt precedes, and the initiative in blame ought for preference to be imputed to the soul to which the flesh ministers in the capacity of a servant. In fact, when flesh is deprived of soul it ceases to sin.

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises).

the body does not merit this disgrace in its own right. For, it is not of itself that it thinks or feels anything toward urging or commanding something sinful. How could it, when it is only an instrument? And, an instrument not as a servant or a friend - they are human beings - but rather as a cup or something like that: it is body, and not soul. Now, a cup may serve the need of a thirsty man, but, unless he lifts the cup to his lips, the cup will yield no ministering service.

public office

literally "of his own law" - a technical phrase of Roman law - anyone not under family authority or in slavery was "sui juris" - i.e. independent

"Advice" by the senate to a magistrate, had become, by the later principate of the Roman empire, an important means of making new law.

well after Tertullian's death), women could not lawfully adopt, because they could not possess patria potestas. Even when the right to adopt was eventually conceded to women - ex indulgentia principis as a solace for the loss of their own children - the right was qualified and never carried with it the acquisition of potestas.¹ As was elegantly and concisely expressed by Ulpian, "Mulier autem familiae suae et caput et finis est" - the beginning and the end of her family.²

For the sake of brevity in this present study, it can be stated shortly that Tertullian does not appear to have used any term of Roman Law to distinguish the relationship to God of boys and girls, or of men and women. On the contrary, he encouraged women to make their own decision about the state of life which they should embrace. Under Roman law, women were first under the potestas of their fathers and then under the potestas of their husbands; nevertheless, Tertullian urged women with unsympathetic husbands to make their own decision to follow the Christian way of life and to hold to it, regardless of opposition from the unbelieving spouse.

The third area of Roman Law touched on by this chapter was in section five, in connection with the age of responsibility. Tertullian fixed this at puberty, which he said occurred at about the age of fourteen, non quia Asclepiades inde sapientiam supputat, nec quia iura ciuilia adhinc agendis rebus attemperant, sed quoniam et haec a primordio ratio est.³ He expressly stated that he had not followed the Roman Civil Law, but that he took his doctrine from the situation described in Genesis. When sin entered the lives of Adam and Eve, they felt it necessary to take certain protective action. Tertullian therefore concluded that

¹ Gaius, Institutes, 1.104; Justinian, Institutes 1.11.10.

² Digest, 50.16.195.5.

³ an 38.1.10-12.

the complete power of the oldest male ascendent over his children and wife

by imperial indulgence

(family) authority

A woman is the beginning and the end of her family.

(we fix on this age) not because Asclepiades sets that as the age of reason nor because civil laws then consider a boy as competent to conduct business, but because this was the appointed order from the beginning.

when similar feelings came to children, it was for a similar reason, namely an infusion of sinful thoughts.

The Civil Law to which he referred, and which he rejected as the reason for fixing on the age of fourteen, was still a matter of debate in Tertullian's day. Later, puberty was fixed at fourteen for males and twelve for females, but in the time of Gaius it was still disputed whether, for males, it should be determined by age or by actual physical development¹. The Proculeians held that a particular age should be fixed for puberty in all cases, while the Sabinians thought that the status of puberty should depend on each case on the physical development of the individual; Javolenus required both!² But although Tertullian rejected the Civil Law as the reason for fixing responsibility at the age of fourteen, he picked up one word from it, very relevant to this chapter. Children below fourteen were excused from responsibility, he said, by reason of privilegium. Privilegium, in Roman jurisprudence, was a private law, applying only to a few named individuals or to a specific group or class. Tertullian insisted that Eve and Adam, covering themselves on the loss of their innocence, were a precedent for his ruling that when innocence passes away at puberty, so did its privilegium - its private exemption (innocence) from the general law, which was the guilt (immunda) of all men.

¹ Gaius, Institutes 1.196.

² Ulpian 11.28.

"a law involving some individuals" - the opposite of general laws affecting everyone.

impurity

IV. 7. CONCLUSIONS FROM CHAPTER FOUR

If Tertullian had felt it necessary to draw any specific distinction between the relationship to God of infants, children and adolescents, particularly the eternal destiny of those who died during childhood, he did not lack the opportunity to do so. One in four of those who survived the perils of infancy would never reach the age of puberty,¹ and in some families, the percentage was worse. An epitaph has been discovered for a Christian lady (as her name shows) who was buried at Giufi before the year A.D. 227, and the inscription runs:

PESCENNIA QVOD VVL (sic) DEVS
H.M.F. BONIS NATALIBVS
NATA. MATRONALITER
NVPTA. VXOR CASTA
MATER PIA GENVIT FILI
OS. III. ET FILIAS. II VIXIT
ANNIS. XXX. P. VICTORI
NA. VIXIT. ANNIS. VII. P.
SVNNIVS. VIXIT. ANNIS
III. P. MARCVS VIXIT
ANNIS. II. P. MARCEL
L V S VIXIT. ANNV. I. P. FO
RTVNATA. VIXIT. ANNIS
XIII. M. VIII. P MARCEL
LVS CONIVGI DIGNAE
SED ET FILIS FILIABUS
QVE NOSTRIS ME VI
VO MEMORIAM FECI
OMNIBVS ESSE PERENNEM.²

"Pescennia God's will - honestae memoriae femina - a lady of honourable memory - well born - duly wedded - a chaste wife - an affectionate mother - bore three sons and two daughters and died aged 30: her children were Pescennia Victorina who lived seven years: Pescennius Sunnius lived three years: P. Marcus two: P. Marcellus one: P. Fortunata 13 years and eight months: I, Pescennius Marcellus who survive them, have erected this tombstone to be an everlasting memorial for all to see, to my dearest wife and our sons and daughters"

¹ The juvenile mortality figure of 25% is my calculation from information contained in Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum, vol. VIII, Supplement III, 12590 - 13229 and Supplement IV 24629 - 25004. This records data taken from 745 tombstones of the Domus Caesaris (slaves and freedmen of the imperial civil service) at Carthage in the first and second centuries.

² Corpus Inscriptorum Latinarum vol VIII. 870.

Interpretation below

a lady of honourable memory

Collection of Latin Inscriptions

household of Caesar

In such a situation, where the death of children was a common event, the absence of more comment by Tertullian on any particular relationship of infants and children to God, does seem to justify the conclusion that he had little distinctive to say in that area.

Accordingly, to the conclusions which were reached in the last chapter (dealing with the relationship of infants to God,) namely:

(a) that the relationship of body and soul to God was a quietly developing relationship, closely linked at all times;

(b) that the soul was affected by a vitium originis and, in addition, was assailed from birth by the devil;

(c) that in the 'good' part of Hades, there were 'those who by their age were necessarily pure and innocent'; and

(d) that healthy children and adolescents should defer their baptism;

the following further conclusions can now be added, to complete Part One of this study.

(e) Satan's attack on the soul continued, and developed into a struggle for the mastery of the individual human life - the struggle being centred on the soul of the individual: section two.

(f) The struggle was concentrated on the soul, because the soul took the initiative in all matters of human conduct: section three.

(g) While Tertullian held strong views on the respective positions of men and women in the Church, he drew no distinction between their relationship to God at the childhood and adolescent stages of life: section four.

(h) Until the age of puberty, children enjoyed privilegium - exemption from the normal consequences of sin in human nature and the constant attacks of the devil. It was only at puberty that each successive child left a paradise

fault of origin

"a law involving some individuals only"

of innocence, for a new world of sinful desires, which had not sprung from nature. Until then Tertullian acknowledged a category of 'innocence', those who, although unbaptised and carrying the taint of Fall, were not under the condemnation of God: section five.

(i) Roman law has, apart from the word privilegium, only one contribution to Tertullian's expression of the relationship of the child to God at this stage. The lead taken by the soul, over the body, was expressed to some extent in terms of the master/servant and accomplice analogies of Roman Civil Law: section six.

For those children who survived to adult life, an entirely new relationship with God awaited - in a world where He gave evidence about Himself and for which He called all men and women to account. The second part of the thesis therefore takes up the relationship to God of unregenerate adult life and the third part will take up the relationship of those who responded to the initiative of God and who came in adult life into membership of the Church.

"a law involving some individuals only"

PART TWO

THE RELATIONSHIP OF UNREGENERATE ADULTS TO GOD

CHAPTER FIVE: THE NATURAL MAN'S KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

V.1. INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER FIVE

Whatever religious beliefs the unregenerate may have held, they were estranged from God by their rejection (even in ignorance) of the vicarious sacrifice of Christ on their behalf. Tertullian's description of those outside the Christian faith - he employed at least twenty-six nouns and adjectives - is examined in section two of this chapter, with particular reference to the relationship to God implied in the twenty-six words he used. Nevertheless, God Himself had at all times taken the initiative toward establishing a right relationship with mankind, and had made Himself the 'tutor' of all. To the generality of mankind, He spoke through the soul but He also gave men the ability to see Himself in nature. These two stand next to each other as mutually supportive pieces of evidence; the external evidence (of works) was stressed in the treatises against Marcion and the internal evidence (of the soul) was emphasised in the apologetic works addressed to the heathen. This initiative on the part of God toward man, especially Tertullian's expressions of the love of God to man, is set out in section three.

Because God revealed Himself to all, in such a way that man could not only find Him but find Him with adequate assurance, it was one of Tertullian's strongest convictions that all men had, or should have, some knowledge of God. He was careful not to distinguish, as the Gnostics did, between the spiritual man, who could apprehend God, and the natural man, who could not. The texts which

deal with this are noted in section four; it is reserved until the next chapter to consider how far the failure to recognise God was culpable and when man was accountable to God.

Sections five to nine set out the five main ways in which Tertullian expected an outsider to begin to enter into a relationship with God. For the majority of mankind, it ought to be through the testimony of their own souls(section five) but this should be supplemented, perhaps even initiated, by the observation of the created world as the handiwork of God (section six). Those who had heard God speak in a dream or in a vision (section seven), those who had come into contact with Christians (section eight) and those who had access to the Scriptures (section nine), had additional ways of knowing God. Finally, the relevant areas of Roman law are set out in section ten and conclusions are drawn in section eleven.

V.2 TERTULLIAN'S DESCRIPTION OF NON-CHRISTIANS

All thirty-one of Tertullian's extant treatises make some reference to the heathen.¹ The word which he used most frequently was nationes, and in this he was unique - the Thesaurus linguae latinae² demonstrates that every other Latin patristic writer preferred gens to natio. It is appropriate, therefore, that Tertullian's treatise to the heathen at large should be entitled ad nationes³ and that it should be almost the only surviving apology so addressed.

Although natio appears 218 times in his works (of which 188 refer to the heathen, three in the singular and the remainder in the plural) natio accounts for less than 40% of Tertullian's references to those outside the Christian faith. Of the other words, many (like natio itself) are not inherently descriptive of the relationship of man to God and so are not the direct concern of this study - for example, barbarus, communis, saeculis and saecularis all appear, at some point in his works, in the sense of "heathen" although Tertullian did not normally employ these words to contrast pagans with Christians. Other words, which are descriptive of the relationship between man and God, as Tertullian saw it - for example caecus, infidelis and profanus - are examined below.

¹In the chart which follows, there are no references to the heathen against some of Tertullian's works because in those works he did not use the particular four words analysed in the chart; he did, however, use other words for the heathen in those works.

² vol VI.2 (Lipsiae, 1934) cols. 1862-1865.

³The title is missing from the beginning of the only extant manuscript, Agobardinus, but it is found in the explicit of Books 1 and 2, in the incipit of Book 2, and in the index of the manuscript. The title ad nationes has been generally accepted since the editio princeps of Gothofredus "Q.S.Fl. Tertulliani ad nationes libri II", Geneva, 1625. The fact that Jerome wrote about Tertullian: "Apologeticus eius et contra gentes libri," (Epist. 70.5), is not generally held to contradict the view that Tertullian himself preferred ad nationes.

the nations

Treasury (Encyclopaedia) of the Latin Language

people - nation

"To the Gentiles (Nations)" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

nation

barbarian, common, secular, heathen/pagan

blind, unbelieving, profane

Agobardus - one of the early manuscripts of some of Tertullian's treatises

Conclusion/End of the book

Introduction

first edition

Q.S.F. Tertullian - "To the Gentiles (Nations) - Two Books"

His Apology and Books against the Heathen

Tertullian's four most common words for the heathen were ethnicus, gens, gentilis, and natio; the chart on the following page sets out the frequency and the location of these four words in his works, divided into five categories¹ viz.:-

- (a) heathen as opposed to Christian, ("X" in the chart)
- (b) heathen in relation to God, ("G" in the chart),
- (c) heathen in contrast with the Jew, ("J" in the chart),
- (d) heathen in general terms, (i.e. not specifically contrasted with Christians or with God or with Jews, ("N" in the chart), and
- (e) the word used in senses other than heathen ("O" in the chart)².

¹ There are of course some uses which refuse to conform to such a neat and artificial classification.

² For example, gens appears 162 times, but of these only 60 (i.e. as little as 37%) refer to the heathen - the remainder are references to "tribes", "races", "peoples", and "nations" without religious connotation. Tertullian's lack of enthusiasm for gens as a word for the heathen is evident from the fact it does not appear at all, in that sense, in over two-thirds of his works.

heathen, people, pagan, nation

people

	ETHNICUS							GENS							GENTILIS							NATIO					
	X	G	J	N	T	O		X	G	J	N	T	O		X	G	J	N	T	O		X	G	J	N	T	O
mart																											
nat													13														
apol													18														
test													2														
jud																											
spec	6		2	4	12			2	22			24	20														
praes	2		3		5	1																					
bapt																											
pat													1		1		1	2									
paen																	1	1									
cult											1	1	1		6		5	11	1						2	1	
ux											1	1			5		15	20							2	2	
orat															1			1	1						4		
Herm																									1		
Marc	1	5		3	9			13	7	8	28	25				3		3						2	10	68	9
pal													5												3		
carn				3	3																				1	1	2
Val													1														
an	5	1		1	7								6														2
res	3			3	6				1	2	3	2													3	7	10
cor	2				2																				2	2	
scorp	2				2						1	1	2												2	8	10
idol	10			2	12																				4		9
Scap																											
ex				1	1																						
fug													1												3	1	6
virg	1			7	8																						10
Prax													1													4	2
jej	1			2	3																						6
mon	6				6								1														1
pud	10	9	6	8	33				1	1	2	1													1	3	1
Totals	49	15	11	34	109	1		15	31	14	60	102		13	3	27	43	2						24	23	87	54

CODE TO CHART

- X = in contrast to Christians
 G = in relation to God
 J = in contrast with the Jews
 N = in general terms
 T = total of all usages where the meaning 'heathen' was intended
 O = total of all usages where some meaning other than 'heathen' was intended

heathen, people, pagan, nation

Whether these four words were intended to convey different shades of meaning or whether Tertullian used them simply interchangeably is outside the scope of this study,¹ but it is apparent from the chart that natio was Tertullian's commonest word when he described the relationship of non-believers to God. He did, however, employ both ethnicus and gens fifteen times each (against twenty-three uses of natio); it was only gentilis which he did not employ at all in that context.

Of greater significance for this study is the considerable variety of other words and phrases which, although they occur less frequently, describe different aspects of the relationship of the heathen to God. The list is not exhaustive, but Tertullian described the natural man as:

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| (a) <u>caecus</u> | bapt 1.1.1; paen 1.1.3 |
| (b) <u>damnatus</u> | 1 cult 1.3.31; 1 cult 2.1.1 |
| (c) <u>extraneus</u> | an 51.7.42; apol 1.2. 12; apol 16.4.19;
II cult 11.2.13; ex 13.1.4; paen 1.3.10;
pud 11.7.30; II ux 2.9.61; II ux 3.1.8;
II ux 3.2.13 |
| (d) <u>filius iracundiae</u> | V Marc 17.9.12; V Marc 17.10.15 |
| (e) <u>filius irae</u> | an 16.7.42; an 21.4.27 |
| (f) <u>hostis dei</u> | apol 48.15.96-97 |
| (g) <u>ignorans dei</u> | apol 1.4.25; apol 1.6.33-35; paen 1.3.9
res 37.9.40 |
| (h) <u>infidelis</u> | II cult 4.2.13/15; IV Marc 29.9. 11/21/22;
pud 15.5.19; pud 15.6.24; II ux 2.1.7/8/10/11;
II ux 2.2. 12/13/18/19/20; II ux 2.3.24;
II ux 2.7.52; II ux 3.3.20 |

¹ This was the subject of a paper given by me at the Ninth International Conference on Patristic Studies, held at Oxford from 3rd to 8th September 1979 and to be published during 1980 as part of the official proceedings of the Conference.

nation

heathen - people

nation - pagan

blind

dammned

stranger

child of anger

child of wrath

enemy of God

ignorant of God

unbeliever

- (i) iniquis II ux 6.1.7
- (j) iniustus an 47.2.11; res 26.8.33
- (k) inreligiosus ex 3.6.36; res 26.8.31
- (l) in tenebris mart 2.2.5; III Marc 20.2.27; IV Marc 8.1.28;
pud 7.11.49
- (m) in umbra mortis jud 6.1.12-13
- (n) nocentes apol 48.15.96; II cult 7.2.14
- (o) non integre ad deum apol 48.13.86
- (p) paganus¹
- (q) peccator I cult 2.2.16; idol 5.2.21/22; pud 9.7.26;
res 37.9.39; spec 3.5.23
- (r) profanus an 47.2.10; apol 48.13.86
- (s) perditus pat 7.10.38
- (t) sine dominici lumine paen 1.1.3
- and of them it could be said that they
- (u) deum ignorant jud 3.12.84
- (w) deum nesciunt II cult 1.2.24; jud 3.12.84;
pud 9.13.58

The word which Tertullian used above all others, to describe the natural man in his relationship to God, was 'idolater'. Satan and his demons had so

¹ Tertullian used paganus three times, but always in the sense "civilian" as opposed to "soldier", not "pagan" as opposed to "Christian". It is well established that paganus did not acquire a religious meaning until the fourth or the beginning of the fifth century, but note should be taken of Miss Mohrmann's comment on de corona 11: apud hunc tam miles paganus fidelis, quam paganus est miles fidelis.

"Ce passage de Tertullien est d'autant plus important qu'il prouve que le mot paganus a fait de bonne heure son entrée dans la terminologie de la militia Christi. Dès le moment qu'on désignait les chrétiens comme milites Christi, on pourrait considérer les païens comme pagani "civils" ou comme M. Harnack l'a formulé: "Leute. die Gott bzw. Christo den Fahneneid (sacramentum) nicht geleistet, also am Sakrament nicht Anteil haben, d. h. Zivilisten, also pagani". Christine Mohrmann, "Études sur le Latin des Chrétiens", (Rome: 1958) I, 28.

wicked

unjust

irreligious

in darkness

in the shadow of death

wicked/culpable

not right with God

pagan

sinner

profane

lost

without the light of God

were ignorant of God

did not know God

pagan

"On the Soldier's Crown" (one of Tertullian's treatises): With Him the faithful citizen is a soldier, just as the faithful soldier is a citizen.

This passage of Tertullian is especially important because it proves that the word "pagan" had made an early entry into the terminology of the soldiery of Christ. From the moment that one designated the Christians as "Soldiers of Christ", one could consider the pagans as "civilians", or, as M. Harnack put it."

"People who have not taken the oath of allegiance (sacrament) to God or to Christ, thus do not participate in the sacrament, that is civilians, thus pagani."

Studies on the Latin of the Christians

successfully corrupted mankind that man's right relationship to God was, in the natural man, supplanted by an allegiance to idols. Every non-Christian was involved. All the events of life involved sacrifices to idols and idol-worship (idol.16); business contracts included an appeal to the pagan deities (idol 23); dress and decorations were mixed up with idol-worship (idol 8); the slave was called upon by his master to assist in the household sacrifices (idol 17); birthdays were celebrated with pagan rites (idol 15); the common language of society, whether in adjuration, malediction, or benediction involved an invocation of the gods of the country (idol 20-22). Modern readers with a love of flowers, and an appreciation of scent and bright colours, may be surprised at the vehemence with which Tertullian denounced flowers outside doors, windows, wreaths and the like, but the symbolism behind them was important to Tertullian; these were explicit signs of paganism, demonstrations of idolatry, with a provocative significance. Idolatry was the one great offence of the human race because it included all others.

Bigg remarked that "We are apt to speak of heathenism in the abstract in antithesis to the Gospel. But the sharp antagonisms of language do not exist in nature. There were innumerable gradations of heathenism ranging from the lowest to all but the highest phase of the religious life";¹ that may be so, but when Tertullian spoke about heathen virtues, as he occasionally did, it was nearly always simply for the sake of the argument, either to parry malicious criticism of similar features in Christian life, or to shame Christians out of their laxity, or to be ~~used~~ in some other way?² As far as the relationship of the heathen to God was concerned, they were in darkness, ignorance, blindness, error and the other estranged concepts listed above. Nevertheless, God loved all of His creation, alienated though they might be, and God's love for mankind is examined next.

¹ Charles Bigg, The Church's Task under the Roman Empire, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905) p 1.

² Examined in chapter VI.5 below. Tertullian not only recognised but also appreciated pagan virtue in the area of human relationships; what he condemned was pagan virtue as a substitute for a right relationship with God.

V.3 THE LOVE OF GOD FOR NON-BELIEVERS

Although Tertullian stressed the estrangement of the natural man from God, he was equally at pains to emphasise the loving-kindness and mercy of God toward all of His creation. God cared for the general well-being of mankind, whether they responded to Him or not - 'imbres etiam et soles suos peraequante deo iustis et iniustis ;¹ quae etiam inreligiosis et blasphemis semel homini addicta conditione communicat, pluens super bonos et malos et solem suum emittens super iustos et iniustos'.² Tertullian contrasted the confidence which the Christian could have in God with the attitude which the non-Christian had to adopt toward his so-called divinities - apud uos de humano arbitratu diuinitas pensitatur. Nisi homini deus placuerit, deus non erit; homo iam deo propitius esse debet'.³ Indeed, Christianity was the one and only religion of Tertullian's day which welcomed the sinner, and which offered salvation to all men, irrespective of birth, occupation, or race.⁴ Speaking of the flesh, but equally applicable to the whole man, Tertullian drew from the scriptures:

etsi perditam, sed Ego, inquit, ueni, ut quod periit saluum faciam; etsi peccatricem, sed Malo mihi inquit salutem peccatoris quam mortem; etsi damnatam, sed Ego, inquit, percutiam et sanabo.⁵

This was indeed another side of the character of God:

ex ipsius domini persona: etsi fuerint delicta uestra tamquam roseum, uelut niuem exalbabo, etsi tamquam coccinum, uelut lanam exalbabo ... Etiam Micheas de uenia delictorum: quis deus quomodo tu? Eximens iniquitates et praeteriens iniustitias.⁶

¹ an 47.2.10-11.

² res 26.8.31-33.

³ apol 5.1.4-6.

⁴ The point is made by Karl Holl, 'Urchristentum und Religionsgeschichte', in Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte, (Tubingen: Paul Siebeck, 1928) I, 1-12.

⁵ res 9.4.17-20.

⁶ IV Marc 10.2.27-02 and 4-6.

God with divine impartiality causes the rain to fall and the sun to shine upon just and unjust alike.

having once for all assigned the creation to man, he distributes even to the irreligious and blasphemous by "sending His rain on the good and the evil and His sun on the just and the unjust".

among you a god's divinity depends on human judgment. Unless a god please man, he simply will not be a god: man will have to be well-disposed toward the god!

Lost, yet he (God) says, "I am come to save that which is lost". Sinful, yet he says, "I would rather have the saving of a sinner than his death". "I will smite and I will heal".

Our Lord in person speaking: "Though your sins be as scarlet, I will make them white as snow: though they be as crimson, I will make them white as wool"... Also Micah, concerning forgiveness of sins, "Who is a God like until thee, who takest away iniquities and passest over injustices.

"Primitive Christianity and the History of Religion" - article in "Collected Essays on Church History".

Quite apart from offering salvation from sin, Tertullian pointed out to Marcion that God was so concerned for the material welfare of all mankind that He extended His good gifts even to Marcionites!

sed 'unum' esse optimum deum solum, qui sic unus sit optimus, qua solus deus. Et utique optimus qui pluit super iustos et iniustos et solem suum oriri facit super bonos et malos, sustinens et alens et iuuans etiam Marcionitas.¹

Although written in irony, that phrase illustrates an important aspect of Tertullian's teaching about the love of God toward non-believers. With one or two exceptions, to be noted in Chapter VI.4 below, the judgment of God for the rejection and rebellion of man was not executed in this life, but was reserved until the day of judgment.

iam primum qui florem lucis huius super iustos et iniustos aequaliter spargit, qui temporum officia elementorum seruitia totius geniturae tributa dignis simul et indignis patitur occurrere, sustinens ingratissimas nationes ludibria artium et opera manuum suarum adorantes, nomen familiam ipsius persequentes, luxuria auaritia iniquitate malignitate cottidie insolescentes, ut sua sibi patientia detrahat: plures enim dominum idcirco non credunt quia saeculo iratum tam diu nesciunt.²

Tertullian had much to say about hell-fire, and he had no doubt that when the time came, there would be plenty of victims,³ but for the present he spoke more about the God who preferred mercy to sacrifice, who desired penance and not the death of the sinner, and who non praecipit tantum (paenitentia), sed etiam hortatur (et); inuitat praemio: salute; iurans etiam, uiuo dicens cupit credi sibi. O beatos nos quorum causa deus iurat.⁴ He pointed out the patience of God, who never wearied of loving even wicked men and of doing good to them; few places in Tertullian's works are more moving than his description in de pudicitia of God as the waiting Father of the parable. Although it was (in context) written

¹ IV Marc 36.3.12-16.

² pat 2.2.4-3.13.

³ He depicted the fate of pagans, philosophers, heretics, and persecutors in terrible terms in spec 30.3.12-4.19.

⁴ paen 4.7.29⁸/32.

there is one only supremely good God, who is for this reason the one supremely good because he is the only God. And indeed he is supremely good, sending rain upon the just and the unjust, and making his sun to rise upon the good and the bad - bearing with, and feeding, and helping even Marcionites.

Long has He been scattering the brilliance of this light (of the sun) upon the just and unjust alike and has allowed the deserving as well as the undeserving to enjoy the benefits of the seasons, the services of the elements, and the gifts of all creation. He endures ungrateful peoples who worship the trifles fashioned by their skill and the works of their hands, who persecute His name and His children, and who, in their lewdness, their greed, their godlessness and depravity, grow worse from day to day: by His patience He hopes to draw them to Himself. There are many, you see, who do not believe in the Lord because for so long a time they have no experience of His wrath directed against the world.

He not only commands, but

He even exhorts! He coaxes us to it by offering salvation as its reward. He yearns to be trusted, even taking His oath, with the words, "I live" O blessed are we for whose sake God binds Himself by oath:

"On Modesty" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

to encourage the repentance of Christians who had fallen into post-baptismal sin, its tender wording typified Tertullian's teaching on the attitude of God to all men :

Illum etiam mitissimum patrem non tacebo qui prodigum filium reuocat et post inopiam paenitentem libens suscipit, immolans uitulum praeopimum conuiuio gaudium suum exornat: quidni? filium enim inuenerat quem amiserat, cariores senserat quem lucra fecerat. Quis ille nobis intellegendus pater? Deus scilicet: tam pater nemo, tam pius nemo. ¹

It is not uncommon to find, in writings about Tertullian, the criticism that he lacked any appreciation of the tenderness and love of God, that he regarded God chiefly as a Judge, and that this is a serious defect in Tertullian's character:

It is noteworthy that to Tertullian the goodness and the justice of God are the attributes of the greatest importance, and that he never attains to the New Testament conception of the love of God. ²

Auch er betont vornehmlich die Gerichtigkeit und Güte Gottes und der Liebe zu Gott nicht besser als die Apologeten. ³

Ganz in den Spuren der Stoiker wandelnd lässt der Kirchenschriftsteller Tertullian wohl die Milde (clementia) gelten, verwirft aber das Mitleid (misericordia). ⁴

¹ paen 8.6.21-7.27.

² Roberts, op. cit., p 130.

³ Friedrich Loofs, Leitfaden zum Studium der Dogmengeschichte, (4th ed.; Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1906) p 153. There is also a revised (6th) edition by K. Aland, Tübingen: Max Neimeyer, 1959.

⁴ Johannes Stelzenberger, Die Beziehungen der frühchristlichen Sittenlehre zur Ethik der Stoa, (München: M. Hueber, 1933) p 262. Although it is true that the Stoics did not despise mercy ("clementia"), they did consider compassion ("misericordia") to be a weakness, an unhealthy state of the soul, (e.g. E. Elorduv, Die Sozialphilosophie der Stoa in Philologus: Supplementband 28 Heft 3, (Leipzig: 1936) pp 155-160 and Hans Friedrich von Arnim, Stoicorum veterum fragmenta collegit Ioannes ab Arnim, (Leipzig: Maximilianus Adler, 1924), IV, 49). Stelzenberger seems to have misled himself regarding Tertullian's use of Stoicism here. This may have been because he confused the Roman Presbyter Novatianus with the schismatic Novatus of Carthage, and concluded that Tertullian was materially influenced by "his fellow-countryman Novatianus". Contrary to what Stelzenberger claimed, Tertullian delighted in the misericordia of God - even as a Montanist - e.g. pud 6.4.15. See also the comments on misericordia by Pétré at the end of the sub-section immediately following.

Nor shall I neglect to speak of that gentlest of fathers, who takes back home his prodigal son and gladly raises him up in his arms, repentant in his destitution: then, slaying the fatted calf for him, he celebrates his joy with a banquet. And, why not? For he had found his son whom he had lost and he held him all the more precious because he had won him back. Whom are we to understand by that father? God, of course! No one is so much a father. No one is so devoted.

He too emphasizes mainly the justice and goodness of God and love to God not better than the Apologists.

Following in the footsteps of the Stoics, the ecclesiastical author Tertullian does indeed consider mercy (clementia) but rejects compassion (Misericordia).

Manual to the Study of the History of Dogma

The Connections of the Early Christian Moral Teachings to the Ethics of the Stoa.

mercy compassion

The Social Philosophy of the Stoa (The Stoic Philosophy) in Philologus:
Supplementary volume

"Fragments of old Stoicism gathered by John of Arnim."

Their religion seems to have been concentrated on the prospect of Judgement hereafter, and on the consequent necessity of propitiating the wrath of God. It was a religion of fear and dread, not of love. So Tertullian in De Cultu Feminarum, ii.2. "Timor fundamentum salutis est".¹

In order to put such comments into context - the last one, for example, does not indicate that the words cited were written to Christians and not to non-believers - it should be noted that Tertullian defended the love of God for non-believers in three main areas, as follows.

(a) AGAINST MARCION

Marcion contended that the love of God and the judgment of God were incompatible, and so he postulated two gods, of unequal rank, the one a judge, stern and warlike, the other mild, placid, only kind and supremely good.² To oppose him and to show him that God's love and God's judgment each demanded the other, Tertullian stressed the constant mercy and the constant love of the Creator, revealed with impartiality to all mankind, at all times. That was just what Marcion denied; according to Marcion, Christ announced the existence of a superior god, hitherto unknown and unsuspected, who would deliver men from the power of their creator. In refuting this heresy, Tertullian stressed first those attributes which it was inconceivable that God should not possess, among them:

Ita et bonitas perennis et iugis exigitur in deo, quae in thesauris naturalium proprietatum reposita .3

Sed cessauit aliquando in deo Marcionis de opere bonitas: ergo non fuit naturalis bonitas, quae potuit aliquando cessasse, quod naturalibus non licet. Et si non erit naturalis, iam nec aeterna credenda .4

The second book against Marcion is particularly concerned to show that the

¹ W.H.C. Frend, The Donatist Church: a Movement of Protest in Roman North Africa, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952) p 97.

² Marcionem dispare deos constituere alterum iudicem, ferum, bellipotentem, alterum mitem, placidum et tantummodo bonum atque optimum - I Marc 6.1.22-24.

³ I Marc 22.4.5-7.

⁴ I Marc 22.6.18-21.

"On Women's Apparel" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

Fear is the true foundation of our salvation

So then in a god we shall expect goodness to be perennial and ever-flowing, such as, being stored up in readiness within the treasures of his natural attributes.

Now in Marcion's god goodness did at one time refrain from working. Consequently that was no natural goodness, which was able for a time to be under restraint; for with natural attributes this is impossible. And if it cannot be natural, it cannot of course be supposed eternal.

Marcion sets up unequal gods, the one a judge, fierce and warlike, the other mild and peaceable, solely kind and supremely good.

Creator, the Demiurge whom Marcion belittled, was none other than the true God, and identical with the God of the New Testament.

Ita non in mortem institutum hominem probat qui (et) nunc cupit in uitam restitutum, malens peccatoris paenitentiam quam mortem. ¹

Et erit haec ipsa patientia creatoris in iudicium Marcionis, illa patientia, quae expectat paenitentiam potius peccatoris quam mortem et mauult misericordiam quam sacrificium, ²

super bonos et malos et solem suum oriri faciente super iustos et iniustos, quod alius deus omnino non praestat. ³

praemisit optimi dei titulum, patientissimi scilicet super malos et abundantissimi misericordiae et miserationis super agnoscentes et deplangentes delicta sua. ⁴

In the fourth book, Tertullian accepted, for the sake of the argument, Marcion's mutilated Bible and proceeded to refute Marcion even on the basis of that:

Euge, Marcion, satis ingeniose detraxisti illi pluuias et soles, ne creator uideretur. Sed quis iste suavis, qui ne cognitus quidem usque adhuc? Quomodo suavis, a quo nulla beneficia praecesserant hoc genus suauitatis, qua soles et imbres, qui non fenerauerat non recepturus ab humano genere, ut creator, qui pro tanta elementorum liberalitate facilius idolis quam sibi debitum gratiae referentes homines usque adhuc sustinet, uere suavis etiam spiritalibus commodis: ⁵

Many similar references could be quoted from the books adversus Marcionem, but the point need not be laboured: whether or not men responded to Him, God had at all times demonstrated His love for all of His creation. As Pétré put it:

lorsque Tertullien veut démontrer à l'hérétique Marcion l'identité du Dieu nommé par le Nouveau Testament pater misericordiarum avec le Dieu misericors et miserator et misericordiae plurimus de l'Ancient Testament, les témoignages de miséricorde qu'il cite sont tous des exemples du pardon divin accordé à la prière, aux larmes, à la pénitence du pécheur repentant. ⁶

¹ II Marc 8.1.2-4.

² II Marc 17.1.7-8.

³ II Marc 17.2.11-14.

⁴ II Marc 24.3.29-02.

⁵ IV Marc 17.6.22-7.02.

⁶ H. Pétré, "Misericordia', Histoire du Mot et de l'Idée du Paganisme au Christianisme", Revue des Études Latines, 12 (1934), 380.

That man was not made for death is proved by this, that God even now desires his restoration to life, preferring a man's conversion rather than his death.

This seems patience of the Creator will serve for judgment against Marcion, that patience which looks for a sinner's repentance rather than his death, and would rather have mercy than sacrifice.

Yet the facts show him sending rain upon good and evil, and making his sun to rise upon just and unjust, of which that other god makes no sort of provision.

describing God in terms supremely good, very slow to anger towards evil men, and most abundant in kindness and mercy towards such as acknowledge and lament their sins.

Well done, Marcion. Cleverly enough have you deprived him of rain and sunshine, that he might not be taken for the Creator. Yet who is this kind one, who has never been heard of until now? How could he be kind when from him and proceeded no good gifts of this sort of kindness with which (he had acted) who gave us the loan of sunshine and showers without expectation of any return from the human race? This the Creator has done, who in return for all his liberality in works of nature even until now bears with men while they pay their debt of thanks giving more readily to idols than to himself. Truly kind is he even with spiritual benefits.

"Against Marcion" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

When Tertullian wishes to show the heretic Marcion the identicalness of the God named "the Father of Mercies" by the New Testament with the "merciful" and "one who pities" and "most merciful" God of the Old Testament, the evidences of mercy that he quotes are all instances of divine pardon granted to the prayer, to the tears, to the penitence of the repentant sinner.

"Mercy.- the History of the Word and the Idea in Paganism and in Christianity", periodical article in "Review of Latin Studies."

(b) AGAINST THE CATHOLICS

When Tertullian became a Montanist, he vigorously disputed the Catholic interpretation of the parables of mercy. The Catholics claimed that the lost sheep portrayed a sinning Christian, who had strayed from the sheepfold of the Church; that the lost drachma was a figure of a sinner lost in the house of God, the Church; that the prodigal son was an example of a baptized Christian who had abandoned God his Father, who had wandered from the Church, his home, but who, on his repentant return, was readmitted to the Church and assisted once more at the eucharistic banquet of the slain Christ. Tertullian the Montanist insisted that these parables were told to show the love of God for the natural man before he became a Christian. They showed (he claimed) the initiative taken by God toward establishing a right relationship between the outsider and Himself.

De pudicitia is of course a treatise in which Tertullian was at his most severe in every other respect, and the treatise is primarily (although not exclusively) taken up with the question of what sins could and should be forgiven by the Church. The Catholics maintained that no sin was irremissible, and they referred to the many texts of Scripture which spoke of God's mercy to the sinner and which promised pardon to the penitent.¹ Tertullian's response - which is here confined to his interpretation of the parables of mercy - was primarily to deny that these parables applied to post-baptismal sin at all, and if they did, it was only in respect of less serious sins - lapses which did not involve spiritual death. The sheep had strayed, but was not dead: the drachma lay hidden, but was not completely lost. (He gave examples of the kind of sin which he had in

¹ A selection from their scriptural armoury was given in pud 2; it included Ezekiel 33.11; Matthew 9.3 and 12.7; Luke 6.36; 1 Timothy 4.10 and Romans 14.4. The parables of mercy were then quoted (pud 7-10), the woman taken in adultery and the Samaritan woman, (pud 11), the incestuous Corinthian excommunicated and reconciled (I Corinthians 5.3 and 2 Corinthians 2.5-11 - pud 13-15), John's Epistles (pud 19) and the promise of the Keys to Peter (pud 21).

"On Modesty" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

mind, but that is outside the scope of this study.) The straying sheep borne back to the fold on the shoulders of the Good Shepherd, the search for the lost drachma, the prodigal son received back with welcome and feasted fatly by the kindest of Fathers, who is God - all these were intended (he said ¹) to portray the attitude of God toward the outsider who would repent from the ways of sin and come back in response to the initiative and the seeking of God.

A parabolis licebit incipias, ubi est ouis perdita a Domino requisita et humeris eius reuecta. Procedant ipsae picturae calicum uestrorum, si uel in illis perlucebit interpretatio pecudis illius, utrumne Christiano an ethnico peccatori de restitutione conliniet. 2... Dic mihi, nonne omne hominum genus unus Dei grex est? Nonne uniuersarum gentium idem Deus et Dominus et pastor est? Quis magis perit a Deo quam ethnicus, quamdiu errat? Quis magis requiritur a Deo quam ethnicus, quando reuocatur a Christo? Denique antecedit hic ordo in ethnicis; siquidem non aliter Christiani ex ethnicis fiunt nisi prius periti et a Deo requisiti et a Christo reportati. 3

Perinde drachmae parabolam, ut ex eadem materia prouocatam, aequae in ethnicum interpretamur, etsi in domo amissam, quasi in ecclesia, etsi ad lucernae lumen repertam, quasi ad Dei uerbum. Atquin totus hic mundus una omnium domus est, in quo magis ethnico gratia Dei inlucet, qui in tenebris inuenitur, quam Christiano, qui iam in Dei luce est. 4

Quid perit hominum, quis labat de ualetudine, nisi qui Deum nescit? Quis saluus ac sanus, nisi qui Deum nouit? Has duas species de genere fraternas haec quoque signabit parabola. Vide an habeat ethnicus substantiam in Deo patre census et sapientiae et naturalis agnitionis in Deum. 5

¹ The argument was hardly very satisfactory, in that it involved the improbable assertion that the publicans and sinners were heathen rather than Jews, and it ignored the Matthaean setting of the parable of the Lost Sheep, which implied the exact reverse of what Tertullian was determined to prove. None the less, it is a forceful illustration of his application of the general principle.

² pud 7.1.1-5.

³ pud 7.6.22-28. "The Catholic who interprets the parable as referring to a Christian sinner will be obliged to show that such words as 'flock,' 'shepherd,' 'lost,' etc. can have no application to the salvation of a pagan. In the sentence which follows Tertullian rejects this view and attempts to prove that these words and the sequence in which they occur point much more clearly to the salvation of an infidel than to the reclamation of a Christian". William P. le Saint, Tertullian, Treatises on Penance : On Penance and on Purity, (Westminster (Maryland) : The Newman Press and London: Longmans, Green, 1959) p 217-218.

⁴ pud 7.10.44-11.49.

⁵ pud 9.13.57-14.62, on which Saint (op. cit., p 228-229) commented: "The man who knows God and the man who does not are 'brothers by birth' because they are (continued overleaf)

You may begin, then, with the parables, where you have the account of the lost sheep which our Lord sought out and carried home on His shoulders. Let the very pictures on your chalices be taken into consideration, to show whether even in them the figurative meaning of that sheep will shine through (the outward semblance, to teach) whether a Christian or heathen sinner be the object it aims at in the matter of restoration.

Tell me, is not the whole human race God's one 'flock'? Is not the same God both Lord and Shepherd of the universal nations? Who more "perishes" from God than the heathen, so long as he "errs?". Who is more 'sought out' by God than the pagan, when he is called back by Christ? In fact, this sequence is more evident in the case of pagans, since men do not become Christians after having been pagans without first being 'lost' then 'sought out' by God and 'brought back' by Christ.

In line with this we interpret the parable of the drachma, also, as having reference to a pagan, occasioned as it was by the same situation: albeit it had been "lost" in a house, as it were in the Church, albeit "found" by aid of a "lamp" as it were by aid of God's word. This whole world, however, is one house for all men. In it the grace of God shines for the pagan, who is found in darkness, rather than for the Christian, who is already in God's light.

What man is lost and who falls from health (is sick) if not the man who is ignorant of God? Who is safe and sound, if not the man who knows God? These two types, brothers by birth, will also be symbolised in this parable. Ask yourself whether or not the pagan has, as his portion, his origin in God the Father and an understanding and natural knowledge of God.

While this interpretation of these three parables is the opposite of the spirit and indeed of the letter of chapter eight of Tertullian's own Catholic work de paenitentia, where he knew of no sin excluded from the Church's pardon and where the parables of mercy were applied to the Christian sinner 'restored' by paenitentia secunda, the discrepancy is outside the scope of this study, except in so far as Tertullian's changing attitude as a Montanist is noted in Excursus Four. What is important here is that Tertullian used them, in de pudicitia at any rate, to illustrate his belief in the mercy of God and the love of God for the outsider, God's preference for the repentance rather than the death of the pagan. After throwing off the 'yoke' of the Catholic exegesis¹ he proceeded, in chapter ten, to show in detail how the love of God for sinful men and women outside the Christian faith made paenitentia more suitable for them than it was for Christian sinners.

(c) ADVERSUS JUDAEOS

If this is an authentic work of Tertullian,² it demonstrates the mercy of God

footnote 5 continued from previous page :

both members of the same human race, children of Adam, the auctor (De exhort. cast. 2) and princeps (De an. 20.2) generis. - Tertullian's argument in this paragraph is a kind of sorites: the prodigal son is one who is lost; but one who is lost is one who does not know God; but one who does not know God is a pagan; therefore the prodigal is a pagan".

¹ Excusso igitur iugo in ethnicum disserendi parabolas istas et semel disperta uel recepta necessitate non aliter interpretandi quam materia propositi est.-pud 10.1.1-3.

² There are three issues here. Some (e.g. the editors of Corpus Christianorum) exclude the whole book from the main body of Tertullian's works. Others divide the book between chapters 1 to 8 (genuine) and chapters 9 to 14. Of those who do this, some regard chapters 9 to 14 as an unpolished draft by Tertullian himself, who used the material in the Third book Adversus Marcionem. (Barnes, "Tertullian" p 53 and Hermann von Tränkle, Q.S.F. Tertulliani Adversus Judaeos (Wisbaden: Franz Steiner, 1964) pp xxxvi, lii.) The remainder regard chapters 9 to 14 as spurious, being mainly excerpts from III Marc and a clumsy attempt by someone else to complete the work. The compiler has been identified by Quispel with the "frater" mentioned in I Marc 1.1.9, who later on apostatized; G. Quispel, De Bronnen van Tertullianus' Adversus Marcionem, (Leiden: Burgersdijk en Niemans, 1943) pp 61-79.

"On Repentance" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

penance after baptism

"On Modesty" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

repentance

"Against the Jews" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

author ("An Exhortation to Chastity") and first man ("On the Soul")
of the human race

Therefore the yoke has been removed which requires that these parables be not interpreted of the pagans. It is understood and even acknowledged unconditionally that they must be interpreted in no other way than their substantial truth allows.

(the edition of Tertullian's works used throughout this thesis)

"Against Marcion" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

"Q.S.F. Tertullian, Against the Jews" (Book)

brother

The Sources of Tertullian's Book "Against Marcion" (Book)

in another area of his thought. The treatise shows in detail how it is impossible to exclude Gentiles from the mercy of God, because the Old Testament constantly asserted its covenant was intended for all nations. It is outside the scope of the thesis to pursue this third point in any detail, but one great idea is nobly expressed - the univers^{al}ity of the Christian religion. Tertullian made a sweeping survey of the kingdoms of the earth, past and present, and asserted the universal sway of Jesus Christ. Were the Gentiles admissible to God's law? Were the Jewish sacrifices incumbent on the Gentiles? Tertullian's argument was that the failure of the Jew was the opportunity of the Gentile. The two children of Rebecca, who embody Jew and Gentile, were both called 'nations', and although in the sequence of birth the Jew was the older nation, the Christian (from the Gentile) also received the understanding of God and then conquered the earlier people, who had turned away from God.¹ Tertullian used this to emphasise the mercy and compassion of God toward the Gentile nations.

One further point should be made. God so loved the non-believer that He had done a great deal more than evince good will toward him; He had even done more than search for lost mankind, as set out in the parables of mercy; He had sent His Son. The Epicurean view of the unconcerned God was particularly distasteful to Tertullian: otiosum et inexercitum, et ut ita dixerim, neminem rebus humanis.² The birth, life and death of Christ were not for Tertullian primarily a revelation of God - although that thought is not absent from his works; the Incarnation and the life and the death of Christ were the way in which the universality of God's love was to be supremely known and understood.

Cum ad Nicodemum (Christus) dicit: Ita, inquit, dilexit Deus mundum, ut

¹ Jud 1.3.17-5.36.

² apol 47.6.25-26.

living in a world of repose and inactivity (literally 'idle and unemployed'), being, so to speak, a non-entity in human affairs.

When He (Christ) speaks to Nicodemus, He says, "God so loved the world that He /

Filium suum unicum dederit, in quem omnis qui crediderit non pereat, sed habeat uitam sempiternam. Et rursus: Non enim misit Deus Filium suum in mundum ut iudicet mundum, sed ut saluus sit mundus per eum: qui crediderit in illum, non iudicatur; qui non crediderit in illum, iam iudicatus est, quia non credidit in nomine unici Filii Dei. 1

and speaking again of Christ:

Dictus est quidem 'angelus magni cogitatus', id est nuntius, officii, non naturae uocabulo. Magnum enim cogitatum patris, super hominis scilicet restitutionem, adnuntiaturus saeculo erat. 2

credimus deum etiam in terris egisse et humani habitus humilitatem suscepisse ex causa humanae salutis. 3

Because God was thus disposed to mankind, Tertullian encouraged the nationes to search for, and to make enquiry about, the Christian God. They would find that He was grande quid boni ⁴ - 'a great essence of goodness'. Since God wished all men to come to salvation in Christ, He had made some knowledge of Himself available to every man. How He did this is examined in the following five sections.

¹ Prax 21.6.31-37.

² carn 14.3. 19-22.

³ II Marc 16.3.15-17.

⁴ paen 3.2.7.

gave His only Son, that every one who believed in Him, should not perish, but should have everlasting life." And again: "For God sent not His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world through Him might be saved; he who has believed in Him, is not judged: he who has not believed in Him, has been already judged, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God."

Certainly he is described as the angel of great counsel, 'angel' meaning 'messenger' by a term of office, not of nature: for he was to announce to the world the Father's great project, that concerned with the restitution of man.

We believe that God has sojourned even on earth, and that for the purpose of man's salvation he has taken upon him the lowliness of human form.

nations

a great essence of goodness

V.4 EVERY ADULT SHOULD HAVE SOME KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

It was one of Tertullian's strongest and most frequently expressed convictions that all men could and should have some knowledge of the Christian God. There was no particularism in his thought, which restricted the understanding of God to any section of mankind - there was not a Christian workman, he said, but who had found out God, and would not tell an enquirer all he could about God - licet Plato affirmet factitorem uniuersitatis neque inueniri facilem et inuentum enarrari in omnes difficilem.¹ That was not to say that the salvation of God was universal - far from it, but God could and should be understood to some degree by all men, at all times.

Nos unum Deum colimus, quem omnes naturaliter nostis, ad cuius fulgura et tonitrua contremiscitis, ad cuius beneficia gaudetis. Ceteros et ipsi putatis deos esse, quos nos daemones scimus.²

In contrast to the gods of the heathen, who were known only to the particular tribes who had invented or discovered them,

Deum ego existimo ubique notum, ubique praesentem, ubique dominantem, omnibus colendum, omnibus demerendum.³

Siquidem a primordia rerum conditor harum cum ipsis pariter compertus est, ipsis ad hoc prolatis, ut deus cognosceretur.⁴

Si et apud ethnicos tale quid traditur, ubique deus potestatis suae signa proponit, suis in solacium, extraneis in testimonium.⁵

¹ apol 46.9.45-47. The Greek god was a god who by his very nature could not make himself known to man. The Christian God is a God who can and does when He chooses, and refrains from doing so if He chooses. There is always the danger of representing the barrier between God and man as being something metaphysical rather than moral, and thus of making God the Father a God who cannot reveal Himself to man because of his metaphysical status. He may, of course, choose not to make Himself known, or His unapproachability may arise from His holiness, but unapproachable by nature He cannot be.

² Scap 2.1.1-4.

³ II nat 8.2.3-5.

⁴ I Marc 10.1.25-26.

⁵ an 51.7.40-42.

though Plato asserts that the maker of the universe is not easily found and, when found, is with difficulty made known to all men:

We worship one God, whom you all know, since nature is your teacher, at whose lightning and thunder you tremble, at whose benefits you rejoice. The rest you yourselves think to be gods, but we know to be demons.

God, I imagine, is everywhere known, everywhere present powerful everywhere - an object whom all ought to worship, all ought to serve.

For the fact is that ever since things have existed, their Creator has become known along with them, for they were brought into being with the intent that God might be made known.

If you hear any stories like these among the heathen, you can conclude that God everywhere manifests His power for the consolation of His own and in testimony of His might to the heathen.

These general statements need to be qualified by one or two explanations, to avoid misunderstanding, as Tertullian himself appreciated. In the first place, it was only in a very restricted and human sense that God could be 'known':

Hoc est, quod Deum aestimari facit, dum aestimari non capit; ita eum uis magnitudinis et notum hominibus obicit et ignotum. Et haec est summa delicti nolentium recognoscere, quem ignorare non possunt. ¹

It was a clever antithesis, which implicitly separated the two extremes - the silent God of gnosis on the one hand, His complete understandability on the other - and at the same time brought out the paradox that "He cannot be understood and yet will be understood". In other words, the possibility of somehow coming to know God was underlined by the assertion that it was not possible not to know Him. That struck a good balance; if man could have comprehended God, He would not be God, so in that sense God had by definition to be both unknown and unknowable; nevertheless, because of the evidence in and around man, no one should be unaware of the nature of God:

Porro diuinitas, si ueram retractes, ea definitione est, ut ista neque argumentationibus incertis colligatur, neque fabulis indignis contaminetur, neque adoptionibus passiuus iudicetur; haberi enim debet, sicut est, certa, integra communis, quia scilicet omnium. ²

and

plane benedici Deum omni loco ac tempore condecet ob debitam semper memoriam beneficiorum eius ab omni homine. ³

Since Tertullian readily accepted that God transcended human thought, he acknowledged the anthropomorphic nature of men's conclusions regarding Him; Marcion in particular had raised the question of how far one could transfer 'human' qualities to God. Tertullian immediately recognised that although certain attributes seemed to be common to God and to man, the similarity was in name only and the qualities were fundamentally different. Attributes such as

¹ apol 17.3.12-15.

² II nat 1.14.28-32.

³ orat 3.2.8- 10.

Thus it is that God can be measured, although He is beyond all measure, thus, the force of His magnitude makes Him known to men and yet unknown. And this is the gravest part of the sin of those who are unwilling to recognise Him of whom they cannot remain in ignorance.

"knowledge" (in the sense used by heretical religious movements)

The nature of God, however, if it be the true one with which you are concerned, is of so definite a character as not to be derived from uncertain speculations, nor contaminated with worthless fables, nor determined by promiscuous concepts. It ought indeed to be regarded, as it really is, as certain, entire, universal, because it is in truth the property of all.

Certainly it is right that God should be blessed in all places and at all times because it is every man's duty to be ever mindful of His benefits.

mildness, patience and goodness, which men could conceive as belonging to both God and man, were to be found in perfection only in God; other 'human' attributes, such as anger and resentment, could be ascribed to God only in a figurative way. Tertullian appreciated the magnitude of the difference between human qualities and divine qualities, but he did not on that account lose faith in the ability of man to "know God".

The second qualification, on which Tertullian insisted most strongly, as set out in Chapter VI.5 below, was that the natural man's knowledge of God, however extensive, had to be supplemented by Christian revelation before man could enter into a proper and saving relationship with God.

Nemo negat, quia nemo ignorat, quod ultro natura suggerit, Deum esse uniuersitatis conditorem eamque uniuersitatem tam bonam quam homini mancipatam. Sed quia non penitus Deum norunt nisi naturali iure, non etiam familiari, de longinquo, non de proximo, necesse est ignorent, qualiter administrari iubeat quae instituit .¹

There were two kinds of understanding of God. Tertullian could say in one place that every man could and should understand God, and then immediately assert that only a Christian could understand God, indeed that conversion to the Christian faith was the gateway to the only proper understanding of God. These two statements were not incompatible. Tertullian's main teaching on the natural man's knowledge of God was directed against Marcion, in particular Marcion's assumption that the, true God -the God of Jesus Christ and of the New Testament, as opposed to the God of the Old Testament -was unknown without the revelation of Christ. To avoid multiplying quotations, the point can be illustrated by a few references to chapter 9 of adversus Marcionem book one, where Tertullian maintained that God neither could be, nor ought to be, unknown, the former because of His greatness, the latter because of His goodness. While this study is not concerned with the era before the advent of

¹ spec 2.4.19-5.25.

No one denies - because nobody is unaware of it and even nature tells it us - that God is the creator of the universe, and that the universe is good and is given to man. But because they do not really know God - knowing Him only by natural law and not by right of sonship - knowing Him from afar and not at close quarters - they are necessarily ignorant as to how He bids or forbids, the things of His creation to be used.

"Against Marcion" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

Christ, nor indeed with the years before Tertullian's own day, the initial proof against Marcion, that God could not be unknown prior to the revelation of Christ, is the same proof that He could not be unknown among the heathen of Tertullian's day who had not heard of Christ. Tertullian went on, in the later books against Marcion, to say that man's knowledge of God was enlarged and strengthened by the prophets and amplified by Christ, but in chapter 9 of book one his argument rested on first principles:

Scio quidem, quo sensu nouum deum iactitent, agnitione utique. Sed ipsam nouitatem cognitionis percutientem rudes animas ipsamque naturalem nouitatis gratiositatem uolui repercutere, et hinc iam de ignoto deo prouocare. Vtique enim quem agnitione nouum opponunt, ignotum ante agnitionem demonstrant. Age igitur, ad lineas rursum et in gradum! Persuade deum ignotum esse potuisse. 1

Sed breuiter proponam et plenissime exequar, praescribens deum ignorari nec potuisse nomine magnitudinis nec debuisse nomine benignitatis, 2

Hinc itaque constatissime dirigam deum non esse, qui sit hodie incertus, quia retro ignotus, quando quem constat esse ex hoc ipso constet, quod numquam fuerit ignotus, ideo nec incertus, 3

or, as he put it in the following chapter :

numquam deus latebit, numquam deus deerit, semper intellegetur, semper audietur, etiam uidebitur, quomodo uolet. Habet deus testimonia: totum hoc quod sumus et in quo sumus. Sic probatur et deus et unus, dum non ignoratur, alio adhuc probari laborante.4

In addition to these general statements Tertullian advanced two specific propositions:

(a) non ulla gens non Christiana

and

(b) anima naturaliter Christiana

The latter is examined as part of the enquiry into the testimony of the soul in

¹ I Marc 9.1.23-2.29.

² I Marc 9.4.10-12,

³ I Marc 9.10.21-24.

⁴ I Marc 10.4.20-24.

I am aware that in boasting of their god as 'new', they mean new in men's knowledge of him. But it is precisely this conception of novelty, in its impact upon simple souls, it is precisely this natural attractiveness of novelty, that I am determined to resist with an immediate challenge in the matter of this god unknown. Now when they set him against us as new in men's knowledge of him, they give proof that he was unknown until men knew him. Come then, straight to the point, dead on the mark: prove to me that a god can ever have been unknown.

but I shall briefly state and fully expound my proposition that by reason of his greatness, their god cannot have been unknown, and by reason of his kindness it was improper that he should be.

After this then I shall firmly insist that that is no god who today is uncertain because he was formerly unknown: because as soon as it is agreed that he exists, it follows by that very fact that he never has been unknown, and therefore was never uncertain.

God can never keep himself hidden, can never be unattainable: he must at all times be understood, be heard, even be seen, in such manner as he will. God has his evidences, all this that we are, and in which we are. Such is the proof that he is God, is the one God, this fact that he is not unknown, while that other one is even yet struggling after recognition.

There is no nation which is not Christian

The naturally Christian mind

section V.5. below, but the meaning of the former phrase is explored now. Non ulla gens non Christiana¹ is usually² explained as a reference to the rapid expansion of Christianity, in other words that Christians could now be found in practically all known races, especially the old ones.³ Certainly it means that, in ^{the} corresponding passage in de anima, uel quia nulla iam gens dei extranea est in omnem terram et in terminos orbis euangelio coruscante?⁴ but that sense just does not fit the context of ad nationes. Tertullian was disputing the derogatory description of Christians as 'tertium genus'⁵ and therefore inferior in some way. He narrated, then refuted, the story told by Herodotus among others, of how Psammeticus tried to discover which language, and therefore which people, was the oldest. According to the story, the king removed some new-born infants

¹ I nat 8.9.23.

² E.g. the comment in the Ante-Nicene Library translation of this passage, "This is one of the passages which incidentally show how widely spread was Christianity"; also Adolf von Harnack, Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten, (Leipzig, 4th edn. 1924) I, 533; Waszink, "De Anima" p 518; A. Schneider, Le premier livre Ad Nationes de Tertullien, Introduction, texte, traduction et commentaire, (Rome: Institut Suisse de Rome, 1968) pp116 and 194.

³ Tertullian certainly did use the argument elsewhere, in defence of the truth of Christianity, viz. the rapid increase of Christians in all parts - e.g. "Hesterni sumus, et orbem iam et uestra omnia impleuimus", apol 37.4.20-21 and at least a dozen other places.

⁴ an 49.3.15-16.

⁵ The origin of the phrase tertium genus and its employment by Tertullian was discussed by Christine Mohrmann, op. cit. vol IV, p 195 ff and by Schneider op. cit. p 187 ff. Schneider stated that the expression tertium genus was borrowed by the pagans from the Christians. Miss Mohrmann was once of the same view, and expressed it in the first volume (1958) of Études sur le Latin des Chrétiens, but by the fourth volume in 1977, "je crois devoir changer légèrement mon point de vue. Selon Plinie, on appelait les eunuques tertium genus, usage qui est également attesté par Lampridius: tertium genus hominum eunuchos. Tout bien considéré, je crois que les chrétiens de langue latine ont emprunté la tournure aux grecs chrétiens, sans rapport avec l'usage latin païen. Comme on le sait, la formule grecque se trouve déjà dans un fragment de la Praedicatio Petri (II^e siècle) cité par Clément d'Alexandrie. Je ne considère pas comme impossible que le païens de l'Afrique du Nord aient, au début du III^e siècle, emprunté la formule aux chrétiens, comme le passage cité de Tertullien semble suggérer." pp195-196.

There is no nation which is not Christian.

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

There is now no race of men completely ignorant of Him, since the light of the Gospel now gleams in every land and to all the ends of the earth.

"To the Gentiles" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

third race

"The Mission and the Propagation of Christianity in the First Three Centuries" (Book)

"Tertullian's First Book 'To the Gentiles' - Introduction, Text, Translation and Commentary" (Book)

third race

"Studies on the Latin of the Christians" (Book)

Actually, these days I believe to have changed my point of view gradually. According to Pliny, one has called the eunuchs 'third race', a usage which is equally attested by Lampridius - 'the third race of men are eunuchs'. All things considered, I believe that the Christians of the Latin tongue have borrowed the expression from Greek Christians, without reference to pagan Latin usage. As is known, the Greek formula is found already in a fragment of the Praedicatio Petri (2nd century), cited by Clement of Alexandria. I do not consider it impossible that the pagans of North Africa had, at the beginning of the 3rd century, borrowed the formula from the Christians, as the passage quoted in Tertullian appears to suggest.

from all human contact, except for one dumb nurse; the first word which they spoke was in Phrygian! However, continued Tertullian:

Sint nunc primi Phryges: non tamen tertii Christiani. Quantae enim aliae gentium series post Phrygas? Verum recogitate, ne quos tertium genus dicitis, principem locum obtineant, siquidem non ulla gens non Christiana. Itaque quaecumque gens prima, nihilominus Christiana: ridicula dementia novissimos dicitis et tertios nominatis.¹

Tertullian's argument (that the alleged 'third race' was in fact the first, because there was no race, however early, that was not Christian) proceeded, not on the basis of a percentage of Christians in the races of Tertullian's day but on the basis that from the very beginning, when races first came into being, there was not one which was not Christian. His proof was historical rather than statistical, as indeed it had to be.² Christianity had only recently been preached, so it would have been impossible for Tertullian to have suggested that a few Christians, now, in 'every race' made Christians the 'first race' chronologically. If, however, Tertullian meant that all men (and races) had, from the beginning, some basic understanding of the Christian God, the phrase fits into the pattern of Tertullian's thought. Ad nationes was more or less contemporary with the apologeticum, and so with the phrase anima naturaliter Christiana (to be examined in the next section). That which is Christian was (he claimed) already present in the beginning, implanted by nature in every man. It was not a question of an assessable unit, but in so far as every race of men have possessed reason and speech and inquisitio universitatis, they have enjoyed some knowledge of the Christian God - He was 'there' in every race and so in the first race, chronologically speaking ... siquidem non ulla gens non christiana. Itaque quaecumque gens prima, nihilominus christiana.

¹ I nat 8.9.20-10.25.

² Tertullian deliberately misunderstood 'third' as a term of abuse, when he said ridicula dementia novissimos dicitis et tertios nominatis. Schneider caught it well when he translated "dans votre folie ridicule, vous dites qu'ils sont les derniers, et vous les appelez les troisièmes." (op. cit., p 79)

Granted, then, that the Phrygians were the earliest race, it does not follow that the Christians are the third. For how many other nations come regularly after the Phrygians? Take care, however, lest those whom you call the third race should obtain the first rank, since there is no nation indeed which is not Christian. Whatever nation, therefore, was the first, is nevertheless Christian now. It is ridiculous folly which makes you say we are the latest race, and then specifically call us the third.

"To the Gentiles" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

"Apology" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

a searched-after-something (participle of inquirio) of the whole human race

since there is no nation indeed which is not Christian. Whatever nation, therefore, was the first, is nevertheless Christian now.

It is ridiculous folly which makes you say we are the latest race, and then specifically call us the third.

in your ridiculous folly, you say that they are the last and yet you call them the third

What Tertullian said of individual souls in the apologeticum he was saying of whole races, in the ad nationes passage. It was senseless, then, for Tertullian's opponents to speak derogatorily of Christians as 'third', because every race on earth was 'Christian' in the sense that every race had possessed from the beginning, and had demonstrated, the basic ethical truths which Christianity now made explicit.

Cur etenim deus, uniuersitatis conditor, mundi totius gubernator, hominis plasmator, uniuersarum gentium sator, legem per Moysen uni populo dedisse credatur et non omnibus gentibus attribuisse dicatur? Nisi enim omnibus eam dedisset, nullo pacto ad eam etiam proselytos ex gentibus accessum habere permetteret. Sed, ut congruit bonitati dei et aequitati ipsius, utpote plasmatoris generis humani, omnibus gentibus eandem legem dedit, quam certis statutis temporibus obseruari praecepit quando uoluit et per quos uoluit et sicut uoluit. 1

Denique ante legem Moysei scriptam in tabulis lapideis legem fuisse contendo non scriptam, quae naturaliter intellegebatur et a patribus custodiebatur. Nam unde Nöe iustus inuentus, so non illi naturalis legis iustitia praecedebat? unde Abraham dei amicus deputatus, unde fides statim, si non de aequitate et iustitia legis naturalis? 2

Nach Tertullian hat Gott an verschiedenen Zeitpunkten und Orten allen Völkern dasselbe Gesetz gegeben (Iud 2,1f.). Der Anfang dieser göttlichen Gesetzgebung ereignete sich schon im Paradies, als Gott Adam und Eva verbot, vom Baum des Lebens zu essen (2,1: vgl. Gen 2, 16f.; 3.2f.). In diesem einen Gebot sind bereits die späteren Gesetze Moses enthalten, d.h. das Gebot zur Gottes- und Nächstenliebe und das Verbot gegen Mord, Diebstahl, Ehebruch, falsches Zeugnis und Habsucht; denn in ihrem Fall haben die ersten Menschen nach Tertullian alle diese Gebote verletzt (2, 2ff.; vgl. Gen 2 u.3). Daher kann es niemanden mehr überraschen, wenn Gott in späteren Zeiten diese lex generalis et primordialis entfaltet (2,6). Es ist diese lex non scripta, quae naturaliter intellegebatur et a patribus custodiebatur (2,7). Weder Noah noch Abraham wäre gerechtfertigt ohne die naturalis legis iustitia, und Melchisedek wäre nicht ein Priester des höchsten Gottes, wenn es nicht schon Leviten vor dem levitischen Gesetz gegeben hätte (2,7; vgl. Gen 6, 9; 15, 6; 14, 18). Jede Gesetzgebung ist aber vorläufig und bedarf im Laufe der Zeit der Verbesserung; so auch das mosaische Gesetz (2, 9). 3

¹ Iud 2.1.2-2.11. The idea that the truths now made explicit in Christianity formed the basis of all original human religion, thus giving the believer the true understanding of God, seems to underlie Tertullian's attempt to prove that Moses was prior to Homer (apoll 9.4); this is contended by William Reginald Halliday, The Pagan Background of Early Christianity, (Liverpool: University Press, 1925) p 248.

² Iud 2.7.43-49.

³ Gregory T. Armstrong, Die Genesis in der alten Kirche, (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1962) p 135.

"Apology" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

"To the Gentiles" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

For why should God, the Founder of the universe, the Governor of the whole world, the Fashioner of humanity, the Sower of universal nations, be believed to have given a law through Moses to one people, and not be said to have assigned it to all nations? For, unless He had given it to all, by no means would He have habitually permitted even proselytes out of the nations to have access to it. But - as is congruous with the goodness of God, and with His equity, as the Fashioner of mankind - He gave to all nations the selfsame law, which at definite and stated times He enjoyed should be observed, when He willed, and through whom He willed, and as He willed.

In short, before the Law of Moses, written in stone-tables, I contend that there was a law unwritten, which was habitually understood naturally, and by the fathers was habitually kept. For whence was Noah "found righteous," if in his case the righteousness of a natural law had not preceded? Whence was Abraham accounted "a friend of God", if not on the ground of equity and righteousness in the observance of a natural law?

According to Tertullian, God has given the same laws to all nations at various times and places (Iud.2,1 etc.). The beginning of this divine legislation is already occurring in Paradise when God forbade Adam and Eve to eat from the tree of life (2,1; compare with Gen. 2,16 etc.; 3,2 etc.). In this one command are already contained the later laws of Moses, that is, the command to love God and one's fellow creatures and the ban against murder, theft, adultery, perjury and greed for in their case, the early men had all violated these commands, according to Tertullian (2,2 etc.; compare with Gen. 2 and 3). Thus it can surprise no one when God develops this "law open to all and from the beginning" in later times (2,6). It is this unwritten law, which was understood naturally and which was preserved by the Fathers (2,7). Neither Noah nor Abraham would be justified without this "righteousness of the natural law", and Melchisedek would not be a priest of the highest God if there had not already been Levites before the Levitical law (2,7; compare with Gen. 6,9; 15,6; 14,8). Every legislation, however, is temporary and needs improvement during the course of time; so also with the law of Moses (2,9).

"Genesis in the ancient Church"

In that sense, then, every race, from the beginning of time, had some knowledge of the Christian God and so could be called 'Christian' in the same sense that every individual soul was naturaliter Christiana. Obviously 'Christiana' cannot there be taken literally, any more than the phrase which follows - quaecumque gens prima, nihilominus christiana - can be understood in a confessional sense. Tertullian was very explicit, when addressing the soul of man, that while Ea expostulo, quae tecum homini infers, quae ex temetipsa aut ex quocumque auctore tuo sentire didicisti. Non es, quod sciam, Christiana. Fieri enim, non nasci solet Christiana.¹ Whatever it was that individual souls reflected of the Christian God, was here extended by Tertullian from individuals to whole races. Therefore, whatever race was counted as 'first', elements of Christianity were present in it, so the inferior designation of 'third race' was meaningless.

Regrettably, Tertullian did not expand on this phrase nor comment on it. The surprise effect of throwing it into the argument was presumably more important to him than the introduction of the concept with a detailed explanation, which would have made it more comprehensible. Equally regrettably, he did not return to it anywhere else in his works. However, an examination of the various ways in which every individual in every race could and should acquire some knowledge of God is explored in the remainder of this chapter. For the present, it is clear that there is no trace in Tertullian of the theory developed by the Neo-Platonists and reflected in the thought of Clement, that God is unknowable. On the other hand, there is no suggestion that God could be known only by the exercise of human reason- human understanding was as corrupted as the rest of human nature- but:

Conuersabatur deus humane, ut homo diuine agere doceretur. Ex aequo agebat deus cum homine, ut homo ex aequo agere cum deo posset. Deus pusillus inuentus est, ut homo maximus fieret.²

¹ test 1.7.48-51.

² II Marc 27.7.9-12.

naturally Christian

Christian

whatever nation was first is nevertheless Christian now.

I shall demand from you an answer concerning those things which you bring with you into man, which you have learned to feel either from yourself or from your author - whoever he may be. You are not a Christian, as far as I know, for, as a rule, the soul is not born Christian: it becomes Christian.

God entered into converse with man, so that man might be taught how to act like God. God treated on equal terms with man, so that man might be able to treat on equal terms with God. God was found to be small, so that man might become very great.

The relationship between the self-revelation of God to man and the validity of human thought about God, and the extent to which man could stretch upward from the imperfections of the human conception of God to the perfection of His nature, will be examined in chapter VI. 6 below. Meantime, the remainder of this chapter will be devoted to the reasons why Tertullian believed that every adult should have some knowledge of God. First to be examined are the spontaneous expressions of the irrepressible, immediate, religious consciousness in every man - the testimony of the soul.

V.5 THE TESTIMONY OF THE SOUL

Basic and fundamental to Tertullian's understanding of the relationship of man to God was the testimony of the soul to the existence of God, and to certain of his attributes. Although every unregenerate soul was to a greater or lesser extent under the control of demoniac powers,¹ this "deposit of inborn knowledge" asserted itself, even in pagans, by involuntary remarks such as "deus magnus", "deus bonus", "deus mihi reddet", "quod deus dederit", "si deus uoluerit", "quod deo placet" "deo commendo" and "deus uidet" - not "Jupiter grant" or Saturn, or Mars or Minerva.² The word common to all these exclamations was 'deus', and since the so-called gods of paganism were all given individual names, they could not really be God at all. The remarks of the heathen not only demonstrated the existence of one true God, but Tertullian believed that he could read into them (and that others should read out of them) the unity and goodness of God, the existence of demons and their ruinous influence on mankind, future survival and the reality of rewards or punishments beyond the grave. These were truths which nature herself, pure and simple, had left in man, because man was the creation of God.³

From everyday talk in the market place, therefore, all men should learn something about their relationship with God. When men spoke of the fear of death or of the dead as wretched or poor, they implied punishment after death; when they prayed "Light be the turf of the tomb", they accepted continued sensation; when they said "such a one is gone", they suggested a return. These remarks were not to be dismissed as trivial or unimportant, because they were

¹ Chapters III.2 and IV.2 above.

² Selected from test 2.1.4-5; I Marc 10.2.10-11; an 41.3.19; apol 17.5.24-27; res 3.2.9.

³ As examined in chapter 1.7, and as mentioned in paragraph (f) of this section, something of the divine original goodness survived in every man; it was never eliminated, but only suppressed, or, as Tertullian put it, obscured.

Great God! Good God! God will repay me! Which may God give!
If God wills! What pleases God! I leave it to God! God sees!

god

the voice of God, the welling up of a consciousness of God in the human soul. Because of this, the primary and most essential truths of religion and morals were, or at any rate ought to be, known to all men independently of revelation or authority.

Tertullian expounded this theme with differing emphases in half a dozen separate works, separate both in time and in character - the widespread, indeed universal, testimony of the soul, in consequence of which every man should have some knowledge of God. Every passage has its own contribution to make to an overall understanding of his teaching, so the relevant excerpts from the six treatises are now examined briefly in chronological order.

(a) apologeticum

Tertullian's first reference to the testimony of the soul to God included (in the chapter before his equally famous and seemingly contradictory aphorism fiunt, non nascuntur Christiani,¹) the much-quoted phrase anima naturaliter Christiana:

uultis ex animae ipsius testimonio comprobemus? Quae licet carcere corporis pressa, licet institutionibus prauis circumscripta, licet libidinibus et concupiscentiis euigorata, licet falsis deis exancillata, cum tamen, resipiscit, ut ex crapula, ut ex somno, ut et aliqua ualetudine, et sanitatem suam patitur, 'Deum' nominat hoc solo nomine, quia proprio Dei ueri. 'Deus magnus, Deus bonus', et 'quod Deus dederit' omnium vox est. Iudicem quoque contestatur illum, 'Deus uidet' et 'Deo commendo' et 'Deus mihi reddet'. O testimonium animae naturaliter Christianae!²

Quispel, in an article 'Anima naturaliter Christiana'³ traced Tertullian's phrase

¹ apol 18.4.18. Ernst Bickel showed that the dictum anima naturaliter Christiana does not stand in opposition to the sentence "fiunt, non nascuntur Christiani" - in an article of that name in Pisciculi, Studien zur Religion und Kultur des Altertums, Festschrift für Franz. Joseph Dölger zum sechzigsten Geburtstag, (Münster: Aschendorff, 1939) pp 54 ff. Part of his argument is considered at the end of this section. The less successful attempt of C. Becker to make the same point is commented on in a footnote on the next page of this thesis.

² apol 17.4.18-6.27.

³ G. Quispel, "Anima naturaliter Christiana", Latomus, 10 (1951), 163-169. Since then, considerable new light has been shed on the doctrine of the anima (continued on next page)

"Apology" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

(souls) become Christian, they are not born Christian.

naturally Christian soul

Do you wish us to prove Him to you from the witness of the human soul itself? Yes! the soul, though it be cabined and cribbed by the prison house of the body, though it be confined by evil nurture, though it be robbed of its strength by lusts and desires, though it be enslaved to false gods, - nonetheless, when it recovers its senses, as after intoxication or after sleep, or after some illness, when it recaptures its proper health, the soul names God, and for this reason and no other, because, if language be used aright, He is the one true God. "Great God!" "Good God!" "Which may God give!" are expressions used by all men. That He is also Judge, is shown by such utterance as: "God sees:" "I leave it to God:" "God will repay me." O the witness of the soul, in its very nature Christian!

'The Soul by Nature Christian'

"Studies in the Religion and Culture of Antiquity", a Book in honour of Franz Joseph Dolger on his 60th birthday.

soul

back to Minucius Felix,¹ and in particular to his training in rhetoric and then, back through Stoic influences, to Greek literature. Although the Stoic influence on Tertullian was strong, as will be examined in section V.10 below, it should be said at this point that (even assuming the chronological priority of Minucius) Tertullian approached the question rather differently from Minucius Felix. For Tertullian, the soul did not only know God, naturally, but also knew His judgement, the existence of the devil, hell, and eternal life. All that man could learn about God, through the testimony of the soul, was expanded by Tertullian and treated in a separate work, de testimonio animae, written in the same year as the apologeticum. The desirability - indeed the necessity - of reading the phrases "anima naturaliter Christiana" and "fiunt, non nascuntur Christiani" in the apologeticum chapter 17 and 18 along with chapters 1 and 2 of de testimonio animae was shown by Brox in an article which he entitled "Anima naturaliter non Christiana".² The argument of Tertullian's second work depends on the natural

footnote 3 continued:

naturaliter Christiana by three articles by C. Tibiletti, the most comprehensive being "Tertulliano e la dottrina dell' anima, naturaliter christiana", Atti della Accademia delle Scienze di Torino, 88 (1953-54), 84-116, followed by "Una presunta dipendenza di Tertulliano da Minucio Felice", ibid. 91 (1956/1957), 60/72, and then "Seneca e la fonte di un passo di Tertulliano", Rivista di Filolog., 35 (1957), 256/260.

¹ The majority view is now in favour of Minucius' dependence on Tertullian and not the other way round, but the point is still much debated and cannot be regarded as settled.

² Norbert Brox, "Anima naturaliter non Christiana", Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie, 91 (1969), 70-75. Brox criticised Carl Becker, who, in his commentary Tertullian's Apologeticum (Werden und Leistung, Munich: Köselverlag, 1954) had claimed to harmonise the two seemingly contradictory phrases "anima naturaliter christiana" and "fiunt, non nascuntur christiani" by reading both in the light of Stoic philosophy. "Wie nach stoischer Lehre zwar die Keime zum Rechten von Anfang an im Menschen liegen, es aber von ihm selbst abhängt, ob er schliesslich den glückseligen Zustand des Weisen erreicht". So, said Becker, the second phrase grew out of the first as the realisation in due course of what had been present naturaliter from the beginning. Brox pointed out that Becker's conclusion could not stand, because if the apologeticum passage was put alongside the treatise de testimonio animae, it would be seen that "Dies ist aber weder die Theologie" (continued on next page)

"On the Witness of the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

"Apology" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

naturally Christian soul

(souls) become Christian,

they are not born Christian

"The Soul by Nature not Christian"

naturally Christian

"Tertullian and the doctrine of the naturally
Christian soul," periodical article in the

Records of the Turin Academy of Science

"Presumed dependence of Tertullian on Minucio Felice"

"Seneca and the source of a passage from Tertullian", Philology Review

"The Soul by Nature not Christian" (periodical article in the Journal
for Catholic Theology)

"Tertullian's Apology" (Book in a series entitled "Genesis and Accom-
plishment")

naturally Christian soul
not born Christian

(souls) become Christian, they are

Just as, according to stoic doctrines, the kernel of the right lies
in man from the very beginning, but that it depends upon him himself
whether he finally reaches the happy state of the wise or not.

naturally

"Apology" - "On the Witness of the Soul" (two of Tertullian's treatises)

However, this is neither Tertullian's theology ...

soul not being Christian, because it is from a non-committed witness that Tertullian extracts the admissions to prove his case.¹ The conclusion is the same in both works - that the fundamentals for understanding the Christian God are to be found in the natural human soul - but it is expedient to defer comment on the apologeticum passage and to look at it along with Tertullian's second reference to the testimony of the soul.

(b) de testimonio animae

In the six chapters of de testimonio animae, Tertullian not only developed the theme that the involuntary utterances of the soul were a primary witness for the existence and attributes of God, but also that they taught life after death, and reward and punishment in the world to come. It was important for him, as an apologist, to be able to show not only the absurdity of heathen polytheism, but to show that the heathen were capable of recognising the God whom the Christians worshipped and that they were culpable if they did not. His first task, therefore, was to find a point of contact with his audience, and he did it by admitting frankly that the approach of his predecessors had not succeeded. They had attempted to prove, through extracts from secular philosophers and poets, that there were agreements between the new doctrine and the old pagan

footnote 2 continued :

Tertullians noch seine Auffassung des Christlichen. Man muss wieder auf den singulären Charakter des Ausrufes über die anima naturaliter christiana verweisen, dem eine ganze Anzahl anders akzentuierter Aussagen gegenübersteht und dem der gesamte Duktus der tertullianischen Theologie nicht parallel läuft. (p 72). Brox considered the phrase anima naturaliter christiana to be thrown in only for surprise effect, and intended to be paradoxical - Das Wort von der anima naturaliter christiana ist also sowohl paradox und emphatischhyperbolisch als auch werbend und taktisch formuliert. Es geht für Tertullian nicht darum, die menschliche Seele als naturaliter christiana nachgewiesen zu haben, sondern die christliche Lehre gegenüber ständiger Verleumdung und Verzerrung ins Abstruse geschützt und abgesichert zu haben. (p 75).

¹ Non es, quod sciam, Christiana. Fieri enim, non nasci solet Christiana. Tamen nunc a te testimonium flagitant Christiani, ab extranea aduersus tuos, - test 1.7.50-52. The context in which these three sentences appear is given in a fuller quotation on page 164 below, (see footnote 6).

"Apology" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

"On the Witness of the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

... nor his concept of what is Christian. One must again point to the singular character of the exclamation about the "naturally Christian soul", which is opposed to a whole number of differently accentuated statements and with which the whole duct of Tertullian's theology does not run parallel.

naturally Christian soul

The words of the phrase "naturally Christian soul" are therefore formulated as much paradoxically and emphatically and hyperbolically as tactically and with a view to recruitment. It was important to Tertullian not to have proved the human soul to be "naturally Christian" but to have protected and guaranteed the Christian doctrines in the face of permanent calumny and contortion into the abstruse.

You are not a Christian, as far as I know, for, as a rule, the soul is not born Christian; it becomes Christian. Nevertheless, the Christians are now pleading for testimony from you, and alien, against your own friends.

wisdom. Tertullian praised their efforts, and their erudition, but they had failed; the pagans simply rejected their most admired masters in the places where they seemed to offer support to the truth of Christianity.¹ No, said Tertullian, there was no need for such philosophical reflexion and discussion² - instead, he called on the natural, untutored soul to give testimony in favour of Christianity - the soul just as it had come from the hands of God, unsullied by cultural influences, virgin of all human education, such a soul as one would encounter in the street and in the workshop, the common soul.³

Disposed to see in all culture, and science, and art, the falsification of original truth, he preferred to appeal to the involuntary utterances of the immediate, original, voice of God in nature. As evidence for Christian truth against polytheism, he appealed to the spontaneous expressions of an irrepressible, immediate religious consciousness in common life - the testimony of the soul, which he held to be Christian by nature - the testimony of the simple, uncultivated, ignorant soul, previous to all education.⁴

It is important to remember, as Tertullian himself pointed out almost as soon as he had introduced the testimony of the soul, that the anima naturalis was not itself in a Christian relationship to God, however valuable a witness it might be to the truths of Christianity - Consiste in medio, anima:⁵

... Imperitia tua mihi opus est, quoniam aliquantulae peritiae tuae nemo credit. Ea ex postula quae tecum homini infers, quae ex temetipsa aut ex quocumque auctore tuo sentire didicisti. Non es, quod sciam, Christiana. Fieri enim, non nasci solet Christiana. Tamen nunc a te testimonium flagitant Christiani, ab extraneis aduersus tuos, ut uel tibi erubescant, quod nos ab ea oderint et inrideant, quae te nunc consciam detineant.⁶

¹ test 1.3.16-19.

² test 1.4.24-26.

³ test 1.6.42-46.

⁴ Augustus Neander, General History of the Christian Religion and Church, (translated by Joseph Torrey) (London: Bell and Daldy, 1869) I, 246-7.

⁵ test 1.5.34-35.

⁶ test 1.7.47-54.

soul by nature

Stand, then, in the middle, O soul.

It is your inexperience that I need, since no one has any faith in your little bit of experience: I demand from you an answer concerning those things which you bring with you into man, which you have learned to perceive, either from yourself or through your author - whoever he may be. You are not a Christian, as far as I know, for, as a rule, the soul is not born Christian; it becomes Christian. Nevertheless, the Christians are now pleading for testimony from you, an alien, against your own friends, so that they may blush even before you, because they hate and ridicule us for those very things of which now your conscience accuses you .

Indeed the whole argumentation of de testimonio animae chapter one is based on the idea that the soul is not Christian in itself; the value of its evidence lies in the fact that it is heathen and so belongs to the opposite party. That is why the phrase from the apologeticum - testimonium animae naturaliter Christianae - must be interpreted in light of the teaching of de testimonio animae. When inquiry is made as to what the soul teaches, the reply will be that it teaches the existence of the one true God and that it will deny the existence of the pagan gods; it will teach the nature of God, that He is good and that He is sovereign and all-powerful, that He sees all and judges all; it will teach, moreover, the existence of demons and of satan; it will teach the resurrection and the judgment. "Anima naturaliter Christiana" must therefore mean that there is, latent in the human soul, before it has undergone any deformation through learning, a testimony to those things that belong to the essence of the Christian faith. Let the sincere-minded pagan offer an attentive ear to the truth which he carries enshrined in himself!

Whether or not Tertullian was demanding too much from the evidence of the soul - whether for example, he had confused (perhaps deliberately) witness to mere theism with witness to the deus christianorum, - there is no doubt that he expected the non-believer to recognise:

- (i) **The sinfulness of man and the judgment of God for sin - the theme of chapter two of de testimonio animae.**

De natura quoque dei quem praedicamus, nec te latet. 'Deus bonus', 'Deus benefacit', tua uox est. Plane, adicis: 'sed homo malus' scilicet contraria propositione oblique et figuraliter exprobrans ideo malum hominem, quia, a deo bono abscesserit. ¹

Sunt qui etsi deum non negent, dispectorem plane et arbitrum et iudicem non putent, in quo utique nos maxime reiciunt, qui ad istam disciplinam metu praedicati iudicii transuolamus . . . At idem alibi animam diuinam et a deo conlatam confitentes cadunt in testimonium ipsius animae

¹ test 2.2.11-15.

"On the Witness of the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

"Apology" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

the testimony of the naturally Christian soul

The soul naturally Christian

the God of the Christians

"On the Witness of the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

Furthermore the nature of the God Whom we proclaim is not hidden from you. 'God is good' and 'God does good' are expressions of yours, obviously implying, "But man is evil". By this contrary proposition, you indirectly and figuratively accuse man of being evil, because he has departed from God who is good.

There are those who, although they do not deny that God exists, yet plainly they do not regard Him as the Searcher, Arbiter and Judge of our actions. It is on this point that they especially despise us who cling to this doctrine because of fear of the predicted judgment ... These same persons, however, by their own confession elsewhere that the soul is divine and God-given run up against a testimony of the soul itself

retorquendum aduersus opinionem superiorem. Si enim anima aut diuina aut a deo data est, sine dubio datorem suum nouit, et si nouit, utique et timet et tantum postremo ad auctorem. An non timet quem magis propitium uelit quam iratum? Vnde igitur naturalis timor animae in deum, si deus non nouit irasci? 1

(ii) **The existence of the devil - the theme of chapter three.**

Satanam denique in omni uexatione et aspernatione et detestatione pronuntias, quem nos dicimus malitiae angelum, totius erroris artificem, totius saeculi interpolatorem . . . Sentis igitur perditorem tuum, et licet soli illum nouerint Christiani uel quaecumque apud dominum secta, et tu tamen eum nosti, dum odisti. 2

Although the heathen might discover, in the testimony of the common soul, some evidence for the existence of the devil, Tertullian recognised elsewhere ³ that revelation was necessary for man to appreciate the significance and the wiles of the devil.

(iii) **The immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the flesh and future judgment - the theme of chapter four.**

Tertullian believed that immortality could be discovered by the natural man listening to the testimony of the natural soul, which pitied the dead, feared death and often exhibited a desire for posthumous fame - all of which proved its belief in a hereafter. Indeed, he went further and believed he could prove the resurrection of the body by natural means:

Primo enim, cum alicuius defuncti recordaris, "misellum" uocas eum, non utque quod de bono uitae ereptum sed ut poenae et iudicio adscriptum. Ceterum alias "seculos" uocas defunctos. Profiteris et uitae incommodum et mortis beneficium. 4.

Quis non hodie memoriae post mortem frequentandae ita studet, ut uel litteraturae operibus uel simplici laude morum uel ipsorum sepulcrorum ambitione nomen suum seruet? Vnde animae hodie affectare aliquid quod uelit post mortem et tantopere praeparare quae sit usura post obitum? Nihil utique de posterocuraret, si nihil de posterio sciret. Sed forsitan de sensu post excessum tui certior sis quam de resurrectione quandoque cuius nos praesumptores denotamur. Atquin hoc quoque ab anima praedicatur. Nam si de aliquo iam pridem defuncto tanquam de uiuo quis requirat, prae manu occurrit dicere: "Abiit iam et reuerti debet." 5

¹ test 2.3.21-24 and 4.29-5.36.

² test 3.2.7-10 and 3.13-16.

³ e.g. spec 2.5.25-27.

⁴ test 4.3.16-4.20.

⁵ test 4.10.53-64.

which can be turned back against their opinion just given: For, if the soul is either divine or given by God, it undoubtedly knows its giver, and, if it knows Him, it certainly fears Him, too, as its special Endower. Does it not fear the One whom it wishes to be propitious toward them rather than angry? Whence, therefore, is this natural fear of the soul toward God if God is incapable of wrath.

Finally, in every instance of annoyance and in every expression of contempt and detestation, you utter the word 'Satan'. This is the one whom we call the angel of wickedness, the contriver of every error, the corrupter of the whole world... You therefore perceive who your destroyer is, and, although the Christians alone (including whatever group profess the Lord) know him, yet even you too recognise him since you hate him.

For in the first place, when you recall to memory some one who has died, you call him 'poor man', not of course because he is snatched away from the good life, but because he has already been delivered to punishment and judgment. But, at other times, you say of the dead that they are free from care, implying the disadvantage of life and the boon of death.

Who today does not take good care to have his memory constantly born in mind after his death, by endeavouring to perpetuate his name either by works of literature or by praise of his sincere character or even by the splendour of his tomb? How is it that the soul today strives for something which it desires only after death, and makes such elaborate preparations for what it can use only after its departure? Surely, it would care nothing about the future, if it knew nothing about the future. But, perhaps you feel more sure about the capability of feeling after death than you are about the future resurrection, a doctrine of ours which is branded as a reckless supposition. Yet, this also is proclaimed by the soul. For, if someone inquires about a person who has died as though he were alive, the following answer comes at once: "He has just gone, and ought to return."

166

That really is going beyond the evidence - to say that a man 'has gone and will return' is not in itself to express belief in the Christian resurrection! Reincarnation it might have taught, but scarcely resurrection - which was a matter of Christian revelation, as Tertullian recognised elsewhere.

(iv) The goodness of God and the justice of God

Etiam circumuenta ab aduersario meminit sui auctoris et bonitatis et decreti eius et exitus sui et aduersarii ipsius. Sic mirum, si a deo data eadem canit quae deus suis dedit nosse? Sed qui eiusmodi eruptiones animae non putauit doctrinam esse naturae et congenitae et ingentiae conscientiae tacita commissa, 1

Deum praedicabas et non requirebas, daemona abominabaris et illa adorabas, iudicium dei appellabas nec esse credebas, inferna supplica praesumebas et non praecauebas, Christianum nomen sapiebas et persequeris. 2

In other words, every man should not only acknowledge the existence of God, but every man had a duty to seek the meaning and significance of what his soul told him about God. Every soul had such natural capabilities, quite apart from supernatural revelation.

(c) de carne Christi

Tertullian, who never wearied of his insistence in the universality and uniformity of the voice of God in the human soul, returned to his theme in de carne Christi :

Sed adeo non ignorat, ut auctorem et arbitrum et statum suum norit. Nihil adhuc de deo discens deum nominat. Nihil adhuc de iudicio eius admittens deo commendare se dicit. Nihil magis audiens quam spem nullam esse post mortem et bene et male defuncto cuique imprecatur. Plenius haec prosquitur libellus quem scripsimus DE TESTIMONIO ANIMAE. 3

(d) adversus Marcionem

In adversus Marcionem book one, Tertullian adapted the argument of the anima

¹ test 5.2.15-3.20.

² test 6.6.30-34.

³ carn 12.4.22-5.29.

Even when outwitted by its adversary, it remembers its own Author and His goodness and law, its own end, and its adversary's end. Is it so extraordinary, then, if, given by God, it utters the truths that God has given to His own people to know? But, he who does not think such outbursts of the soul are the teaching of its essential nature and the silent deposit of a congenital and inborn knowledge...

O soul, you always did proclaim God, yet did not seek Him; you detest the demons, yet worship them: you invoked the judgment of God, yet did not believe in its existence: you foresaw infernal punishments, yet took no precautions to avoid them: you knew about the Christian name, yet persecuted it.

"On the Flesh of Christ" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

So far however is it from being ignorant of itself, that it knows its Author, and its Judge and its own estate. While as yet it learns nothing of God, it mentions God's name while as yet it makes no acknowledgment of his judgment, it professes to commend its cause to God: while it hears at every turn that there is no hope after death, it utters either a blessing or a curse upon this dead man or that. This theme is more fully pursued in the book I have written ON THE TESTIMONY OF THE SOUL.

"Against Marcion" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

soul

naturaliter christiana, to meet the particular heresy of Marcion. Some understanding of God - including the existence of God as Creator, His goodness, man's duty, and his immortality - could not be dated only from the days of Moses, because the majority of people, who still did not know the name of Moses and knew nothing about his writings, knew, or should know, about the God of Moses. Some understanding of God was given to all men, and for this the soul was the "prophet":

Denique maior popularitas generis humani, ne nominis quidem Moysei compotes, nedum instrumenti, deum Moysei tamen norunt; etiam tantam idolatria dominationem obumbrante, seorsum tamen illum quasi proprio nomine 'deum' perhibent et 'deum deorum' et 'si deus dederit' et 'quod deo placet' et 'deo commendo.' Vide, an nouerint quem omnia posse testantur. Nec hoc ullis Moysei libris debent. Ante anima quam prophetia. Animae enim a primordio conscientia dei dos est. ¹

(e) de resurrectione carnis

Tertullian's contention that the human soul never ceased to be capable of apprehending some divine truth appeared again in his treatise on the resurrection:

Est quidem et de communibus sensibus sapere in dei rebus, ... Quaedam enim et naturaliter nota sunt, ut immortalitas animae penes plures, ut deus noster penes omnes. Vtas ergo et sententia Platonis alicuius pronuntiantis: 'Omnis anima immortalis'; utar et conscientia populi contestantis deum deorum; utar et reliquis communibus sensibus, qui deum iudicem praedicant: 'Deus uidet' et 'Deo commendo'. ²

The use which Tertullian made of pagan philosophers, and his general condemnation of their teaching on religious matters, will be examined in chapter VI.6 below. Meantime it can be noted that Tertullian was not attempting, in the passage just quoted, to base his argument on the views of Plato or the views of the natural man, but was simply saying that this was the kind of support he was prepared to accept from non-Christians, in furtherance of his own case.

¹ I Marc 10.2.6-3.14.

² res 3.1.1-2 and 1.4-2.9.

by nature Christian

Again, the great majority of the human race, though ignorant even of Moses' name, not to mention his written works, do for all that know Moses' God. In spite of darkness of idolatry and its wide dominion, men do distinguish him by the name of God, as though this were a proper noun - 'God of gods', and 'If God grant it', and 'What God will', and 'I commit to God'. Evidently they know him, for they testify that he can do all things: and this they owe not to any books of Moses, for man's soul was there before prophecy. The knowledge inherent in the soul since the beginning is God's endowment.

"On the Resurrection of the Body" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

Now it is possible even on the basis of popular ideas to be knowledgeable in the things of God... For there are certain things that are known even by the light of nature, as for example the immortality of the soul, in the case of many people and as is our God among all. I will therefore make use even of the opinion of one Plato, when he proclaims: "every soul is mortal". I will avail myself also of the consciousness of the people (of Israel) when it calls to witness the God of gods: I shall use also other nations' popular ideas, which proclaim that God is judge. 'God sees', and 'I entrust it to God'.

(f) de anima

In his very detailed treatise de anima, Tertullian returned to the theme of why the darkness of paganism could not hide completely the understanding of the true God. In consequence of the semen boni, of which no soul was entirely bereft,¹ Sic et diuinitas animae in praesagia erumpit ex bono priore et conscientia dei in testimonium prodit: 'deus bonus' et 'deus uidet' et 'deo commendo'. 2.

It was a fair point for Tertullian to make against the heathen, but it must be taken in the context of his overall thought. If the understanding of God, of which Tertullian had been speaking, was really inborn, then so must be the understanding of the resurrection, the immortality of the soul and the characteristics of God to which Tertullian also referred. Elsewhere,³ however, he emphatically rejected the Platonic doctrine of inborn ideas, preferring the Aristotlean and Stoic notion that the soul acquired understanding through the senses. As will be examined in the next section, the external world had a great deal to teach to the soul through the observation of the senses, but this present section is concerned with the evidence of the natural, inner power of the soul. The point Tertullian was surely trying to make, about the testimony of the soul, was the need for man to take at face value its spontaneous utterances, that is what came from its innermost being; he could call on the evidence of the healthy and natural mind of man, because it gave the same testimony everywhere and therefore it was true. Beyond that his argument should not be pushed.

¹ For the reasons set out in chapter I.7 above.

² an 41.3. 17-19.

³ e.g. an 18 and 24.

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

seed of good

The soul, conscious of its divine origin and native goodness, renders prophetic testimony to God in such expressions as 'Good God', 'God will provide', and 'God bless you'.

CONCLUSIONS FROM THIS SECTION

The natural man used, and heard others use, a variety of expressions which gave spontaneous evidence of the existence and attributes of the one true God. Every man therefore had, or should have, some understanding of Him. God had created man in such a way that he could possess and enjoy a relationship with God. In his original condition, knowledge of God had been clear and unclouded, but through sin that knowledge had been obscured. In the untutored soul, however, it had not been obliterated, and phrases which sprang involuntarily to the lips of men were testimonies to God which even sin could not eradicate. Fütcher seems rather to have missed the point of this, when he wrote:

Auch so, sagt T., bezeugt sie Dasein des einen wahren Gottes. Dazu braucht es kein fertiges, aktuelles angeborenes Wissen, sondern es handelt sich vielmehr um die Fähigkeit und Naturanlage der Seele, vermöge deren die im Hinblick auf das objektive Zeugnis für das Dasein Gottes in und um uns anwillkürlich, mit einer gewissen Naturnotwendigkeit zur Anerkennung Gottes kommt, ohne sich das in wissenschaftlicher Reflexion zu klarem Bewusstsein zu bringen. Das ist der Standpunkt, den T. sowohl in der Polemik gegen die Heiden als insbesondere gegen Marcion einnimmt, wo die Erkenntnis Gottes aus dem Zeugnis seiner Werke so stark im Vordergrund steht ¹.

The testimony of the soul was innate, according to Tertullian, not acquired by observation impressed on the tabula rasa of the soul as life went on. That was true of the evidence from the world outside, which was acquired and not innate, but that was a separate (although related) source for the knowledge of God, which is examined next.

¹ Lorenz Fütcher, "Die natürliche Gotteserkenntnis bei Tertullian", Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie, 51 (1927), 238.

Thus, Tertullian says, it testifies to the existence of the one true God. For this purpose, no ready-made, actual innate knowledge is needed, it is more a question of the capability and natural ability of the soul, by virtue of which it, with regard to the objective evidence of the existence of God in and around us, arrives involuntarily at the acknowledgment of God with a certain physical necessity, without becoming clearly conscious of it by scientific reflection. That is the standpoint which Tertullian takes as much in the controversy against the heathens as against Marcion in particular, where the understanding of God through the evidence of His works stands so strongly in the foreground.

unmarked writing-tablet

"Natural knowledge of God in the writings of Tertullian" (periodical article in Journal for Catholic Theology)

V.6 THE TESTIMONY OF NATURE

The second main evidence, brought forward by Tertullian¹ for the natural man's knowledge of God, was the evidence of nature. The God of creation had been known to man since the beginning of the world and had taken care to convey, through the works of His creation, a universal and certain understanding of His existence. Tertullian believed this both complemented the testimony of the soul, and also gave independent evidence for the existence of the one true God. The two evidences were closely related, because God was the creator of both the soul and of the external world; both aspects of His creation bore testimony to God.

Die geistige Natur der Seele hat er nach seinem Ebenbild geschaffen mit der Bestimmung zur Erkenntnis Gottes und sie deshalb auch mit den entsprechenden Fähigkeiten ausgestattet, um leicht und spontan zur Erkenntnis ihres Urhebers zu gelangen. Die äussere Natur hat er geschaffen mit der Bestimmung, den Menschen zur Erkenntnis Gottes zu führen. So hat sich Gott in der Natur und Anlage unserer Seele und der Welt ein Zeugnis geschaffen, das jeden Menschen zu seinem Urheber emporweist. ²

Tertullian developed the argument from nature in three distinct, although related, directions. First, against Marcion, it was necessary to establish that God could be understood by His works in nature, and Tertullian attacked the Marcionite god, because he had produced nothing to make his existence known to man.

Primo enim quaeritur, an sit, et ita, qualis sit. Alterum de operibus, alterum de beneficiis dinoscetur. Ceterum non quia liberasse dicitur hominem, ... quam debuisse condidisse, uti cognosceretur et operibus, quia sit fuisset, cognosci debuisset, et utique a primordio rerum, - deum enim non decuisset latuisse. ³

If this new god of Marcion's really existed, then he would have made himself known through works - but he had not done so, he had not produced even one

¹ Tertullian did not originate the concept; it is frequently found in the works of Christian apologists before him.

² Fütcher, op. cit., p 240.

³ I Marc 17.1.7-2.9 and 3.15-18.

He created the spiritual nature of the soul in His own image with the stipulation that it should understand God and He thus equipped it with the relevant abilities to succeed easily and spontaneously in understanding its creator. He created external nature with the stipulation that it should lead man to the understanding of God. Thus God has created evidence in nature and the capabilities of our soul and in the world which points each man up towards his creator.

For the first question is whether he is, and only then of what his character is. The first question will be settled by works, the other by benefits. Now his existence is not established by the allegation that he has set man free... He ought to have instituted something, so that he might have become known from his works: because if he had existed it would have been his duty to become known, even from the very beginning of things, since it was not seemly that a god should remain in hiding.

vegetable of his own - therefore he was no god.

Welches sind nun die Kriterien, die das Dasein des Schöpfergottes mit Sicherheit verbürgen? Es ist die Tatsache, dass er niemals unbekannt war, weil er sich eine Welt geschaffen hat, die sein Dasein unzweifelhaft kundtut. Fehlen also für den neuen Gott M.s diese Kriterien, so bleibt seine Existenz in Frage gestellt und ist er nur als eine Erfindung M.s zu werten. ¹

The true God would first reveal Himself through nature, Tertullian argued, otherwise God would be unknowable, except through the scriptures, and Tertullian held that to be an untenable position.

Furthermore, Marcion claimed that his god was a good god. What and where were the evidences of his goodness? The evidences of goodness in a god, said Tertullian, were to be looked for by inspecting his handiwork:

Igitur oportebit ineuntes examinationem in deum notum, si quaeritur in qua conditione sit notus, ab operibus eius incipere, quae priora sunt homine, ut statim cum ipso comperta bonitas eius. ²

By observing the works which were prior to the existence of man, it would be possible to find a starting-point from which to examine the world-order, which had been complicated by the arrival of man. This starting-point was the obvious goodness of the natural creation. Marcion's contempt for the lower order of creation was answered by Tertullian with a whole series of admiring examples - the humblest flower, the tiniest shell on the sea shore, the feather from the wing of the smallest bird, all these pointed to a good Creator:

Vnus, opinor, de sepibus flosculus, non dico de pratis, una cuiuslibet maris conchula, non dico de rubro, una tetraonis pinnula, taceo de pauo, sordidum artificem pronuntiabit tibi creatorem? ... imitare, si potes, apis aedificia, formicae stabula, aranei retia, bombycis stamina, ... Postremo te tibi circumfer, intus ac foris considera hominem : placebit tibi uel hoc opus dei nostri. ³

While the polemic with Marcion demanded these arguments, they fit in with the general pattern of Tertullian's thought, that something of the nature

¹ Futschner, op. cit., p 20.

² II Marc 3.1.9-12.

³ I Marc 13.5.2-5, and 14.1.9-10 and 14.2.14-16.

Now which are the criteria which guarantee for certain the existence of the God of creation? It is a fact that He was never unknown, because He has created a world which undoubtedly makes His existence known. If these criteria are lacking for Marcion's new God, then his existence remains in doubt and he is only to be valued as an invention of Marcion.

As then we take in hand to weigh the evidence respecting the God we know, since the question arises under what circumstances he has become known, we shall need to begin with those works of his which were there before man was. In this way his goodness will be discovered immediately, as he himself is.

Can one little flower of the hedgerow - I say not the meadows, one little shell from any sea you like - I say not the Red Sea - one little moorcock's feather - I say nothing of the peacock permit you to judge the Creator a low-grade artificer... imitate, if you can the bee's house-building, the ant's stablings, the spider's network, the silkworm's spinning... Finally, display yourself to yourself, look at man, within and without. At least this work of our God will obtain your approval.

and goodness of God could and should be discovered by every man by observing God's handiwork. This theme was continued by Tertullian in other anti-heretical works, where he used both the macro-cosmic, the world at large, and the microcosmic, the detail of the human body and the animal and vegetable creation, to establish the knowledge of God. When he had to refute the belief that the life-breath was a separate substance from the soul, (a view based on the assertion that certain animals did not possess respiratory organs,) Tertullian argued:

Si uero non putas capere tam minuta corpuscula deī ingenium, sic quoque magnificentiam eius agnoscas, quod modicis animalibus sine necessariis membris nihilominus uiuere instruxerit, saluo etiam uisu sine oculis et esu sine denticulis et digestu sine alueis. ¹

When the Marcionites tried to argue that their god had indeed created things, but that these were invisible, and that the visible creation belonged to the Creator as contrasted with their supposed superior god, Tertullian seized on a phrase used by Marcion and by the Valentinians for the Creator - deus mundi. That exactly suited his purpose, and he insisted that the only God was the One who was known in and through His visible world, omnibus naturaliter notum de testimoniis operum. ² Nature presented examples of resurrection, examples deliberately provided by God so that man, having seen resurrection in the act, should the more readily believe it when told of it in words.

Totus igitur hic ordo reuolubilis rerum testatio est resurrectionis mortuorum. Operibus eam praescipit deus ante quam litteris, uiribus praedicauit ante quam uocibus. Praemisit tibi naturam magistratam, summissurus et prophetiam, quo facilius credas prophetiae discipulus ante naturae, quo statim admittas, cum audieris quod ubique iam uideris, nec dubites deum carnis etiam resuscitatorem, quem omnium noueris restitutorem. ³

This, like the evidence from dreams to be examined in the next section, may not

¹ an 10.6.35-40.

² res 2.8.36.

³ res 12.7.2 7-34.

If, however, you choose to believe that the power of God cannot form such tiny bodies, still you must admire His wonderful power in that He can make the smallest animals live without providing them with the ordinary organs. Thus, they can see without eyes, eat without teeth, and digest their food without stomachs.

the god of the world.

by nature known to all on the evidence of His works

All this revolving order of things, therefore, is evidence of the resurrection of the dead. God ordained it in works before He commanded it in writing, He proclaimed it by strength before He proclaimed it in words. He first sent you nature as teacher, intending to send you prophecy also, in order that having learnt from nature, you may the more easily believe prophecy, in order that you may receive at once when you hear what you have already seen everywhere and that you may not doubt God to be the resuscitator of flesh also, since you know Him to be the restorer of all things.

sound very convincing to modern ears but Tertullian must have thought it had some value as an argument, because he had already used it in the apologeticum and would use it again against Scapula; his argument in his apologetic works is therefore examined next.

The second main area where Tertullian developed his argument from nature is found in the apologeticum chapters 17 to 20. Tertullian set out the nature of the God whom the Christians worshipped, in contrast to the gods who were the objects of pagan worship. In particular, he refuted the report, current among the heathen, that the Christians worshipped an ass's head. The true sources of the knowledge of God were, he said, threefold. First there was the evidence from His works (apol. 17.4 ff); then there was the evidence from the human soul (17.4) and finally, there was the revelation of Scripture, which came to confirm '...plenius et impressius ...' the silent revelation of nature, and the witness of the soul. It is the first of these which is the concern of this present section - that all men should have some knowledge of God because of the evidence of nature:

Vultis ex operibus ipsius tot ac talibus, quibus continemur, quibus sustinemur, quibus oblectamur, etiam quibus exterremur? ¹

It was therefore, the crowning guilt of men that they would not recognize the One of whom they could not possibly be ignorant. This was a theme to which Tertullian returned, years later, when he addressed Scapula:

Nos unum Deum colimus, quem omnes naturaliter nostis, ad cuius fulgura et tonitrua contremiscitis, ad cuius beneficia gaudetis. ²

The third area in which Tertullian developed the cosmological argument might at first seem irrelevant for this chapter, which is concerned with the means by which the natural man could come to a knowledge of God, but even in

¹ apol 17.4.16-18.

² Scap. 2.1.1-3.

"Apology" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

more fully and more firmly

Do you wish to prove His existence from His numerous, mighty works by which we are supported, sustained, delighted and even startled?

We worship one God, whom you all know, since nature is your teacher, at whose lightning and thunder you tremble, at whose benefits you rejoice.

his moral works Tertullian made use of the basic fact that God was to be known first in the evidence of nature.

Quaerens igitur diē legem habes communem istam in publico mundi, in naturalibus tabulis, ad quas et apostolus solet prouocare, ut cum in uelamine feminae nec natura, inquit, uos docet? ut cum ad Romanos, natura facere dicens nationes ea quae sunt legis, et legem naturalem suggerit et naturam legalem. ¹

Ipsam deum secundum naturam prius nouimus, scilicet deum appellantes deorum et bonum praesumentes et iudicem inuocantes: ²

Nemo negat, quia nemo ignorat, quod ultro natura suggerit, Deum esse uniuersitatis conditorem eamque uniuersitatem tam bonam quam homini mancipatam. Sed quia non penitus Deum norunt nisi naturali iure, non etiam familiari, de longinquo, non de proximo, necesse est ignorent, qualiter administrari iubeat quae instituit. ³

The significance of that last quotation lies in its address - it was Tertullian's reply to those who claimed that the 'shows' could not be offensive either to God or to His worshippers, because everything used at them had been created by God and for that reason was good. That was true, said Tertullian, and even the pagan could appreciate that nature was the handiwork of the Creator God; however the non-Christian had no real knowledge of God and consequently did not know that things created must not be used for purposes forbidden by God - quando haec sit tota ratio damnationis peruersa administratio conditionis a conditis. ⁴ In other words, God had indeed Himself known through the order of nature, but God had also made Himself known by direct teaching, and this teaching would give a fuller and truer picture of God than the appreciation of His majesty through the cosmic order. The testimony of nature was valuable, but it was no substitute for revelation.

¹ cor 6.1.1-6.

² cor 6.2.9-12.

³ spec 2.4.19-5.25.

⁴ spec 2.11.58-59.

If you demand a divine law you have the common one prevailing all over the world written on the tablets of nature, to which also, St. Paul is accustomed to appeal. Thus he says concerning the veiling of women: Does not nature teach you this. Again, in saying in his letter to the Romans that the Gentiles do by nature what the Law prescribes, he hints at the existence of natural law and a nature founded on law.

We come to the knowledge of God first by the teachings of nature. We call Him, for instance, God of gods, we assume that He is benevolent, and we invoke Him as Judge.

No one denies - because nobody is unaware of it and even nature tells it us - that God is the creator of the universe, and that this universe is good and has been made over to man by its Creator. But because they have no real knowledge of God - knowing Him only by natural law and not by right of friendship, knowing Him only from afar and not from intimate association - they are necessarily ignorant as to how He bids or forbids the things of His creation to be used.

The whole reason for condemnation is, rather, the misuse of God's creation by God's creatures.

This section seems to be another indication of Tertullian's debt to the Stoics, who likewise employed a double approach to the knowledge of God, the macrocosmic and the microcosmic. The great and orderly κόσμος furnished some proof for the existence of God and so did the little universe of man. Tertullian did not doubt that man might come to a true, if inadequate, knowledge of God through observing the order and beauty of the visible κόσμος quite apart from the revelation given through the prophets and through Christ, but it would remain inadequate and other ways, in which God might speak to man, are now explored.

world

V.7. DREAMS, VISIONS AND REVELATIONS

Tertullian devoted five complete chapters of de anima to the subject of dreams (45 - 49) and made a number of incidental references to them elsewhere.¹ Of all that he wrote about dreams, few ideas are stranger to modern ears than his assertion that almost all men came to a knowledge of God through dreams.

A deo autem, pollicito scilicet et gratiam spiritus sancti in omnem carnem et sicut prophetaturos, ita et somniaturos seruos suos et ancillas suas, ea deputabuntur quae ipsi gratiae comparabuntur, si qua honesta sancta prophetica reuelatoria aedificatoria uocatoria, quorum liberalitas soleat et in profanos destillare, imbres etiam et soles suos peraequante deo iustis et iniustis, siquidem et Nabuchodonosor diuinitus somniat et maior paene uis hominum ex uisionibus deum discunt. Sicut ergo dignatio dei et in ethaicos,...²

That this was a serious assertion, and not just a passing remark, is shown by his heated (almost angry) reply to the suggestion that the ^{Libyan} ~~Lybian~~ tribe of Atlantes did not dream³ and so were ignorant of God - Quid ergo nec a deo Atlantes somniarent, uel quia nulla iam gens dei extranea est in omnem terram et in terminos orbis euangelio coruscante?⁴ and with that he closed his argument about dreams.

Inability to dream would be a vitium animae, and Tertullian regarded the suggestion that any soul should be incapable of dreaming as an insult to the nature of the soul in general. As an adherent of Montanism he was of course particularly interested in dreams, particularly as a source for the knowledge of God.⁵ There was no question of man establishing a saving relationship with God

¹ e.g. an 57.10.62-71; apol 23.1.3-5; and the story of Hermotimus, taken up at the end of this section.

² an 47.2.5-14.

³ an 49.2.5-6.

⁴ an 49.3.14-16.

⁵ His definition of the natural and normal dream as a combination of sleep and ecstasy (an 45.3.12-18), ecstasy being a completely new concept in the discussion of dreams, must be explained from Tertullian's views as a Montanist.

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

The second class of dreams must be considered to come from God, since He has promised to pour out the grace of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh... Their bountiful nature causes them to overflow even to the infidels since God with divine impartiality causes the rain to fall and the sun to shine upon just and unjust alike. Surely, it was under the inspiration of God that Nebuchadnezzar had his famous dream, and the majority of mankind get their knowledge of God from dreams. Therefore just as the mercy of God abounds for the pagans, so ...

Why couldn't God make the Atlanteans dream? There is now no race of men completely ignorant of Him, since the light of the Gospel now gleams in every land and to all the ends of the earth.

fault of the soul

through dreams, although a dream might set a man on the correct course to faith. To that end Tertullian was concerned to distinguish:

- (a) dreams that conveyed messages from God,¹
- (b) dreams sent by the devil, even if they were true,²
- (c) dreams which were natural, produced by the free play of psychic energies, and which carried no divine message,³ and
- (d) dreams arising from a special form of ecstasy.⁴

While God would use dreams to speak about Himself to all men, visions and revelations during ecstasy were a different matter. They, together with prophecies, were a means of communicating God's will only to the Christian; there is no indication, in any of Tertullian's writings, that visions or revelations were used by God to give knowledge of Himself to non-Christians.

Following on the examination in the previous section of nature as a testimony to God, it is significant that Tertullian regarded dreams as the more likely avenue for God to use, if He had a message for a particular individual. In de anima chapter 44, just before coming to his main treatment of dreams, Tertullian was combatting the popular view that the soul could leave the body during sleep. He narrated the story of Hermotimus⁵ and what he had to say about Hermotimus is as instructive for this section on dreams as anything else which Tertullian wrote. It had been said of Hermotimus that his soul regularly left his body during sleep, and so on one occasion his enemies burnt his body, when he was lying as dead; Tertullian was concerned about the popularity of this

¹ an 47.2.5-16.

² an 47.1.1-5.

³ an 47.3.16-22.

⁴ an 47.4.22-25.

⁵ an 44.1.1-6.

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

story,¹ because it seemed to support his opponents' theory that the soul could leave the body, which theory in its turn would support the pernicious doctrine of metempsychosis.

Si enim tale quid semel accidere dicatur, ut deliquium solis aut lunae, ita et animae, sane persuaderer deuinitus factum; congruere enim hominem seu moneri seu terri a deo, uelut fulgure rapido, momentaneae mortis ictu - si non magis in proximo esset somnium credi, quod uigilanti potius accidere deberet, si non somnium magis credi oporteret.²

In other words, if this was anything else but a dream (a 'non-somnium'), it would not have happened to Hermotimus during his sleep (uigilanti potius accidere deberet); for Tertullian, any explanation was better than the popular belief that the soul could leave the body before death. If it had happened once only, it might be explained as a special warning on the part of God -and in that case it would be reasonable to regard it as a dream, Hermotimus being asleep at the time. The fact that it was said to have taken place regularly made the story improbable to the point where it could safely be discounted.

Because Tertullian accepted as commonplace that God could speak to man through dreams, he did not say a great deal about their effect on the relationship of ^{the} natural man to God. One final point is, however, worth mentioning. Denique et bona facta gratuita sunt in somnis et delicta secreta; non magis enim ob stupri uisionem damnabimur quam ob martyrii coronabimur.³ There was therefore no question of man establishing a saving relationship with God through dreams alone.

¹ The story is found in five other places, viz. Plutarch, De Genio Socratis 22 (592 C), Lucian, Encomium Muscae 7, Pliny, Nat. hist. 7, 174, Origen, c. Cels. 3, 32, and Apollonius, Histor. mirab. 3. Only the last-mentioned account is as detailed as Tertullian's.

² an 44.3.19-25.

³ an 45.4.21-23.

If such a thing were declared to have happened to his soul once (like a total eclipse of the sun or moon), I should imagine it happened through divine intervention. It would not be unlikely that a man might be warned or frightened by God, as by a bolt of lightning or a sudden stroke of death, but it would be much more natural to think that such a warning would come in a dream. But, if this were not a dream, then it ought to have happened to Hermotimus when he was awake.

not a dream

it ought to have happened when he was awake

In our dreams any good actions we perform are without merit and our dreams are blameless. We will no more be condemned for a rape committed in a dream than we will be crowned for dreaming we were martyrs.

Plutarch: On the genius of Socrates

Lucian: Eulogy of a fly

Pliny: Natural History

Origen: Against Celsus

Apollonius: History of miracles

V.8 OBSERVING CHRISTIANS, INCLUDING EXORCISM

There were, according to Tertullian, a number of ways in which a non-Christian could learn about the Christian's God, simply by observing the behaviour of Christian people. Even if the outsider had no interest in the Christian faith, he could hardly avoid some contact with Christians and, through that, some knowledge of what Christians believed.

Itaque non sine foro, non sine macello, non sine balneis, tabernis, officinis, stabulis, nundinis uestris, ceterisque commerciis cohabitamus hoc saeculum. Nauigamus et nos uobiscum et uobiscum militamus et rusticamur et mercamur. ¹

In addition, Christians went quite openly to their religious ceremonies (except in times of persecution or acute popular hostility) and observant pagans would be familiar with their places of worship, the days of their assembly, even details of their rites.² Apart, however, from the Christian's general presence in society, there were specific areas of life where non-believers should be challenged to consider the claims of the Christian faith.

(a) By observing the way in which Christians faced persecution or martyrdom

The recorded history of the African Church begins with martyrdom. From a village called Madaura, near Carthage, Namphamo, Miggin, Suname and Lucitas were brought to Carthage to be executed in July A.D. 180;³ a few days later, on 16th July, the Proconsul Vigellius Saturninus condemned twelve more Christians to death ^{from} Scilli (location unknown) for refusal to do sacrifice to the gods - seven men and five women.⁴

¹ apol 42.2.8-3.12.

² I nat 13.1.14-15, 'quod innotuerit ad orientis partem facere nos precationem uel die solis laetitiam curare.'

³ "car nous ne pouvons nommément attribuer à cette première épreuve de l'Église d'Afrique que l'archimartyr Namphamo et les martyrs Scillitains;" Charles Guignebert, Tertullien: Étude sur ses sentiments à l'égard de l'Empire et de la Société civile, (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1901) p 119. The other three names (in addition to Namphamo) were listed by Herbert B. Workman, The Martyrs of the Early Church, (London: Charles H. Kelly, 1913) p 92. Their names, Punic rather than Roman, indicate native Africans. (Barnes dated this incident in the Fourth Century - "Tertullian" pp 261-262.) and this is now generally accepted.

⁴ Bray remarked on Tertullian's surprising lack of mention of this incident - op. cit., "Holiness", p 44. but Tertullian did refer to it - Scap 3.4.21-22.

And so we dwell with you in this world, not without a forum, not without a provision-market, not without your baths, shops, workrooms, inns, weekly markets, and other places of business. With you we go on voyages, and serve as soldiers, and till the soil, and trade.

because it is a well-known fact that we pray toward the east, or because we make Sunday a day of festivity.

because we can only particularly attribute to this first proof of the African Church the archmartyr Namphamo, and the Scillitain martyrs.

"Tertullian - A Study of his feelings in regard to the Empire and the Civilian Society" (Book)

It was another outbreak of persecution against the Christians in A.D. 197-198 which produced Tertullian's first extant work, ad martyras, addressed to those in prison for their faith. The edict of Septimius Severus in A.D. 202, by which his subjects were forbidden to embrace Christianity, brought another sharp wave of persecution to the Christians in Africa. Among those arrested on that occasion was the daughter of a well-to-do provincial named Vibia Perpetua, along with her slave Felicitas and their catechist, the presbyter Saturus. Their imprisonment and subsequent execution in the amphitheatre at Carthage in the spring of A.D. 203 left a strong impression on Tertullian, who may be the editor of Perpetua's diary.¹ Then, with the death of Severus in A.D. 211, and the accession of Caracalla, persecution once again broke out at Carthage and Tertullian had to write a vigorous apology, addressed to Scapula, the proconsul of Africa.

From the very beginning of his writings, Tertullian regarded the persecution and martyrdom of Christians as an enticement to the faith - semen est sanguis Christianorum!² Tertullian continued:

Quis enim non contemplatione eius concutitur ad requirendum, quid intus in re sit? Quis non, ubi requisivit, accedit, ubi accessit, pati exoptat, ut totam Dei gratiam redimat, ...³

Fearlessness before death was to Tertullian the mark of a true Christian. It has often been suggested that Tertullian, who left no clear explanation in his works of the reasons which influenced him to become a Christian,⁴ was himself drawn

¹ The latest study on the relationship of Tertullian to the diary, which includes a review of earlier comment, is by René Braun, "Nouvelles Observations Linguistiques sur le Redacteur de la 'Passio Perpetuae', Vigiliae Christianae, 33 (1979), 105-117; he emphatically rejected Tertullian's involvement as editor.

² apol 50.13.60-61.

³ apol 50.15.65-68.

⁴ Tertullian was nowhere autobiographical except by accident, and there has been a great deal of speculation, from the few allusions to himself in his writings, as to why he became a Christian. It is outside the scope of this study even to list these, but most commentators include the spectacle of Christian steadfastness in martyrdom, and some make it the determining cause: (continued on next page)

the blood of the Christians is seed

For, who is not stirred by the contemplation of it to inquire what lies indeed within it? Who, on inquiry, does not join us, and joining us, does not wish to suffer, that he may purchase for himself the whole grace of God.

"New Linguistic Observations on the Editorship of the 'Passion of Perpetua'" (periodical article)

partly by the intrepid fortitude of such martyrs. Certainly he came to believe that the spectacle of men and women who were prepared not only to embrace the Christian faith against all human interest, but who were prepared to persist in that faith until death, should lead the observers to make enquiry about the Christians' God.

Quisque enim tantam tolerantiam spectans, ut aliquo scrupulo percussus et inquirere accenditur, quid sit in causa, et ubi cognouerit ueritatem et ipse statim sequitur. ¹

(b) By observing their changed character

In the years of peace, when there were no martyrdoms, the witness of God through Christians was not absent. Christians took their high principles and standards out into the world, and could not help but attract attention because of it - in silentio et modestia agimus, singuli forte noti magis quam omnes, nec aliunde noscibiles quam de emendatione uitiorum pristinorum. ² Even the pagans

footnote 4 continued :

"the sight of men and women prepared to die rather than accept the conventional form of loyalty to the Severan age led him to Christianity."

W.H.C. Frend, Martyrdom and Persecution In The Early Church, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965) p 366.

"... as others before him, was converted to Christianity by the bearing of Christian martyrs whom he happened to watch in the amphitheatre."

W.H.C. Frend, "Their Word to our Day - IX. Tertullian", Expository Times, 81 (1969-70), 136.

"Tertullien ne nous a pas laissé le récit de sa propre conversion au christianisme. Mais il y a tout lieu de croire que de spectacle de la vie chretienne y contribua plus que les livres". d'Alès, op. cit. p 33.

"Their obstinacy was his teacher. He looked for the reason, he learned the truth and he followed it at once." Terrot Reaveley Glover, The Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire, (10th ed.; London: Methven & Co, 1923) p 320.

The two most relevant texts from Tertullian's own works are the climax of his appeal in the apologeticum, quoted immediately above in the thesis (apol 50.15.65-68) and his final words to Scapula, quoted immediately next in the thesis (Scap 5.4.23-26).

¹ Scap 5.4.23-26.

² Scap 2.10.43-45.

For, whoever beholds such noble endurance will first, as though struck by some kind of uneasiness, be driven to inquire what is the matter in question, and, then, when he knows the truth, immediately follow the same way.

We conduct ourselves quietly and modestly, known, perhaps, more as individuals than as organised communities, and remarkable only for the reformation of our former vices.

Tertullian has not left us an account of his own conversion to Christianity, but there is every reason to believe that sight of the Christian life-style contributed more than reading books.

"Apology" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

acknowledged - and expected - a change in lifestyle when a man became a Christian - if he no longer appeared at the 'shows', they assumed that he had been converted to the Christian faith.¹

Paradoxically, when frivolous, perverse natures were suddenly altered for the better, the pagans' reaction was not always favourable - they realised that God was at work and this could produce a sarcastic reaction, which Tertullian turned to his advantage in the apologeticum:

Quid quod ita plerique clausis oculis in odium eius impingunt, ut bonum alicui testimonium ferentes admisceant nominis exprobrationem? 'Bonus uir Gaius Seius, tantum quod Christianus'. Item alius: 'Ego miror Lucium Titium, sapientem uirum, repente factum Christianum'. Nemo retractat, ne ideo bonus Gaius et prudens Lucius, quia Christianus, aut ideo Christianus, quia prudens et bonus. 2

Caecitate odii in suffragium impingunt enarrantes: Quae mulier, quam lasciuia, quam fastiua! Quis iuuenis, quam lusius, quam amasius! Facti sunt Christiani'. Ita nomen emendationi imputatur. 3

However, the testimony to God's grace was there for the pagans to see, and a very remarkable testimony it was, to the working of God among men. Tertullian argued cogently that the observers should do more than express astonishment - they should ponder whether this was not a compelling reason for they themselves to make inquiry about the deus Christianorum.

When addressing Scapula, Tertullian went further than the personal knowledge of his hearers, and appealed to the Christians' general reputation for high standards - and to the fact that they would disown anyone who fell short of these standards. As Tertullian put it ad nationes, the inconsistent life of any one

¹ spec 24.3.12-13.

² apol 3.1.1-7, and the parallel passage in I nat 4.8.18-20, 10.22-24 and 11.26-28. Quo more etiam nobis soletis: 'bonus uir Lucius Titius, tantum quod Christianus,' Item alius: 'Ego miror Gaium Seium, grauem uirum, factum Christianum'...Nemini subuenit, ne ideo bonus quis et prudens, quia Christianus, aut ideo Christianus, quia prudens et bonus. ... Alii, quos retro ante hoc nomen uagos uiles improbos norant, emendatos repente mirantur, et tamen mirari quam assequi norunt.

³ apol 3.3.13-16.

What should one say of the fact that many shut their eyes and force themselves to such hatred of the name that, even when they speak favourably of someone, they insert some hateful remark about this name? "Caius Seius is a good man, except that he is a Christian". Similarly someone else says: "I am surprised that Lucius Titius, otherwise a man of sense, has suddenly become a Christian!" No one stops to think whether Caius is good and Lucius sensible because he is a Christian, or is a Christian because he is sensible and good!

In the blindness of their hatred they stumble into favourable criticism. "That woman! How dissolute and frivolous she was! And that young man, how much more prodigal and debauched he used to be! They have become Christians." Thus, the name which was responsible for their reformation is set down as a charge against him.

The God of the Christians

"To the Gentiles" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

It is just in the same way that you are in the habit of saying of us: "Lucius Titius is a good man, only he is a Christian;" while another says: "I wonder that so worthy a man as Caius Seius has become a Christian..." It occurs to none to consider whether a man is not good and wise because he is a Christian, or therefore a Christian because he is wise and good... Some persons wonder that those whom they had known to be unsteady, worthless, or wicked before they bore this name, have been suddenly converted to virtuous courses: and yet they better know how to wonder at the change than to attain to it.

bad Christian no more condemned true disciples of Christ, than a passing could obscured a summer sky;¹ let Scapula make enquiry from his own officials, and he would find how great an impact the Christian God had made in the lives of His followers:

Praeter haec depositum non abnegamus, matrimonium nullius adulteramus, pupillos pietractus, indigentibus refrigeramus, nulli malum pro malo reddimus. Viderint, qui sectam mentiuntur, quos et ipsi recusamus. 2

(c) By observing Christian home-life

In addition to his wider argument that the observation of Christian behaviour should give the pagan some idea about the Christian God, Tertullian mentioned several times that the meaning and significance of a Christian's relationship to God should be particularly apparent in the conduct of Christians in their own homes. He drew attention to the absurd paradox of a father disinheriting his son because he had become a Christian and so more dutiful, and of a master banishing a slave on his becoming a Christian and so more trustworthy; the bearing and conduct of Christians in these situations was a testimony to God.

Pater filium, de quo queri desierat, exheredavit; dominus servum, quem praeterea necessarium senserat, in ergastulum dedit: simul quis intellexerit Christianum, mauult nocentem. 3

and, in the parallel passage in the apologeticum:

filium iam subiectum pater retro patiens abdicavit, servum iam fidelem dominus olim mitis ab oculis rehgavit: ut quisque hoc nomine emendatur, offendit. Tanti non est bonum quanti odium Christianorum! 4

Tertullian made particular reference to the difference which conversion to Christianity brought to the marriage relationship, again with some quite illogical consequences:

¹ The import of I nat chapter five.

² Scap. 4.7.41-45.

³ I nat 4.13.37-40.

⁴ apol 3.4.19-22.

Besides this, we do not misuse any trust funds deposited with us; we never defile the marriage bed; we deal faithfully with our wards; we give aid to the needy; we render to none evil for evil. As for those who falsely pretend to belong to us, and whom we too, repudiate, let them answer for themselves.

A father disinherited his son, with whom he had ceased to find fault. A master sent his slave to bridewell, whom he had even found to be indispensable to him. As soon as they discovered them to be Christians, they wished they were criminals again.

A son, now docile, is disowned by a father who was patient with him in the past. A servant, now trustworthy, is banished from the sight of a master who was formerly indulgent. To the degree that one is reformed under the influence of the name he gives offence. The Christians' goodness is outweighed by the hatred borne them.

V^xorem iam pudicam maritus iam non zelotypus eiecit, 1

Scio maritum unum atque alium, anxium retro de uxoris suae moribus, qui ne mures quidem in cubiculum inrepentes sine gemitu suspicionis sustinebat, comperta causa nouae sedulitatis et inusitatae captiuitatis omnem uxori patientiam obtulisse, negasse zelotypum, maluisse lupae quam Christianae maritum; ipsi suam licuit in persuersum demutare naturam, mulieri non permisit in melius reformari. 2

and he mentioned the specific case of Claudius Lucius Herminianus, governor of Cappadocia, who persecuted the Christians through rage at his wife's conversion. 3

Tertullian made several references to the custom, common in the African Church in the third centry, of the communicant, after receiving the sacrament during the service, carrying the bread home wrapped in a napkin and taking a small portion at the beginning of every meal. A non-believing husband would quite naturally ask, "quid secreto ante omnem cibum gustes?" 4 When writing ad uxorem, Tertullian used this as an argument against marriage with heathens, but if such did take place, this and other Christian practices were compelling evidence, in the home, for the heathen spouse to consider the claims of the Christian faith.

Nam et ad aliquam uirtutem caelestem documentis dignationis alicuius uocatus ille de gentibus terrori est gentili, quo minus sibi obstrepat, minus instet, minus speculetur. Sensit magnalia, uidit experimenta, scit meliorem factum; sic et ipse dei candidatus est timore. Ita facilius huiusmodi lucrifiunt, in quos dei gratia consuetudinem fecit. 5

(d) By observing exorcism

Another factor which Tertullian believed should influence pagans to an awareness of God, was the homage paid by devils when exorcism took place. He

¹ apol 3.4.18-19.

² I nat 4.12.30-37.

³ Scap 3.4.22-24.

⁴ II ux 5.2.17-18.

⁵ II ux 7.2.8-14.

The wife is chaste now: but the husband has ceased to be jealous, and has turned her out.

I know more than one husband, formerly anxious about their wives conduct, and unable to bear even mice to creep into their bedroom without a groan of suspicion, who have, upon discovering the cause of their new assiduity, and their unwonted attention to the duties of home, offered the entire loan of their wives to others, disclaimed all jealousy, (and) preferred to be the husbands of she-wolves than of Christian women:

"what do you eat privately at the beginning of every meal?"

"To his Wife" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

Thus, for instance, when a wife is called from among the heathen to the practice of heavenly virtue, by an act of the divine condescension, this very fact inspires a feeling of awe in the heart of the spouse who remains a pagan. As a result, he will be less violent in his attacks on the faith, less threatening, less suspicious. He has been brought into touch with the miraculous, he has ocular evidence of the truth, he sees that his wife is changed into a better person and thus, through reverential awe, he himself becomes a seeker after God. So it comes about that men like this are rather easily won over, once the grace of God has brought them into contact with the faith.

made no less than ten references to public exorcism¹ and spoke of it, not as a rare phenomenon to be ascertained with difficulty from the evidence of others, but as a common event, to which he could appeal confidently for evidence in favour of the Christian faith.² He went so far as to offer a divine test:

Edatur hic aliqui ibidem sub tribunali uestro, quem daemone agi constet: iussus a quolibet Christiano loqui spiritus ille tam se daemonem confitebitur, quod in uero est, quam alibi deum, quod in falso est.³

Alternatively, let the pagans select someone who was supposed to be god-possessed, who was under the influence of sacrificial smoke from the altar, and if when challenged by a Christian these persons did not confess themselves to be demons, then let the Christian pay for his temerity with his life.⁴

Tertullian did not just ask his pagan adversaries to believe that the Christians had gifts of exorcism - that was evident; what he did demand was their conversion to the Christian faith, when such compelling evidence of the gift could be produced - Quid isto opere manifestius? Quid hac probatione fidelius?⁵ Indeed Tertullian seems to have expected rather more tangible results from exorcism than he did from the general influence of Christian character in the pagan world - he claimed that Haec denique testimonia deorum uestrorum Christianos facere consuerunt.⁶

¹ apol 23.4.22-6.33; apol 23.15.77-16.84; apol 27.6.24-26; apol 32.3.14-16; apol 37.9.41-44; apol 46.5.24-26; idol 11.7.24-25; cor 3.11.17-19; Scap 2.9.37-38; Scap 4.5.23-6.31; spec 26.2.4-6; test 3.1.1-2; II ux 5.2.15.

² Scap 4.4.21-6.31.

³ apol 23.4.22-25. The Fathers frequently assert that nothing more is needed to expel demons from persons, places, or things than to call on the name of Jesus, to recite simple prayers or verses from the Scriptures, or to make the Sign of the Cross: J. Forget, Article 'Exorcisme,' in Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique, (Paris: Letouzey et Ane, 1923) vol 5.2, columns 1762-80, and (for Tertullian specifically) Joseph Lortz, op. cit., II 39-54.

⁴ apol 23.5.26-6.33.

⁵ apol 23.7.34-35.

⁶ apol 23.18.89-90.

Let there be produced right here before your tribunals, someone who, it is well known, is demon-possessed. If any Christian you please bids the spirit to speak, the same will confess that he is a demon, just as truly as elsewhere he will falsely proclaim himself a God.

What could be more revealing than such a demonstration? What could be more trustworthy than such a proof?

Finally these testimonials of your gods have habitually made converts to Christianity.

"Exorcism", in the Dictionary of Catholic Theology

V.9 READING OR HEARING SCRIPTURE

To the testimonium animae naturaliter Christianae and the testimonium naturae, Tertullian believed that God had added another witness - instrumentum litteraturae. His argument was directed specifically toward the books of the Old Testament but elsewhere he gave equal status to those of the New.¹ From the beginning of time, God had spoken through holy men, filled with the Spirit², whose words had been recorded and preserved in order that God might be known. What the prophets had been to former generations, the Scriptures were to the present generation:³

quo plenius et impressius tam ipsum quam dispositiones eius et uoluntates adiremus, adiecit instrumentum litteraturae, si qui uelit de Deo inquirere, et inquisito inuenire, et inuento credere, et credito deservire.⁴

The prophets had proclaimed, and their writings bore witness to, the existence of the one true God, who had framed all things, who had made man and who would one day raise man from the dead for eternal judgment. Tertullian insisted that the inspired writings of the Old Testament were not hidden or secret books - anyone could consult them if he wished, and Tertullian encouraged enquiries to do so; God in His goodness had even arranged for the books to be translated into Greek, so that the Greek-speaking world might benefit by their light.⁵

Aux premiers siècles, l'idée que la traduction des Septante était d'inspiration divine, était courante. Irénée, par exemple, en parle abondamment (adv. Haer. III, 21, 2). La Septante, en effet, était un cas particulièrement remarquable; elle rendait intelligible à d'autres les saintes Écritures des

¹ "il admet les Évangiles et les Épîtres des apôtres sur le pied d'une égalité absolue avec la Loi et les Prophetes. Enumérant, dans le traité de la Prescription, les sources de la foi pour l'église romaine, il s'exprime ainsi:(praes 36)" d'Alès, op. cit., p 221.

² apol 22.9.40-43.

³ apol 18.2.6.

⁴ apol 18.1.1-4.

⁵ apol 18.8.37-38.

the witness of the naturally Christian mind - the witness of nature
books

In order that we might more fully and more firmly approach God Himself as well as His thoughts and His will, He has added the assistance of books, in case one wishes to search for God, and after searching discover Him: and after discovering Him, believe in Him: and after believing in Him, serve Him.

In the first centuries, the idea that the translation of Septuagint was of divine inspiration, was current. Irenaeus, for example, speaks abundantly of it (Adv. Haer, III, 21.2). The Septuagint, in effect, was a particularly remarkable case; it rendered intelligible to others the holy writings of...

he allows the Gospels and the Epistles of the apostles on the basis of an absolute equality with the Law and the Prophets. Listing, in the treatise of the Prescription, the sources of faith for the Roman Church, he expresses himself so:

Juifs. Pendant longtemps elle fut, dans le monde de l'Antiquité, la seule traduction vraiment accessible, entre autres aux Chrétiens. Les Pères de l'Eglise grecs voyaient en elle l'oeuvre de la providence divine qui, de cette façon, prépara le monde à la venue du Christ. Que les auteurs des écrits néo-testamentaires se servissent d'elle pour leurs citations, ajoutait évidemment à son autorité.¹

If one did not have access to the originals in the Serapeum at Alexandria,² or even to a copy of the Septuagint, no matter, because a passer-by could hear the Scriptures recited in the open air, on one of the Fast Days when the African Jews left their synagogues and conducted their worship in public - per omne litus quocumque in aperto aliquando iam precem ad caelum mittunt.³ An enquirer could also go into any synagogue, where the Jews publicly read these books every Sabbath:

Iudaei palam lectitant. Vectigalis libertas; uulgo aditur sabbatis omnibus. Qui audierit, inueniet Deum; qui etiam studuerit intellegere, cogetur et credere.⁴

It was no part of Tertullian's argument to mention, in an apologetic treatise, that if an enquirer had gone into a synogogue and asked further about the Christian God, he would not be likely to be re-directed to a Christian congregation - there was a keen rivalry, sometimes even mutual hatred, between the two monotheistic groups in Tertullian's day,⁵ and the Jews, more than

¹ Geest, op. cit., p 13.

² hodie apud Serapeum Ptolemaei bibliothecae (in Graecum stylum) cum ipsis Hebraicis exhibentur - apol 18.8.38-39.

³ jej 16.6.5-6. In I nat 13.4.23-24, Tertullian referred to the 'orationes litorales' of the Jews.

⁴ apol 18.9.39-42.

⁵ Jewish-Christian relations in Tertullian's Carthage have received considerable attention recently - six relevant articles are quoted at the end of this footnote. It has long been recognised that Jews were present in large numbers throughout North Africa, and especially in Carthage, at the end of the second century, see, for example Pierre Monceaux, op. cit. "Histoire" pp 9, 294; and idem, "Les colonies juives dans l'Afrique romaine", Revue d'études Juives. 44 (1902), 1. Though at first they seem to have lived on good terms with the Christian community - this is implied in their use of common cemeteries - by Tertullian's time they had shown themselves in Carthage as elsewhere its most bitter opponents. Tertullian's ad nationes and apologeticum, both contain (continued on next page)

...the Jews. During a long time it was in the world of antiquity the only translation among others truly accessible to Christians. The Greek Fathers of the Church saw in it the work of divine providence which, this time, prepared the world for the coming of Christ. That the authors of New Testament writings used it for their quotations, evidently added to its authority.

through out all the shore, in every open place, they continue long to send prayer up to heaven.

The Jews read and re-read them openly. For that freedom they must pay a tax, and generally they make use of it every Sabbath. He who listens will find God: he who exerts himself to understand will also be led to believe.

To this day in the temple of Serapis, in Ptolemy's library they are on display, translated into Greek, together with the Hebrew originals.

the prayers on the shore

"The Jewish Colonies in Roman Africa", periodical article in the Review of Jewish Studies.

"To the Gentiles" and "Apology" (two of Tertullian's treatises)

anyone else, stood to lose by the spread of Christianity. However, even if the enquirer simply heard the Scriptures, he would learn about God; Tertullian believed that a conversation with the Jews about the Scriptures of the Old Testament might have been what led to Zacchaeus' conversion - Enimuero Zaccheus, etsi allophylus, fortasse tamen aliqua notitia scripturarum ex commercio Iudaico adflatus.¹ Certainly, in defending the Christian faith to pagans, Tertullian told them not to take just his word for it, but to consult the Holy Books:

Qui ergo putaueris nihil nos de salute Caesarum curare, inspicere Dei uoces, litteras nostras, quas neque ipsi supprimimus et plerique casus ad extraneos transferunt. Scitote ex illi, ...²

and not just for the Christian attitude to the State - Tertullian referred the pagans to Scripture, both to verify what he had said to them and to demonstrate that the Christian faith was no less credible than the fables of anthropomorphism.

footnote 5 continued:

an angry description of Jewish tactics against the Christians, and the reason for their hostility. The Jewish community is charged with being the seminarium of every calumny against the Christians - I nat 14.2.4. Some, e.g. T.D. Barnes, *op. cit.* "Scorpiace," pp 105-31 and *idem*, *op. cit.* 'Tertullian' p 91 ff have argued that Tertullian was chiefly concerned with biblical as opposed to contemporary Judaism, but it seems more probable that Tertullian was citing current Jewish anti-Christian polemic, and that synagogae Iudaeorum, fontes persecutionum (scorp 10.10.12-13) was a fact. Recent relevant articles include Y F. Baer, "Israel, the Christian Church and the Roman Empire from the Time of Septimius Severus to the Edict of Toleration of A.D. 313", *Scripta Hierosolymitana*, 7 (1961), 86-95; Joachim Wilhelm Hirschberg, *A History of the Jews in North Africa*. (Jerusalem: 1965) I, 43-51. J.M. Ford, "Was Montanism a Jewish-Christian Heresy?", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 17 (1966), 155-7. W.H.C. Frend, 'Tertulliano e gli ebrei', *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa*, 4 (1968), 3-10; *idem*, 'A Note on Tertullian and the Jews', in *Studia Patristica* x.i. (T.U. cvii, Berlin, 1970) pp 291-6; *idem* 'A Note on Jews and Christians in Third-Century North Africa', *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s. 21 (1970), 92-6.

¹ IV Marc 37.1.22-24, on which Evans commented: "Luke 19: 1-10 does not say that Zacchaeus was a foreigner, unless that is implied by his being a chief tax-collector." Ernest Evans, *Tertullian Adversus Marcionem*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972) II, 473.

² apol 31.1.4-2.7.

For in fact Zacchaeus, though a foreigner, yet perhaps had breathed in some knowledge of the scriptures by converse with Jews.

If you think that we have no interest in the emperor's welfare, look into the words of God, into our books, which we do not hide; in fact, many a chance hands them over to outsiders. Learn from this literature...

seed-bed

the synagogues of the Jews, the fountains of persecution

"Tertullian and the Jews", Review of religious history and literature,

Tertullian advanced two arguments why the pagan enquirer should take seriously the testimony of Scripture to God. The first was based on its antiquity. Tertullian exploited the current notion that there was nothing so old as the truth¹ and that the antiquity of a doctrine was a guarantee of its authenticity. Moses, he said, dated far earlier than the earliest history of the Greeks and Romans, and the other sacred writers were little less remote. The work of God, announced in the Old Testament, was now brought to fruition in the New and the double collection of Jewish Scriptures and Christian Scriptures, was the revelation of God to any man who would read them or listen to them.

Having shown that great antiquity made for great authority, Tertullian turned to his second argument, namely the fulfilment of prophecy:²

Multis adhuc de uetustate modis consistere diuinarum litterarum, si non maior auctoritas illis ad fidem de ueritatis suae uiribus, quam de aetatis annalibus suppetisset. Quid enim potentius patrocinabitur testimonio earum, nisi dispunctio cotidiana saeculi totius, cum dispositiones regnorum, cum casus urbium, cum exitus gentium, cum status temporum ita omnibus respondent, quemadmodum ante milia annorum praenuntiabantur.³

Tertullian laid considerable emphasis on the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecy in the public events of his own time, claiming that the Scriptures were the one satisfactory key for understanding the course of contemporary history. Their accuracy attested their source in the God who controlled and governed the world, the God who had revealed Himself of old.

¹ Primam igitur instrumentis istis auctoritatem summa antiquitas uindicat. Apud uos quoque religionis est instar, fidem de tempore adserere - apol 19.1.1-3.

² Tertullian did not restrict the function of the prophets to foretelling future events, as is seen from the previous part of the paragraph, apol 18.2.4-8.

³ apol 19.7.32-39 from Codex Fuldensis. The text of the Codex Fuldensis is so different at this point from other texts that it is printed separately in the edition from which quotations throughout this thesis are taken (CCL). It may have been a first draft, but, in spite of much research, there is no unanimity of opinion as to whether the Codex Fuldensis should be attributed to Tertullian or to an earlier apologist whom both he and Minucius Felix used.

In many ways I would maintain a very firm position about the antiquity of the Sacred Books, if there was not at hand a consideration of greater weight in proving their trustworthiness, which results from its own force of their truth rather than from the evidence of their antiquity. For, what will more powerfully sustain their testimony than their daily fulfilment throughout the whole world, when the rise and fall of kingdoms, the fate of cities, the ruin of nations, the conditions of the times, correspond in all respects just as they were foretold thousands of years ago?

Their great antiquity claims prime authority for these records. And among you it is almost a superstition to make faith depend on time elapsed.

The Fuldensian Collection (one of the medieval manuscripts of Tertullian's works)

It may be that some pagans were won over by such evidences of the fulfilment of scriptural prophecy, or by the rewards and punishments announced in Scripture, but, generally, Tertullian did not seem to expect a great deal from the reading of Scripture by non-Christians. He appears to have said that, in his experience, one had first to be a Christian before one would benefit from reading or hearing the Scriptures - Tanto abest, ut nostris litteris annuant homines, ad quas nemo uenit nisi iam Christianus.¹ - but it is unclear whether Tertullian meant the Bible itself when he wrote that. He may have meant the works of Christian apologists - Harnack thought that he referred to the Bible² but O'Malley thought that he did not.³ Holl thought that it was just another example of Tertullian's scepticism,⁴ and Mohrmann saw it as a reference to the incomprehension with which Christian texts were greeted, owing to their specialised vocabulary, the distance between Christian Latin and ordinary Latin being already so great that the spread of Christian works among the pagans was thereby inhibited.⁵ Whichever of these interpretations of that particular passage is correct, Tertullian did argue in the apologeticum that the reading and hearing of Scripture was one of the ways in which he expected the natural man to have some knowledge about, and some understanding of, the Christian God.

¹ test 1.4.30-31.

² Adolf Harnack, "Tertullians Bibliothek christlicher Schriften", Sitzungsberichte der königlichen - preussischen Akademie des Wissenschaften zu Berlin, historische - philosophische Klasse, (1914) p 306-307.

³ op. cit., p 36.

⁴ "Tertullian als Schriftsteller", in Karl Holl, op. cit. III, 4.

⁵ Christine Mohrmann, "Le latin commun et le latin des chrétiens", Vigiliae Christianae, 1 (1947), 1-12.

So far are men from assenting to our writings, to which no one comes unless he is already a Christian.

"Apology" (one of Tertullian's writings)

"Tertullian as a Writer" (article in collection of articles)

"Common Latin and Christian Latin" (periodical article in "Christian Vigils")

V.10 ROMAN LAW FOR THIS AREA

Tertullian appears to have drawn on Roman law on three occasions, when expressing God's initiative toward man and the natural man's knowledge of God. The plainest reference came when he was endeavouring to show Marcion how God intended man to possess goodness; goodness had on the one hand to be the gift of God to man, but on the other hand it could not be merely conferred on man from without - it had to be man's very own. The Roman law of conveyancing afforded Tertullian with an example which was more or less (quasi) in point.

Vt ergo bonum iam suum haberet homo, emancipatum sibi a deo, et fieret proprietas iam boni in homine et quodammodo natura, de institutione adscripta est illi quasi libripens emancipati a deo boni libertas et potestas arbitrii, quae efficeret bonum ut proprium iam sponte praestari ab homine, ¹

The making of a gift under Roman law, and in particular the function of the libripens, appears to have been in Tertullian's mind. Property was gifted from one person to another by the formality of mancipatio, which was a fictitious sale in the presence of five witnesses, all Roman citizens and all over the age of puberty. The libripens held a pair of scales, in which a token price was weighed. (In the sale of goods, which also took place by mancipatio, the actual price was weighed out and had to be handed over before the purchaser became the legal owner of the goods.) In the case of man and his goodness, said Tertullian, the donor was God and the libripens was man's power of free choice. God conveyed goodness to mankind after the manner of a legal gift, and by virtue of mancipatio; man became the possessor in his own right (emancipatum sibi) of the goodness which had its origin as an attribute of God, and goodness was thus man's proprietas et quodammodo natura. There is nothing here of the threat of judgement and similar legal language, which is so often said to dominate Tertullian's expression of the relationship of man to God. Man's liberty

¹ II Marc 6.5.2-7.

more or less

Therefore, so that the man might have a goodness of his own, bestowed upon him by God, and that there might thenceforth be in the man a proprietorship and as it were a natural attribute of goodness, there was granted and assigned to him freedom, and the power of choice, as a kind of conveyancer of the good bestowed on him by God. The intention was that this should enable the man to exhibit goodness as his own, by voluntary act -

conveyancer (a technical term of Roman law - the man who held the scales, as if to weigh out money, at a nominal sale or transfer of property)

transfer (of a thing to another)

transferred to him.

proprietorship and, as it were, a natural attribute

to choose his own destiny will be taken up in chapter V1.2, under the section on free-will, but in this present section the example of the libripens is clearly expressive of the good-will of God toward mankind.

The natural man's status in the sight of God, expressed in terms of delictum, will be examined in chapter V1.8, but this is an appropriate place to examine Tertullian's use of the concept of ius naturale to express the relationship of God to man. There is no doubt that the meaning of natura in Tertullian is a particularly difficult problem, and one which has given rise to many misunderstandings.¹ Before coming to these, however, the use of the word by the Roman lawyers will be briefly set out.

The Romans attached various meanings to ius naturale, for example Ulpian described it as the law which nature taught to all living creatures, men and beasts; generally, however, ius naturale was held to be the possession of rational beings only. Sometimes the Romans treated it as synonymous with the ius gentium,² and while the two came to very much the same thing in practice, the ius naturale was based on an abstract philosophical conception,³ whereas the ius gentium had its origin in the practical necessity of commercial transactions between Romans and others engaged in trade. The ius gentium therefore applied only to freemen, irrespective of nationality, but the ius naturale applied to all mankind, and so was more comprehensive than the ius gentium.

¹ As Gerald Bray has recently demonstrated in "The Legal Concept of Ratio in Tertullian", Vigiliae Christianae, 31 (1977), especially at p 110.

² Digest 1.1.9; Institutes 1.2.1. Even in the Corpus Juris Civilis, the distinction between ius gentium and ius naturale is not clearly drawn. One of the few examples of a conflict between them is in the institution of slavery. The Romans declared that slavery was contrary to natural law but they found it was generally recognised amongst all nations and so was a valid part of the ius gentium.

³ A comprehensive examination of the speculative ius naturale as understood by the Romans is contained in Moritz Voigt, Die Lehre vom jus naturale aequum et bonum, und jus gentium der Römer, (Leipzig, 1856 - 1876). He summarised its characteristics; (1) It applied to all mankind; (2) among all peoples; (3) in all ages; and (4) it corresponded with man's innate sense of right.

conveyancer (a technical term of Roman law - the man who held the scales, as if to weigh out money, at a nominal sale or transfer of property)

fault or wrong

natural law

nature

that part of Roman law governing the relations between all free men, whether Roman citizens or foreigners, without reference to their nationality

reason

Collected Edition of Roman Civil Law

The teaching of the just and good natural law and the civil law of the Romans,

Tertullian's frequent allusions to natural law show the influence on him of both Roman law and Stoicism - for ius naturale was a concept derived by the Roman jurists from the Stoic philosophy of Greece.¹ The Stoic philosophers had professed to find certain universal rules of both moral and physical application, based on the common nature of mankind, and from the time of the classical jurists, Roman lawyers took over the concept and (more or less) identified it with the ius gentium of their own system. (The ius gentium was further distinguished from the ius civile, which could apply only to those who possessed Roman citizenship and which is of no concern for this chapter.) The ius naturale was however, as mentioned above, of universal application to all people, because it was based on the inherent reasonableness and sense of justice (naturalis ratio) implanted by nature itself and common to all mankind.

It was this concept which Tertullian took up - or at least which Esser,² Monceaux³ and Lortz⁴ thought he took up - and which he demonstrated was due to the divine element present in every man, quite apart from revelation. Bray disagreed, because he said this interpretation ignored "the overall context of Tertullian's Weltanschauung, which, in our opinion, radically alters the superficial view of natura outlined above".⁵ It is too big an issue to debate here,

¹ In the Digest 1.3.2., Marcian cited the theorist of the Stoics, Chrysippus; in 1.3.6. Paul cited Theophrast, the student of Aristotle; in 5.1.76. Alfenus referred to the philosophers; in 41.3.30., Pomponius reproduced a dogma of the Stoics. It would be remarkable if these educated men, who brought jurisprudence to its highest development, had not paid heed to philosophy. The attempt to find a philosophical basis for the teachings of Roman lawyers was first made in modern times by Goppert, Über einheitliche, zusammengesetzte und Gesamtsachen, 1871. Sokolowski followed him with Die Philosophie im Privatrecht, (Halle: I (1902), II (1907) and another study is, Ludwig Schnorr von Carolsfeld, Geschichte der juristischen Person, (Munich: 1933).

² op. cit., pp 16-19.

³ op.cit., "Historie" pp 376-377.

⁴ op. cit., I, 55-58.

⁵ op. cit., p 110.

natural law

that part of Roman law which governed the relations among all free men, whether Roman citizens or foreigners, without reference to their nationality.

the law for Roman citizens (only)

the reasonableness of nature

view of the world

nature

"About uniform, composite and aggregate things"

"Philosophy in Private Law" (Book)

"History of the Juristic Person" (Book)

and recourse will be had to a quotation which seems to sum up as well as any the majority view of Tertullian's understanding of nature:

Well versed in the writings of Cicero and the Stoics and, (as Eusebius records) "accurately acquainted with the Roman law," Tertullian carried over from these pagan sources into his teaching as Christian apologist and theologian a settled presumption that in "nature," in some sense or senses of the term, are to be found valid norms of belief and conduct.

It designates, namely: (a) that which is known universally and without special revelation, i.e., is attested by the sensus communis and the consensus gentium; (b) that, therefore, which was known (and, indeed more clearly known) in the primitive age (in primordio, a favorite expression of Tertullian's); (c) that which is uncomplicated, easily intelligible, evident to the untutored, more or less dimmed to the learned and sophisticated, mind. Natura, in short, denotes the three marks, if not of truth as such, at least of those moral and religious truths which are fundamental and essential: universality, primevality, simplicity. The term anima, moreover, as used by Tertullian, frequently designates a noetic organ or function; it is the faculty through which these "natural" truths are apprehended, that which makes man "a rational animal, in the highest degree capable of thought and knowledge." To accept the arbitrium animae is synonymous with credere naturae.¹

Many of Tertullian's references to nature and to natural law are outside the scope of this chapter - for example when he told Scapula, "Tamen humani iuris et naturalis potestatis est unicuique quod putauerit colere".² Glover listed eighteen such passages,³ pointing out that "a Roman lawyer could hardly speculate except in the terms of Stoicism - it was his natural and predestined language".⁴ Of these eighteen passages, three are relevant to this chapter -

- (a) when Marcion condemned the God who had created the world, Tertullian referred him to "one flower of the hedge-row, ... one shell of any sea you like ... one feather of a moor-fowl ...", to show that God was no mean Creator; the rationality and the order of the universe were commonplaces of Stoic teachers.

¹ Arthur O. Lovejoy, Essays in the History of Ideas, (New York: George Braziller, 1955) p 308.

² Scap 2.2.4-5.

³ op. cit., pp 314-317.

⁴ ibid., p 314. Modern writings, however, have tended to minimise the influence of Stoicism on Roman law, and it would be unwise to rely heavily on the views of a writer of fifty years ago in a matter like this.

common sense

consensus of people

in the primitive age

nature

soul

judgment of the soul

to believe according to nature

It is the law of mankind and the natural right of each individual to
worship what he thinks proper

- (b) On the antiquity and therefore the authority of Scripture, Tertullian argued that it was not the pen of Moses that initiated the knowledge of the Creator ... the maior popularitas generis humani had never heard the name of Moses, let alone his book, but they knew the God of Moses nonetheless - the Stoics professed to live "agreeably to nature", and it was they who identified reason in man with the principle of order in the world; and
- (c) One of Tertullian's favourite arguments was the testimonium animae naturaliter Christianae - and the influence of the lex naturae on Tertullian's mind here is illustrated by the difficulties which ^{he} had in trying to reconcile the giving of the Ten Commandments, which he accepted from the Biblical narrative, with his conviction that the moral law of nature was known by the light of nature which shined in every man.

These three arguments rest on Tertullian's general conception of Nature as God's self-revelation, published in the universe and written on the natural tables of the heart. God must first be known from nature and only thereafter by instruction, from nature through His works and by instruction through the revelation He had given in the scriptures.

The third and final area where Roman law is relevant to this chapter of the thesis has been well expressed by Robert Dick Sider in "Ancient Rhetoric and the Art of Tertullian",¹ where he analysed Tertullian's attempt, in de testimonio animae, to demonstrate the basic truths of Christianity from the universal assent of the human soul:-

Tertullian develops his proof by means of an imaginative and highly dramatic cross-examination of the soul, as though it were a witness in the court. This gives the evidence for the Christian belief the character of inartificial proof, and Tertullian's development of the treatise reflects contemporary procedure in using witnesses for proof in a court case.

¹ pp 43-44. (The work has been cited previously).

majority of the human race

witness of the naturally Christian soul

law of nature

"On the Witness of the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

Tertullian first undertakes the task of establishing confidence in his witness. Thus in chapter 1, after pointing to the inadequacy of the testimony of heathen literature and to the unacceptability of the witness of the Christian Scriptures, Tertullian calls upon the soul as the best witness possible: ... Then in several vivid sentences, he shows the dependability and authority of the witness. First, he claims that his witness will not be false. The trustworthiness of the witness is asserted on the basis of its origin and pedigree ...

In the chapters that follow Tertullian produces the evidence offered by the soul on the great questions of Christian faith: ... The scene takes on added life in chapter 4 where the soul appears to offer contradictory evidence on the question of whether man continues to live after death ... But Tertullian examines the witness and shows that the soul calls the dead securi only under pressure of circumstances. The true opinion of the soul is seen in its calling of blessings and curses upon its friends and foes who have died. Thus the advocate has caught the witness in a contradiction, a circumstance which, however, the advocate turns to his own favour.

Roman lawyers were, by the time of Tertullian,¹ using 'paganus' as a technical term for 'civilian', that is a 'non-soldier' in contrast with 'miles'.² Tertullian is the only Latin-Christian author who used the word in this meaning, but since he did not use it to describe the non-Christian in his relationship with God - established in section V.2 - the use of the word in Roman law is not pursued here. It is, however, appropriate to draw certain conclusions from this chapter, and this is now done.

¹ Digest 28.2.16 (Paulus); 11.4.4.2 (Ulpian); 19.2.50 (Modestinus).

² Johannes Emil Kuntze, Excursus über römisches Recht (2nd ed.; Leipzig: J.C. Hinrich, 1880) pp 661-665.

free from care

pagan

soldier

Study of Roman Law

V.11 CONCLUSIONS FROM CHAPTER FIVE

There were (as set out at the end of section V.2) many gradations of heathenism, ranging from the lowest to all but the highest in religious life, and embracing men of every race, every degree of civilisation. For Tertullian, however, there was such a fundamental difference between the Christian and the pagan in his relationship to God that he tended to speak of the heathen in sharp antithesis to the Gospel. This is reflected in the words which he used to describe the natural man in his relationship to God, as was set out in some detail in the early parts of this chapter; the whole Roman world, its education, its amusements, its administrative, civil and military services, its religious aspirations, all were dominated by idolatry and so alienated from God. Whether the distinction was as clear-cut in practice as Tertullian would have liked is doubtful, as expressed by Guignebert:

"... nous donnent l'impression d'un désaccord sans remède entre le christianisme et le paganisme. Il nous semble qu'un fossé profond et infranchissable a été, du premier jour, creusé entre les deux religions. Or, ce n'est certainement pas là la vérité. De nombreuses passerelles réunissaient les deux bords de fossé et bein des hommes, glissant le long de ses deux pentes, se retrouvaient et se mêlaient au fond."¹

However confused the situation may have seemed to the observer, Tertullian was very clear in his own mind that there were no "demi-chrétiens", as Guignebert dubbed them; the words which Tertullian used clearly described the estrangement of the natural man from God.

Nevertheless Tertullian emphasised the good-will of God toward all of His creation, whether they responded to Him or not. God had done more than merely express good-will - He had sent His Son, because He wished all men to come into a saving relationship with Himself. Few have written more feelingly of God's love toward sinners than Tertullian, "the sinner" as he described himself.

¹ C. Guignebert, "Les demi chrétiens et leur place dans l'Église antique", Revue de l'Histoire des Religions, 88 (1923), 65.

give us the impression of unsolvable discord between Christianity and paganism. It seems as if a deep and unbridgeable trench had been dug between the two religions from earliest times. But this is certainly not the truth. Numerous bridges linked the two banks of the trench and many men, gliding back and fore on these two slopes, really met and intermingled.

half-Christians

"The half-Christians and their place in the Ancient Church" (periodical article in The Review of the History of Religions).

Tertullian did not doubt that in response to the initiative of God toward men every man could and should come to some knowledge of God, however inadequate, apart from revelation. He specified the two ways in which such knowledge was generally available, both of which reflected the Stoic philosophy of his day - the order and beauty of the visible κόσμος introduced, supplemented and reinforced the testimony of the soul. Tertullian insisted that the soul testified to God in itself, because there remained in it some residue of its original divine knowledge; in section five (conclusion) it was noted that Fütcher had not made allowance for that, and in consequence he wrote: "Die Seele ist eine tabula rasa, die erst beschrieben werden muss, sie bringt keine fertigen Erkenntnisse mit, sondern nur die Anlagen und Fähigkeiten zu denselben. Somit ist auch die Gotteserkenntnis nicht im eigentlichen Sinne angeboren, sondern erworben."¹ With due respect to Fütcher, there was (Tertullian maintained) certain evidences about God which the untutored soul would spontaneously utter, simply because of what it was in itself; observation should strengthen that evidence, but observation was not the source of it. Through this double evidence, every man could understand not only that there was a Creator God but he could understand the essentials of his relationship to Him. This explained the universality of the consciousness of God and at the same time explained His lasting permanence in the history of man - He was so intimately concerned with intelligent human nature that He could not be denied. There might be differences among peoples and nations, differences of language and of custom, but a consciousness of God was the inalienable property of every intelligent human being.

This summary has deliberately omitted any reference to the other sources available to some men for a knowledge of God - dreams, the witness of

¹ op. cit., p 238.

world

The soul is a "clean writing-tablet" which must first be written upon, it brings no ready-made understandings with it but only the capabilities and abilities of the same. Thus the understanding of God is not, strictly speaking, innate, but is acquired.

Christians, the hearing or the reading of Scripture - because Tertullian's own emphasis rested on the evidence of the soul and the evidence of nature.

Since, however, Tertullian did refer so clearly to these two natural sources for a relationship with God, not only independently of revelation but abundantly, it is difficult to follow the reasoning of Hauschild, who claimed that in Tertullian's thought, revelation was essential for any understanding of God:

Gott kann aus der Welt des Gewordenen ("Natur" im gewöhnlichen Sinne) nur recht erkannt werden, wenn man weiss, wie diese Welt geworden ist (natura Tertullian's): Das sagt uns aber die Heilige Schrift. Und die Seele, die ihn erkennen soll, kann in ihrer eigentlichen Beschaffenheit und besonderen Bestimmung ("in ihrer Natur" nach dem gewöhnlichen Sprachgebrauch) selbst nur recht erkannt werden, wenn man weiss, wie sie entstanden ist (natura Tertullian's): Aber auch derüber belehrt uns die Heilige Schrift.)¹

Hauschild would thus make revelation not only the primary source of any relationship with God, but the essential basis for any relationship at all; however, Tertullian believed in nature as the basis for some relationship, irrespective of whatever opinion one might hold about the creation of the soul. The separation of nature and revelation as two different (yet related) sources for the understanding of God is the starting-point and nervus probandi of the whole treatise de testimonio animae: nature should not only lead all men to some understanding of the one true God, independently of revelation, but there were, according to Tertullian, some truths about revelation which could also be understood through the light of normal reason - for example, the immortality of the soul. Furthermore, Tertullian believed that some understanding of God through nature should normally precede the understanding of God through revelation - not (as Hauschild insisted) the other way round: Nos definimus deum primo natura cognoscendum, dehinc doctrina recognoscendum, natura ex operibus, doctrina ex praedicationibus.²

¹ G.R. Hauschild, Die rationale Psychologie und Erkenntnistheorie Tertullians, (Leipzig: 1880) p 2. What Hauschild appears to have done, to justify these statements, is to take certain passages out of the context of Tertullian's works and without reference to their individuality in that situation.

² I Marc 18.2.11-13.

God can only be correctly understood by the created world ('Nature' in its usual meaning) if one knows how this world has been created (Tertullian's *Natura*): that however we are told by the Holy Scriptures. And the soul, which should understand Him, can itself only be correctly understood in its true state and specific destiny ('in its essence' in the usual linguistic usage) if one knows how it has been formed (Tertullian's *Natura*): but that we also learn in the Holy Scriptures.

force/strength of proving

"The Witness of the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

For my part I postulate that a god ought first to be known by nature, and afterwards further known by doctrine - but nature through his works, by doctrine through official teaching.

"The Rational Psychology and Theory of Knowledge of Tertullian" (Book)

That stricture against Marcion is a proper reminder that unless and until the unregenerate man had either read the Scriptures for himself or had entered into the catechumenate, where he would be taught the revealed truth of God, his relationship with God rested on a very imperfect understanding. The next chapter will examine the status which the unregenerate man had before God. Meantime, this chapter can close with the establishment of the fact, on the available evidence, that Tertullian separated the understanding of God into a double source - nature and revelation. On that basis God offered some relationship with Himself to every man, through the evidence of Himself to be found through the inner world of the soul and the outer world of nature. God thus offered Himself to men in such a way that every man could come with reasonable certainty to some understanding of God. The influence of Roman law, for this area of Tertullian's thought, appears to be minimal in detail, although the concept of natural law underlay much of his approach to it. If a God really existed, then He must reveal Himself to man in his inner and outer world.

CHAPTER SIX: THE NATURAL MAN'S ACCOUNTABILITY TO GOD

VI.1 INTRODUCTION OF CHAPTER SIX

Faced with the obvious fact that many of his contemporaries rejected any relationship with the one true God, even when they became aware of Him and knew something of His attributes, Tertullian made a number of comments. First, in order to explain why this could be so, he expounded in some detail the freedom of every man to accept or to reject a personal relationship with God. He developed this against the Valentinian doctrine of the immutability of human nature, and against Marcion's accusation that the Creator God was not a good God because He had failed to prevent man from sinning. Tertullian's teaching on free-will, in so far as relevant to the non-believer, is examined in section two of this chapter.

Two further responses by Tertullian, to the rejection of God by man and man's scepticism that God would do anything about it, are examined in sections three and four. In the former, the failure to recognise God is found to be culpable, in the light of the evidence available to man; even the admitted influence of satan on mankind did not excuse man from responding in some measure to God. In section four, the judgment of God on sin is examined and found to be almost always in the future - i.e. after death. Tertullian had no problem about the prosperity of the wicked in this world, which was under the domination of the evil one; judgment was, however, so certain that Tertullian could speak as if it had already happened. Both the body and the soul would be judged by God, the soul alone immediately after death and then body and soul together at the resurrection. This is the only reference in the thesis to the future state of man, as the main theme of the study follows a progression from the unregenerate state to conversion to the faith, and there the thesis stops.

Section five makes a 'test case' of the best in paganism, to see the standing of the natural man before God. Tertullian was far from despising what was good in pagan life - but he stressed the inadequacy of even the best of

paganism to have a correct relationship with God on its own account. The wise men of paganism distorted the voice of God to man, and Socrates was a case in point. In fact, the so-called natural (i.e. unregenerate) man was for Tertullian the "unnatural" man. Tertullian took the same attitude as Paul, that the world by wisdom could not know God - human wisdom had to be swept away before the truth of God could find a secure place in man. Even if the teaching of good pagans was commendable, their conduct fell short of God's standards for man; the wise men of this world misled both pagans and Christians, because they had misled themselves.

Section six looks briefly at the debate about the relationship between revelation and reason in the writings of Tertullian. Confining it only to the texts relevant to the relationship of man to God, it appears that Tertullian did not (contrary to what some have written) despise human reason, provided it built on, and did not try to contradict, the natural revelation of God. Philosophers were attacked for abusing their reason, not for using it - reason provided a rational underpinning for what God expected man to believe. Human reason could, however, never be more than a praeambulum fidei - no one could become a Christian without accepting (after such legitimate enquiry as he wished to make) the truth revealed by God and unattainable by human reasoning. Only by revelation could man come to certainty and to salvation.

Tertullian wrote almost nothing about the relationship to God of those affected by mental illness, insanity, intellectual incapacity or diminished responsibility. Certain deductions, can, however, be made, and this is the theme of section seven. It was a repeated emphasis of Tertullian that God searched and examined the human heart. Mental incapacity would not, because of the nature of the soul and the wiles of the devil, prevent a man from committing deeds which were in themselves offensive to God, but this section explores the extent to which God would hold a man of diminished capacity subjectively guilty for his objectively sinful acts. The Roman law for the area of this chapter is set out in section eight, and certain conclusions reached in section nine.

preliminary to faith

VI.2 FREEWILL - MAN'S RIGHT TO OBEY OR TO DISOBEY GOD

Tertullian was a firm believer in the freedom of the human will, and where others (for example Paul) had spoken of the freedom of man, he preferred to speak of liberum arbitrium. Waszink made the surprising assertion that the phrase liberum arbitrium was not established, as a phrase, until Augustine,¹ but Tertullian used it three times against Marcion;² he also used a variety of similar phrases to express the right of the natural man to obey or to disobey the voice of God. It was in fact Tertullian who introduced this important concept into theology and he hammered out the details in a series of disputes with heretics. For example, in the second book against Marcion, he wrote about:

libertas arbitrii ³
libertas arbitrii homini ⁴
libera arbitrii potestas ⁵ ⁶
libertas arbitrii et potestas ⁶
libertas et potestas arbitrii ⁷
liber et suae potestatis ⁸
liberi et suae potestatis ⁹
liberi arbitrii et suae potestatis ¹⁰

¹ Waszink, "De Anima", p 289.

² Cur permiserat liberum arbitrium, si intercedit? - II Marc 7.3.4-5; Si libero arbitrio hominis... - II Marc 7.5.15; id est per liberum arbitrium - II Marc 9.8.24.

³ II Marc 5.7.23; II Marc 6.4.25; 5.8; 6.17; 7.25-26; 7.27; II Marc 7.3.30; 3.31-32; II Marc 10.6.4.

⁴ II Marc 5.7.23-24.

⁵ The addition of potestas is discussed at page 352 of a study by V. Naumann entitled 'Das Problem des Bosen in Tertullians zweitem Buch gegen Marcion', Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie, 58 (1934), 311-63 and 533-51.

⁶ II Marc 5.6.18-19; 6.3.18; II Marc 7.2.18; II Marc 8.3.18-19.

⁷ II Marc 6.1.4; 6.7.5-6; II Marc 7.2.18; II Marc 8.3.18-19.

⁸ II Marc 6.5.13.

⁹ II Marc 6.3.20.

¹⁰ II Marc 6.3.16.

free will

freedom of the will
freedom of the human will
free power of the will
freedom of the will and power
freedom and power of the will
free and of his own power
free and of his own power
of free will and of his own power

"On the Soul (one of Tertullian's treatises - here the title of Waszink's book)

Why did he grant freedom of choice - if (he had set up a check
against) the man's free choice - that is by free choice.

power

"The Problem of Evil in Tertullian's Second Book against Marcion"
(periodical article in the Journal for Catholic Theology

liberum et sui arbitrii et suae potestatis ¹
libera hominis potestas arbitrii sui ²

and in de anima:

libera arbitrii ³
libertas arbitrii ⁴
libera arbitrii potestas. ⁵

He controverted the Valentinians when they claimed that human nature was immutable ⁶ and argued that Hermogenes was wrong to say the soul came from matter. ⁷ It was however chiefly against Marcion ⁸ that Tertullian contended:

Tota ergo libertas arbitrii in utramque partem concessa est illi, ut sui dominus constanter occurreret et bono sponte seruando et malo sponte uitando, quoniam et alias positum hominem sub iudicio dei oportebat iustum illud efficere de arbitrii sui meritis, liberi scilicet. ⁹

Tertullian argued his case in four separate areas:

- (a) Adam had had freedom of choice.
- (b) The catechumen had freedom of choice.
- (c) The Christian had freedom of choice.
- (d) The natural man had freedom of choice.

¹ II Marc 5.5.12-13.

² II Marc 6.1.1-2.

³ an 22.2.11.

⁴ an 20.5.36.

⁵ an 21.6.36.

⁶ Examined in paragraph (d) of this section.

⁷ an 11.2..10-13. Hermogenes would not accept that man, having received the breath of God, could fall into sin, but Tertullian drew a distinction between the spirit of God and the breath of God (spiritus and flatus). Man was not the spirit of God, but only the breath of God, and so Tertullian found it possible to attribute to man a separate personal existence, and a free will, able to obey his Maker, but also capable of disobeying Him.

⁸ At the beginning of the third century, Marcion was dead, but his doctrines remained a danger for the Church; there was no adversary against whom Tertullian fought harder.

⁹ II Marc 6.6.16-21.

free and of his own will and of his own power
free power of man over his own will

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

free will
freedom of the will
free power of the will

Consequently there was granted to him complete freedom of choice in either direction, that as his own master he might boldly confront goodness by choosing to maintain it, and evil by choosing to avoid it. And moreover, since the man was subject to the judgment of God, it was essential that he should cause that to be a just judgment by the merits of his own choice, which had to be free.

spirit and breath

The first and third are not relevant to this thesis, but are mentioned briefly here in order to put the fourth into the context of Tertullian's thought as a whole. The third is explored in detail in chapter VII.3 below.

(a) Adam's freedom of choice

After having, in the first book, shown the deficiencies of Marcion's god, Tertullian devoted the second book to defending the Creator, so misunderstood by the heretics. In particular, Marcion alleged that the Creator God was not a good God, because He was responsible for the sin of man, having given Adam the capacity to choose good and evil but having failed to prevent Adam from choosing evil:

si deus bonus et praescius futuri et auertendi mali potens, cur hominem, et quidem imaginem et similitudinem suam, immo et substantiam suam, per animae scilicet censum passus est labi de obsequio legis in mortem, circumuentum a diabolo? ¹

Tertullian defended the Creator, explaining first to Marcion (chapter five of book two) that the fall was contingent on man's attributes, for he had freedom of choice, and not on any deficiency in God's character - neither in His goodness, nor in His foreknowledge, nor in His power. God had made man free (liber) and not a slave, his own master (sui arbitrii) and under his own control (suae potestatis):

Igitur si et fuerunt in deo istae facultates, prae quibus nihil mali euenire homini aut potuisset aut debuisset, et nihilominus euenit, uideamus et hominis condicionem, ne per illiam potius euenerit quod per deum euenire non potuit. Liberum et sui arbitrii et suae potestatis inuenio hominem a deo institutum. ²

Tertullian then went on, in chapter six, to explain why this had to be so. Freedom for man to disobey God, as much as to obey Him, was essential for a being worthy of the image of God. Without free-will, man would not have been fitted to be the ruler of the world:

¹ II Marc 5.1.12-16.

² II Marc 5.5.8-13.

If God is good, you ask, and has knowledge of the future, and also has power to avert evil, why did he suffer the man, (who was the image and likeness of God, or even God's substance, since from it man's soul took its origin) to be deceived by the devil, to fall away from obedience to the law, and so to die?

free

of his own will/choice

of his own power

Consequently, if there were in God those faculties in virtue of which no evil either could have happened to the man or ought to have happened, and yet none the less it did happen, we have to look at the man's constitution, asking whether perhaps it was through it that that happened which from God's side could not have happened. I observe that the man was created by God as a free man, with power to choose, and power to act, for himself.

Oportebat igitur imaginem et similitudinem dei liberi arbitrii et suae potestatis institui, in qua hoc ipsum imago et similitudo dei deputaretur, arbitrii scilicet libertas et potestas. 1

Without free-will, man could not have been good; with it, he could be either good or bad:

quia non natura in bonum dispositus est, sed institutione, secundum institutorem bonum, scilicet bonorum conditorem. Vt ergo bonum iam suum haberet homo, emancipatum sibi a deo, et fieret proprietas iam boni in homine et quodammodo natura, de institutione adscripta est illi quasi libripens emancipati a deo boni libertas et potestas arbitrii, quae efficeret bonum ut proprium. 2

Adam had had that choice; he had succumbed to the devil because the devil had managed to get Adam's free will on his (the devil's) side, but the responsibility lay entirely on Adam's shoulders and was not attributable to God.³

Tertullian went back one stage further - to anticipate the question of why Adam chose evil and not good. He gave the same answer - freedom of choice - in this case in the devil. The devil had been created a good angel, and he too, the creation of the good God, sinned of his own choice, and instigated man to sin.⁴ Tertullian did not face the next question - why did the devil, after being created with the power of choosing good or evil, choose the latter. Tertullian had gone far enough to meet the immediate challenge - the gnostic doctrine of determination. It was enough for Tertullian to show that both the

¹ II Marc 6.3.15-18.

² II Marc 6.4.31-5.06.

³ ex 2.5.30-34, where the text is corrupt but the sense seems to be that God willed Adam's obedience, whatever one says about the devil's activity and Adam's own choice.

⁴ II Marc 10.3.12-5.26. Tertullian's ideas on the origin and existence of the devil were based on an ingenious exposition of Ezekiel 38.11-16, which he made to refer to the devil. God created an angel endowed with free will; this angel by his own choice became evil. He had been formed for good by God, adorned with every angelic glory and set in God's presence but of his own accord he began to sin and became the instigator of evil and wickedness in men. As he had misused his own free will, so he taught men to misuse theirs - apol 22.3..10-13.

So it was necessary that God's image and likeness should be endowed with free choice and personal initiative, so that in it this very fact of freedom and initiative he might be accounted the image and likeness of God.

Thus he was not ordained to goodness by nature, but has it by endowment - not possessing goodness of his own, seeing he was not by nature ordained to goodness, but by endowment - since God, the Creator of good things, is also good to endow them. Therefore, so that the man might have a goodness of his own, bestowed upon him by God, and that there might thenceforth be in the man a proprietorship and as it were a natural attribute of goodness, there was granted and assigned to him freedom, and the power of choice, as a kind of conveyancer of the good bestowed on him by God. The intention was that this should enable man to exhibit goodness of his own...

devil and Adam had had free will - that relieved Tertullian of the difficulty of attributing evil to God as Creator.

(b) The catechumen's freedom of choice

The enquirer after the Christian faith was very plainly faced with the alternatives of entering the discipline of the catechumenate, with the promise of forgiveness of sin at the end of it, or of facing the wrath of God which awaited the natural man who had not repented of his sin. The choice was there - the choice was his; since this is fully explored in chapter VII.3, no further reference will be made to it in this section.

(c) The Christian's freedom of choice

In baptism, all past sins were washed away, but the efficacy of baptism was retrospective only. The path to ultimate fellowship with God lay ahead; man was free and man had to tread that path for himself; what had been gained in baptism could be lost again. If the Christian was to avoid post-baptismal sin, he had to exercise his free-will to do what God had commanded, and avoid what God had prohibited:

Igitur cum utrumque ex praeceptis eius didicerimus, quid nolit et quid uelit, iam in nobis est uoluntas et arbitrium eligendi alterum, sicut scriptum est: 'Ecce posui ante te bonum et malum: gustasti enim de agnitionis arbore.'¹

The way by which a Christian kept himself right with God was to exercise his free-will and to choose the good, to defeat the devil by using aright that same freedom by means of which the devil had secured his initial success with man. Thus God gave man the opportunity "worthily to recover his salvation",² but that is outwith the scope of this thesis and is not explored further here.

(d) The natural man's freedom of choice

Although every soul was derived velut surculus from Adam, and so inherited the stain of sin and bias toward evil, free-will remained a basic faculty

¹ ex 2.3.19-23.

² II Marc 10.6.3-9.

Thus it follows that even after we have learned from His precepts both what He does and what He does not desire, we still have a will of our own and a power of choosing the one rather than the other, according as it is written: "Behold, I have placed before you good and evil, for you have eaten off the tree of knowledge".

as a shoot (agricultural)

of every soul. Tertullian appears to have regarded the will as an independent faculty, having complete freedom, knowing both good and evil, and able to choose whichever it pleased:

quod deus non intercesserit aduersus ea, quae noluit euenire, ut conseruaret ea, quae uoluit. Si enim semel homini permiserat arbitrii libertatem et potestatem et digne permiserat, . . .¹

In opposition to the Valentinian doctrine of the immutability of human nature, Tertullian stressed man's freedom to accept or to reject the voice of God, however, he came to hear it. The Valentinians maintained that all men belonged to one or other of three classes - spiritual, animal, or terrestrial; as this distinction was fixed at birth, it was immutable; just as a thorn could not produce figs nor a thistle grapes, so (they argued) no choicus or animalis could produce the works of a spiritalis, or vice versa. Tertullian disagreed; of course a corrupt tree could not bring forth good fruit, but a good tree could be grafted into corrupt stock and bring forth good fruit. A new nature could be grafted into the corrupt nature of man, because the power of divine grace was stronger than nature and could subject nature to itself, if the free will of man allowed divine grace to work in the human heart.²

The problem of reconciling the efficacy of divine grace with the freedom of man's will did not seriously engage Tertullian's attention, although in general he tended to stress man's freedom rather than the efficacy of grace; he was far from the idea that man could will what was good only by the grace of God.³ He was more concerned to establish that free-will made man responsible for his

¹ II Marc 7.1.16-2.18.

² an 21.6.34-40.

³ The de paenitentia gives the impression passim that God's grace somehow affected the choice, although it was freely made. The recognition of some ultimate divine initiative is strengthened by the passage in de anima referred to in footnote 2 above, that divine grace, mightier than nature, had in subjection to itself the free power of choice in man. The grace of God is studied briefly in chapter X.4 below.

God has abstained from interfering so as to forestall the things he wished should not take place, and by so doing preserve those he approved of. For having once granted the man freedom of will, and power to act...

earthly (soul) or animal (soul) - spiritual (soul) or the other way round (the terms being exchanged).

"On Repentance" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

in the passing

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

acts. Man had sinned through his own free choice, (human nature having been corrupted by the fall of Adam) and the natural man had to take steps to return to God - he had to make his own choice - to 'opt in'. Endowed by God with elements of religious and ethical knowledge, but above all with free will, he should hear and obey the prompting of God, in whatever way God spoke to him. Tertullian was not concerned with the influence of character or environment - all was free, unconditioned choice.

"Ainsi Adam a-t-il choisi librement. Le démon lui avait présenté la matière du péché, mais n'avait pu l'y contraindre. La tentation n'est donc pas une excuse suffisante. De toutes façons, et quelles soient les sollicitations venues de l'extérieur, l'homme se détermine par lui-même". ¹

God had however foreseen the fall of man, and had provided the way of escape; He gave to every new life the freedom to choose salvation. How this became, for Tertullian, man's responsibility, is examined next.

¹ d'Alès, "Theologie", p 270

Thus Adam chose freely. Thd devil had offered him the material of sin, but was not able to compel him to it. Temptation is not therefore a sufficient excuse. In all ways, and whatever may be the sollicitations from the outside, man makes up his own mind.

VI.3 FAILURE TO RECOGNISE GOD WAS CULPABLE

Since God had given some evidence about Himself to all men,¹ through His works² and through the testimony of the soul,³ and since every man was free to respond to the voice of God to him or within him,⁴ Tertullian believed that all men were accountable to God if they failed to respond to Him. God had set men the practical exercise of recognising their estranged relationship from Him, and to fail in this was culpable.

Cum autem etiam ignorantes dominum nulla exceptio tueatur a poena, quia deum in aperto constitutum et uel ex ipsis caelestibus bonis comprehensibilem ignorari non licet,⁵

ita eum uis magnitudinis et notum hominibus obicit et ignotum. Et haec est summa delicti nolentium recognoscere, quem ignorare non possunt.⁶

Recognoscere deum, as opposed simply to accepting His existence, (which Tertullian described as cognoscere deum), was within the natural capability of every man. If only man would search for God, he would know Him, would worship Him and would find Him a God of pity rather than a God of anger. In the event:

Semper humana gens male de Deo meruit: primo quidem ut inofficiosa eius, quem cum intellexeret ex parte, non solum non requisivit timendum, sed et alios sibi citius commenta quos coleret; dehinc quod non inquirendo innocentiae magistrum et nocentiae iudicem et exactorem omnibus uitiiis et criminibus inoleuit. Ceterum si requisissit, sequebatur, ut cognosceret requisitum et recognitum obseruaret et obseruatum propitium magis experiretur quam iratum.⁷

Tertullian returned, in the opening paragraph of his treatise against idolatry, to

¹ Chapter V.4 above.

² Chapter V.6 above.

³ Chapter V.5 above.

⁴ Section VI.3, immediately above.

⁵ paen 5.4.12-15.

⁶ apol 17.3.13-15.

⁷ apol 40.10.38-11.45.

But since there is no excusing cause which saves men from punishment even when they know not the Lord - for ignorance of God is not excusable, since He is set plainly before men and can be known through the very gifts we have received from heaven...

Thus the power of His greatness makes Him known to men, and yet unknown. And here is the sum total of the sin of those who are unwilling to recognise Him of whom they cannot remain in ignorance.

to recognise God

to know God

At all times the human race has deserved ill at God's hands. In the first place, because it failed in its duties toward Him: although it knew Him in part, it did not seek and find Him, but actually invented for itself other additional gods to worship: (in the second place because, by not seeking the Teacher of innocence and the Judge and Avenger of guilt, it became hardened in all vices and crimes. But, if it had sought Him, it would follow that it would recognise Him who was sought, would worship Him when recognised, and, if it worshipped Him, it would experience His mercy rather than His wrath.

the first of the two points made in the passage just quoted - the greatest condemnation of the natural man was that he had not only neglected to respond to the God who was seeking after him, but that he had invented other deities, whom he worshipped instead.

Principale crimen generis humani, summus saeculi reatus, tota causa iudicii idolotaria. Nam etsi suam speciem tenet unumquodque delictum, etsi suo quodque nomine iudicio destinatur, in idololatriae tamen crimine expungitur. ¹

Since Tertullian had set out both the witness of the soul and the evidence of nature as the two separate and yet related ways in which all men should come to some knowledge of God, it is not surprising that he made use of both arguments in order to show the culpability of man's failure to respond to God. In his fifth book against Marcion, he showed at length why it was not unfair that the heathen were to be judged. Even as the people of Israel had been given the commandments and had failed to live up to the standards set by God in the law, so the Gentiles had failed to recognise God in His works:

Et populus autem per disciplinae transgressionem et omne hominum genus per naturae dissimulationem et deliquerat et rebellauerat aduersus creatorem. ²

Mention was made in chapter V.10 of the ius naturale and how the Roman jurists tended to identify it with ius gentium - those laws which, as Rome's dominions spread, they found they had in common with other nations. There is, however, nothing of this thought of natural law underlying Tertullian's condemnation of the natural man for his failure to recognise God; instead he made use of Paul's argument in Romans chapter 2, that both Jew and Gentile were inexcusable before God, the latter because they had the "lex scripta in cordibus suis." God could and would judge the heathen, because they had failed to respond to the

¹ idol 1.1.3-6.

² V Marc 5.4.6-9. Similarly in IV Marc 25.10.5-7 and V Marc 5.7.11-13.

The principal crime of the human race, the highest guilt charged upon the world, the all-inclusive cause of judgment, is idolatry. Although each particular fault keeps its own characteristic features and will certainly be condemned under its own name, yet it is listed under the (general) count of idolatry.

But the people of Israel by transgression against instruction, and the whole human race by shutting their eyes to nature, had both sinned and rebelled against the Creator.

natural law

international law (as defined at page 193)

the law written on their hearts

light they had been given by God - the emphasis being on God as both giver and as judge:

Si enim iudicabit deus occulta hominum, tam eorum qui in lege deliquerunt quam eorum qui sine lege, - quia et hi etsi legem ignorant, at natura faciunt quae sunt legis - utique is deus iudicabit, cuius sunt et lex et ipsa natura, quae legis est instar ignorantibus legem. 1

Furthermore (the argument continued) there was the evidence of God's works. If Christ had been the messenger of the new and unknown God of Marcion, then God could not have called the heathen to account, because He would not have had any yardstick against which they could be judged. They could have said that since they had not heard of God, and since the deity was unknown because he had not created anything, they could not be held accountable. Tertullian insisted that God was recognisable in His works, and could be known independently of revelation, so the heathen had no excuse for not responding to Him.

Cum enim ad ultionem uenturum scribat apostolus dominum exigendam de eis, qui deum ignorent et qui non obaudiant euangelio, quos ait poenam luituros exitialem aeternam a facie domini et a gloria ualentiae eius, sequitur, ut flammam ignis inducat, scilicet ueniens ad puniendum. Ita et in hoc, nolente Marcione, crematoris dei Christus est, et in illo creatoris est quod etiam de ignorantibus dominum ulciscitur, id est de ethnicis. Seorsum enim posuit *** euangelio non obaudentes, siue Christianos peccatores siue Iudaeos. Porro de ethnicis exigere poenas, qui euangelium forte non norint, non est dei eius, qui naturaliter sit ignotus nec usquam nisi in euangelio sit reuelatus, non omnibus scibilis. Creatori autem etiam naturalis agnitio debetur, ex operibus intellegendo et exinde in plenioram notitiam requiringdo. Illius est ergo etiam ignorantes deum plectere, quem non liceat ignorari. 2

Even the common, yet remarkable, provision of rain and fire should have been enough to make the heathen admit the existence of God,³ because, as le Saint recently paraphrased Tertullian's argument, every man needs someone to whom

¹ V Marc 13.4.20-25.

² V Marc 16.2.8-3.22.

³ apol 18.3.10-13.

For if God will judge the secret things of men, both those who have sinned in the law and those who have sinned without the law - because these too, though they are ignorant of the law, yet do by nature the things of the law - evidently the judge will be that God to whom belong both the law and that nature which to those who know not the law has the value of law.

When the apostle writes that the Lord will come to exact vengeance of them that know not God and obey not the gospel, and says they will pay the penalty of destruction, an eternal penalty, from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his power, he must of necessity bring with him a flame of fire since he comes with intent to punish. So that in this too, though Marcion denies it, Christ belongs to a God who consumes with fire, and consequently, the Creator, because he even takes vengeance on them that know not the Lord, which means that heathen: for he has made separate reference to those who obey not the gospel, whether they be Christian sinners, or Jews. But to exact penalties of the heathen, such, it seems, as do not know the gospel, is not the act of a god by nature unknown, one never revealed except in the gospel, one not capable of being known by all. But the Creator has the right to be known by nature, to be understood by means of his works, and thereafter to be sought for with a view to fuller knowledge. So then, to chastise those who know not God is within the competence of the God whom they have no right not to know.

he can say 'thank you' for the world.¹ God could and would expect a response from all men - if need be based only on the evidence of His works.

Das die Erkenntnis Gottes und zwar nicht nur die rein theoretische, sondern vor allem auch die praktische Anerkennung Gottes zur Aufgabe des Menschen gehört, erhellt auch aus der Rechenschaft, die Gott darüber fordern wird und zwar nicht nur von den Juden und Christen, sondern auch von den Heiden. Diese Verantwortlichkeit stützt sich auf die Leichtigkeit der Gotteserkenntnis, da das Zeugnis der Innen- und Aussenwelt den Menschen zur Anerkennung Gottes drängt. Die Verantwortlichkeit des Menschen für die Anerkennung Gottes hat T. wiederholt betont. Er schliesst seine Schrift vom Zeugnis der Seele mit einem ernsten und eindringlichen Hinweis darauf. Auch sonst hält er diesen Gedanken den Heiden vor. Ebenso weist T. am Beginn des zweiten Buches Ad nationes, in dem er die Torheit des heidnischen Götzendienstes dartut, auf die Schuldbarkeit ihres Irrtums hin.²

Tertullian was not, of course, unaware of the influence which satan exerted over men, to draw them away from God,³ but he absolutely rejected any theory of sin which whittled away altogether man's responsibility. God had provided sufficient evidence, in the world around, for every man to recognise his Creator, and Tertullian remarked on the irony of those who said they rejected Christianity but who were prepared to accept far less credible evidence for the supernatural if it was put forward apud aemulatorem dei - Haec quidem in testimonium posita sunt repellentibus fidem, si minime credant rebus dei, quarum adfectionibus apud aemulatorem dei credunt.⁴ There was, however, no 'opting-out'; whether they were prepared to recognise God or not, Bene quod omnium Deus est, cuius, uelimus ac nolimus, omnes sumus. Sed apud uos quoduis colere ius est praeter Deum uerum, quasi non hic magis omnium sit, cuius omnes sumus⁵ - and He would call all to account. The question of when that accounting took place is examined in the next section.

¹ op. cit. p 154, quoting someone (whom he did not name) who had used the phrase in a more general cosmological sense.

² Fütcher, op. cit., p 25.

³ Chapter IV.2 above.

⁴ bapt 5.3.20-22.

⁵ apol 24.10.45-48.

That the understanding of God and not only the purely theoretical but above all the practical recognition of God is an exercise set for man, also becomes apparent in the fact that God calls to account not only the Jews and Christians but also the heathens. This responsibility is supported by the facility of understanding God, for the evidence of the inner and outer world of man forces one to the recognition of God. Tertullian has stressed again and again the responsibility of man towards the recognition of God. He closes his essay "From the Evidence of the Soul" with an earnest and impressive allusion to this. Moreover, he holds this idea up for the heathens. Even so, at the beginning of the second book "To the Gentiles" in which he demonstrates the foolishness of pagan idolatry, he points out the blameworthiness of their error.

by God's rival - I have set down those remarks for a testimony against those who reject the faith, in that they give too little credence to things of God, though they do give credit to the attempts to reproduce them made by God's rival.

It is well that God is one God of all, to whom we all belong whether we would wish it or not. But among you it is lawful to worship anything you choose at all, so long as it is not the true God! - as if He were not rather God of all, to whom we all belong.

Before leaving this topic, two further points should be made. First, some reference should be made to the argument about ignorance and responsibility which underlies Tertullian's first treatise ad nationes. There he showed that the ignorantia of pagans, with respect to Christianity, was culpable because it was not involuntary ignorance; it was deliberate, because they had every opportunity to learn the truth, yet they took pleasure in their ignorance and with it they fed their hostility. Tertullian's immediate purpose was the defence of the persecuted Christian community, and not the relationship of the pagan to God, but his argument is significant for this section because it rests on the assumption that ignorantia of one's opponent could be both error and sin. From the shape of the argument, Tertullian seems to have borrowed it from Cicero's de officiis, which set out in juridical terms the responsibility for wrongdoing by omission and by ignorance.

Mais c'est dans le De officiis que l'analyse de la responsabilité est la plus profonde et la plus précise: à côté de l'acte injuste, commis sciemment dans le dessein de nuire, il y a l'injustice par omission, celle qui résulte d'une action dommageable à autrui qu'on a laissé commettre, par mauvaise volonté, négligence ou paresse.

On comprend sans doute mieux à la lumière de ces textes l'importance et la signification de la forte antithèse défendit-reuineit par laquelle Tertullien commence avec éclat son traité. Elle n'est pas un banal effet oratoire, mais constitue le fondement même de son argumentation. ¹

The background to Cicero's thought is mentioned in the conclusion to this chapter, i.e. in section VI.9, but the second (and final) point to be noted in this section is the extent to which Tertullian's emphasis on responsibility was shaped by his quarrels with the Gnostics. If, as they claimed, evil was inherent in matter (in the case of man inherent in the flesh) sin was unavoidable in materially-constituted beings. This doctrine took away all responsibility from man and particularly it removed his guilt before God; Tertullian could not

¹ Fredouille, op. cit., p 73.

"To the Gentiles" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

ignorance

"About Official Duties" (treatise)

But it is the 'De officiis' that the analysis of responsibility is deepest and most precise: alongside the wrong action, committed knowingly with the intention of injuring, there is the wrong by omission, that which results from an action prejudicial to others which one has let happen, through bad will, negligence or laziness.

One undoubtedly understands better in the light of these texts the importance and significance of the strong anti-thesis 'defendit - revinct' with which Tertullian vividly begins his treatise. It is not a banal oratorical effect, but constitutes the very foundation of his argument.

tolerate a system in which wrong could be done and no one be brought to account for it. His use of the word 'delictum' to describe man's accountability to God is examined in section VI.8, but meantime it is necessary to ask when Tertullian believed that this accounting took place; that is examined next.

wrong/fault

VI.4 WHEN MAN WAS ACCOUNTABLE TO GOD

When Tertullian's inquisitors looked at the world around, and saw the obvious prosperity of the wicked, they may have said to Tertullian that events hardly supported his theology about judgment resting on mankind for its rejection of God. Those who neglected God seemed to be none the worse for it; they scorned Him, but He did not intervene; on the contrary, it was the Christians who were suffering misfortune just then, at the hands of the pagans. Were was this God who judged sinners?

Tertullian replied:

Qui enim semel aeternum iudicium destinavit post saeculi finem, non praecipitat discretionem, quae est condicio iudicii, ante saeculi finem. Aequalis est interim super omne hominum genus et indulgens et incessans; communia uoluit esse et commoda profanis et incommoda suis. ¹

The Matthaean parable of the good seed and the bad seed illustrates well the attitude of Tertullian to evil-doers.² He had no illusions that goodness would necessarily lead to material prosperity in this world, nor that wickedness would bring punishment to the wicked, such as was taught in Old Testament Judaism. The attitude of the pagan to God, had (according to Tertullian) little or no consequence for him in this life, unless he happened to be alive during the events immediately preceding the parousia; rewards and punishments were being stored up for a future accounting. Of that future accounting, however, Tertullian had no doubt at all. "Il nous decrit le jugement dernier comme s'il en arrivait".³ Judgment on the unbeliever was so certain that Tertullian could speak of it as if

¹ apol 41.3.10-14.

² He mentioned it briefly in an 16.7.49-50 and developed it in detail in Prax 1.6.34-7.47, not with reference to the material prosperity of the wicked but to illustrate the priority of truth over falsehood (as he had already done in praes chapters 29 to 31) and to explain the freedom accorded to the heretics to propagate their views.

³ Christine Mohrmann, "Observations sur la Langue et le Style de Tertullien", Neovo Didaskaleion, 4 (1950-51), 44.

For He who has appointed eternal judgment once and for all after the end of this world does not anticipate the separation, which is a preliminary condition of the judgment, before the end of the world. Meantime He treats all mankind equally, both indulging and disciplining them. He has willed that all things be shared by all: the pleasant things of life to be shared by the profane, the unpleasant by His own.

Second Coming of Christ

He describes the Last Judgment for us as if it had already arrived.

"Observations on the Language and the Style of Tertullian" (periodical article)

it had taken place already - judicially it had, as soon as the guilt was incurred, thought not actually - Qui negat idololatren perisse, is negabit idololatren homicidium fecisse;¹ renuant ob malitiam praedamnatos se in eundem iudicii diem cum omnibus cultoribus et operationibus suis.² Tertullian could also argue, in another context, that the incestuous man referred to by Paul in Second Corinthians was already 'condemned' and, hence, already 'consumed', the point being that the sinner who was pardoned in Second Corinthians "lest he be consumed" could not be the man guilty of incest³ because that man's condemnation was already a fact even if it had not yet happened.

Tertullian realised that he would be ridiculed by the pagan world, when he preached future judgment as a motive for conversion - Haec et nos risimus aliquando⁴ - but nevertheless he was fully persuaded that he had to make it a major emphasis of his apologeticum:

Itaque ridemur praedicantes Deum iudicaturum. Sic enim et poetae et philosophi tribunal apud inferos ponunt. Et gehennam si comminemur, quae est ignis arcani subterraneas ad poenam thesaurus, proinde decachinnamur.⁵

It is outwith the scope of this thesis to look in any detail at the future judgment of God on the natural man, because the thesis assumes (and closes with) the natural man's progression from heathenism to the Christian faith. However, to set this section in the overall context of Tertullian's thought, it is desirable to mention briefly (without citations) that Tertullian believed:

- (a) All souls, except those of martyrs, went on death to what Tertullian called inferi, there to wait for the resurrection and the judgment. Souls went

¹ idol 1.2.10-11.

² apol 23.14.76-77.

³ pud 13.1.1-6.

⁴ apol 18.4.17.

⁵ apol 47.12.52-55.

He who affirms that the idolater perishes not will affirm that the idolater has not committed murder.

Let them deny (the charge) that for their sin they have been condemned already against that same Day of Judgment, they and all their worshippers and all their works!

These are points at which we too laughed in times past

"Apology" (one of Tertullian's works)

Hence, we are ridiculed when we proclaim that God will hold a final judgment. Yet, in like manner the poets and philosophers establish a tribunal in the underworld. And, if we threaten hell, which is a subterranean storehouse of punishment consisting of a mysterious fire, we are laughed to scorn for it.

underworld

there immediately after death, whether their bodies were buried or not, whether they had departed before the time set for them or not, and whether they had suffered a violent death or not. No soul could leave the underworld until the resurrection, either by its own will or by necromancy.

- (b) **There were different places** and different treatments for the guilty and the righteous apud inferos. Tertullian described the abodes in the infern quite systematically, distinguishing clearly between the dwellings of the saved and of the damned; indeed, he criticised the pagans for locating virtuous men in the same region as criminals. For the latter, the infern were already a place of punishment, although not the same as gehenna, the great abyss into which sinners would be thrown after the resurrection. The part where the righteous lived apud inferos was distinguished as 'Abraham's bosom'; paradise or heaven was the place of blessedness into which they would enter after the resurrection; martyrs went to an earthly paradise as soon as they died.¹
- (c) **Judgment began** for the soul immediately on death, although it must be noted that Tertullian's view of this appears to have developed over the years. In the apologeticum and in de testimonio animae, he stated that a soul separated from its body could neither suffer nor enjoy, but simply waited, and its reward or its punishment was postponed until the resurrection of the body. In de anima, however, Tertullian wrote that the soul, because of its corporal constitution, was capable of sensation even although separated from the flesh; Scripture, confirmed by the new prophecy, demonstrated that the souls of the deceased had a foretaste apud inferos of the rewards and penalties due to them at the judgment. These sensations were, however,

¹ The different places in the intermediate state have been fully set out by Heinz Finé, Die Terminologie der Jenseitsvorstellungen bei Tertullian, (Bonn: Peter Hanstein, 1958). The usefulness of the book is best indicated by its subtitle: 'ein semasiologischer Beitrag zur Dogmengeschichte des Zwischenzustandes'. Not all eschatological ideas are considered, but the condition of souls immediately after death and the nature of the underworld are set out in detail.

in the underworld

underworld

hell

"Apology" and "On the Witness of the Soul" (two of Tertullian's treatises)

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

The Terminology of the Concept of the World Beyond in Tertullian"
(Book)

a contribution, from the point of view of the words used, to the history of the dogma of the Intermediate State of Man

no more than an anticipation of the joys of heaven or the pains of hell, according to the soul's ultimate destiny. For the Christian who had sinned after baptism there might be some purifying process - it is outwith the scope of this study to comment on that - but for the non-believer, there was no possibility of a better relationship with God. For him, the intermediate state was a foretaste of those everlasting torments which would be declared on the day of judgment. To those who could not understand how there could be pains for any one in the intermediate state, Tertullian explained: Cur enim non putes animam et puniri et foueri in inferis interim sub expectatione utriusque iudicii in quadam usurpatione et candida eius?¹ Those fouentur were those who would be acquitted in the judgment day; those puniuntur were those who would be condemned. Tertullian anticipated and answered the objection that the judgment day was thus forestalled - Quia saluum debet esse, inquis, in iudicio diuino negotium suum sine ulla praelibatione sententiae;² i.e. that no reward or infliction should take place until the flesh has been restored to share it. He explained that it would be iniquissimum otium if the guilty were still in comfort and the innocent not yet in comfort; if the punishment of the wicked did not begin until death, at least it began directly after death.

- (d) A **first resurrection** would then usher in a reign of Christ and the just on earth, a reign which would last for a thousand years. However, not all the just would rise at the same time; some would rise earlier, and others later, according to their merits, to reign with Christ. After this millennial rule, there would be a second resurrection, general and simultaneous, when the remainder of the just and all the reprobates would be raised together, to attend the day of judgment.

¹ an 58.2.4-6.

² an 58.2.6-8.

Why don't you want to believe that the soul is punished or rewarded in the underworld in the meantime, while awaiting the alternatives of judgment, in certain anticipation of either glory or damnation?

being rewarded

being punished

You reply that God's judgment ought to be definitive, and that no inkling of His sentence should be given beforehand.

the highest possible injustice.

- (e) Judgment could not be finalised until the resurrection of the body, when the "whole man", soul and body, would stand before God. The interim judgment of the soul was without prejudice to the full judgment of God, which would take place then. Unlike the gnostics, who believed that man was liberated from the body at the end of time, Tertullian was convinced that the perfectio of man would be the resurrection of the body.

The sentence pronounced on the judgment day would be final and irrevocable. There was no hope of deliverance beyond the grave, and none beyond the judgment. Body and soul would not be annihilated, which would be to consume them, not to punish them; hell was everlasting, and so was its punishment.

iudicii est, necessario idem ipse, qui fuerat, exhibebitur, ut boni seu contrarii meriti iudicium a Deo referat. Ideoque repraesentabuntur et corpora, quia neque pati quicquam potest anima sola sine materia stabili, id est carne, et quod omnino de iudicio Dei pati debent animae, non sine carne meruerunt intra quam omnia egerunt. ¹

The basis of judgment would be the conduct of man and the attitude of man to God during his days on earth. (The passages now quoted are those addressed to the heathen, where Tertullian's object was to prove the moral necessity of resurrection and of judgment, not to go into details which would complicate his argument and, to the mind of an unbeliever, partly stultify it. For Christian readers he went into much more detail.)

adfirmamus te manere post uitae disunctionem et expectare diem iudicii proque meritis aut cruciatui destinari aut refrigerio, utroque sempiterno; ²

ut qui producto aevo isto iudicaturus sit suos cultores in uitae aeternae retributionem, profanos in ignem aequae perpetem et iugem, suscitatis

¹ apol 48.4.33-39. The reconciliation of the view expressed here (that the resurrection of the body was necessary for the judgment of God to begin) with Tertullian's teaching elsewhere that there was an interim judgment of the soul alone, was set out in paragraph (c) above.

² test 4.1.2-5.

meanwhile

perfecting

It must necessarily be the very same man, who once was, that will be restored so that he may receive from God the judgment which he has deserved for his good or bad deeds. And for this reason the bodies, too, will be brought forth, because the soul cannot endure anything without a firm substance, that is, the flesh: and what souls generally have to suffer from the judgment of God they have not deserved without the flesh, within which they committed all their actions.

We affirm that you continue to exist after the extinction of bodily life and await the day of judgment: and that, according to your deserts, you will be delivered either to torture or to bliss, both eternal.

seeing that, when this age reaches its full end, He will sit as Judge, and His worshippers He will repay with life eternal, and the profane. He will condemn to fire as perpetual and unceasing for

meanwhile

omnibus ab initio defun̄tis et reformatis et recensitis ad utriusque meriti dispunctionem. 1

Item iudicium annuntiamus a Deo pro cuiusque meritis post interitum destinatum; id uos Minoi et Radamantho adscribitis, iustiore omnino Aristide recusato. Eo iudicio iniquos aeterno igni, pios et insontes amoeno in loco dicimus perpetuitatem transacturos: 2

Cum ergo finis et limes, medius qui interhiat, affuerit, . . . tunc restituetur omne hominum genus ad expungendum, quod in isto aeuo boni seu mali meruit, et exinde pendendum in immensam aeternitatis perpetuitatem. 3

Tertullian's keen anticipation of the Day of Judgment,⁴ and in particular the satisfaction he expected the Christians to enjoy from their vantage point in the new Jerusalem - kings and governors, actors, wrestlers, and charioteers, all tortuously tossing in the fiery billows of hell - has been much criticised,⁵ but that is outwith the scope of this study; the point to be established here is that man's accountability to God was normally after death, not in this life.

¹ apol 18.3.13-17.

² I nat 19.5.33-6.4.

³ apol 48.12.76-77 and 79-82.

⁴ Quid admirer? Quid rideam? Vbi gaudeam. ubi exultem, spectans tot ac tantos reges, qui in caelum recepti nuntiabantur, cum ipso Iove et ipsis suis testibus in imis tenebris congemescences? Item praesides persecutores dominici nominis saeuioribus quam ipsi flammis saeuierunt insultantibus contra Christianis liquescentes?-spec 30.3.8-14.

⁵ Particularly by Edward Gibbon: who, in the most famous chapter (15) of The History of the Decline and Fall of The Roman Empire seems deliberately to have misunderstood Tertullian. Certainly he abridged the translation judiciously to suit his purpose, and in one or two places he missed Tertullian's point. A more serious criticism is that the reader of Gibbon would not appreciate, without referring to the text of Tertullian, but when Gibbon concluded with a flourish"... But the humanity of the reader will permit me to draw a veil over the rest of this infernal description, which the zealous African pursues in a long variety of affected and unfeeling witticisms.", there was in fact little or nothing more to be quoted which would have served his purpose. While further consideration of the point is entirely outside the scope of this study, it would be quite wrong to deduce from that single passage, removed (as it is by Gibbon) from its context, that Tertullian took pleasure in imagining the sufferings of others. The influence of literary tradition, the didactic goal, the Biblical inspiration, the principles of classic rhetoric all have to be taken into account. (The quotation from Gibbon is from vol II of J.B. Bury's edition, (London: Methuen and Co., 1909) p 27.

the dead, every man of them from the beginning, shall be raised, re-fashioned and reviewed, that their deserts of either kind, good or evil, may be adjudged.

Again, we affirm that a judgment has been ordained by God according to the merits of every man. This you ascribe to Minos and Rhadamanthus, while at the same time you reject Aristides, who was a juster judge than either. By the award of the judgment, we say that the wicked will have to spend an eternity in endless fire, the pious and innocent in a region of bliss.

So, when the limit and boundary line which gapes widely in the midst shall have come, ... then shall the entire human race be restored to settle the account for the good or the evil it has merited in this world, from then on to be required for a limitless and unending eternity.

Which sight shall excite my wonder? Which, my laughter? Where shall I rejoice, where exult - as I see so many and so mighty kings, whose ascent to heaven used to be made known by public announcement, now along with Jupiter himself, along with the very witnesses of their ascent, groaning in the depths of darkness? Governors of provinces, too, who persecuted the name of the Lord, melting in flames fiercer than those they themselves kindled in their rage against the Christians braving them with contempt?

There were, however, two exceptions to this norm. The first was drawn from Tertullian by the exigencies of the moment. The Christians who would not worship the gods of Rome, nor perform sacrifices for the Emperor, were blamed when there were severe floods in Rome (or the lack of them in Egypt), for earthquakes, for famines and for disease. Tertullian replied that the calamities besetting the empire did not reflect any disfavour by pagan deities at the spread of Christianity, but were more likely to be divine punishments inflicted by the true God on the empire, which He maintained in existence despite its refusal to recognise him - but this was a general judgement and not related to individuals.

Eundem igitur nunc quoque scire debet iratum, quem et retro semper, priusquam Christiani nominarentur. Cuius bonis utebatur ante editis quam sibi deos fingeret: cur non ab eo etiam mala intellegat euenire, cuius bona esse non sensit? Illius rea est, cuius et ingrata. Et tamen, si pristinas clades comparemus, leuiora nunc accidunt, ex quo Christianos a Deo orbis accepit. Exinde enim et innocentia saeculi iniquitates temperauit et deprecatores Dei esse coeperunt. ¹

Vos igitur importuni rebus humanis, uos publicorum incommodorum illices semper, apud quos Deus spernitur, statuae adorantur! ²

The same is true of his assumption - he implied that it was a doctrine he had in common with the Marcionites - that God could use war as a method of chastisement. ³

The other exception to this normal rule, that the natural man would be dealt with by God only on the day of judgment, was certain individuals who, like Scapula, persecuted the Christian Church. Clamant ad Dominum

¹ apol 40.12.45-13.54. In other words, if the Creator was good enough to grant His ungrateful creation a period of time from which it might profit and return to Him, let it take care not to interpret this as indifference on God's part with regard to the sins of men. Present calamities had for their aim the warning that God's patience was nearing its end, and should recall to all that they were threatened by God's ultimate judgment.

² apol 41.1.1-3.

³ nec fulminibus tantum aut bellis et pestibus aliisque plagis creatoris sed et scorpiis eius obiectus - I Marc 24.7.23-25.

Mankind should know the same God to be angry today, who was always angry of old, before ever the name of Christian was even mentioned. His were the blessings men enjoyed, bestowed before they fashioned any of their own deities: why do they not realise that misfortunes also come from Him, whose blessings they have failed to recognise? They are guilty before Him toward whom they have been ungrateful. Yet, if we take into consideration the misfortunes of earlier times, those of the present time are less serious, now that the world has received the Christians from God. For, since that day, their innocence has tempered the wickedness of the world, and there have begun to be intercessors with God.

You are the ones, then, who cause trouble in human affairs: you are always the ones who bring down public calamities - you, by your contempt for God and your worship of *statues*.

They cry to the Lord/

He (the Marcionite) is exposed not only to the Creator's lightnings, with his wars and pestilences and other chastisements, but even to his scorpions.

invidia animae martyrum sub altari: Quonam usque non ulcisceris, Domine, sanguinem nostrum de incolis terrae?¹ Normally it was true that ultio illorum a saeculi fine dirigitur,² but just occasionally divine justice did not wait. Chapter three of the letter to Scapula gave seven practical examples of persecutors who had already been divinely chastised, three of them confessing on their death-beds that they had been punished for persecuting the Christian Church. Tertullian emphasised that the Christians did not fear persecution for themselves - in becoming Christians they were prepared to make the sacrifice of their life - but they appealed to the self-interest of their adversaries, who would have to bear the consequences of fighting against God.³ For example, in the procuratorship of Hilarianus, under whom Perpetua and Felicitas suffered, the people shouted, with reference to the fields used for Christian burial places, "Away with the burial fields (areae)", but what happened was that their own fields (areae) suffered, and they gathered in none of their crops.⁴ Tertullian declared that his aim was not to frighten Scapula but to save him from the folly of contending with God. If divine chastisement was frightful here and now, as the treatise ad Scapulam demonstrated, in the after-life it would be worse.

¹ orat 5.3.12-15.

² orat 5.3.15.

³ The fourth chapter opens with the striking warning: "Non te terremus, qui nec timemus; sed uelim, ut omnes saluos facere possimus, monendo", quoted in Greek from Acts 5: 39 - Scap 4.1.1-2. μη θεομαχεῖν.

⁴ Scap 3.1.4-5. The burial places of Christians were special objects of popular fury. As a secta illicita, they had no legal right to possess them, and from their meetings at the graves they returned with invigorated energy of faith. Thus when there was an outbreak of persecution, the cry was raised, "Away with the areae of the Christians," meaning their places of interment. When a season of sterility followed, Tertullian saw a fulfilment of that demand in a different sense - their own areae had suffered and they gathered no harvest. "Areae non sint!" Areae ipsorum non fuerunt: messes enim suas non egerunt. - Scap 3.1.4-5.

(They cry to the Lord)/With reproach the souls of the martyrs beneath
the altar cry aloud to the Lord: 'How long, O Lord, do you refrain
from avenging our blood on those who dwell on earth?'

their vengeance is set in motion at the end of the world

a pun on a word meaning both 'burial grounds' and 'threshing floors
for crops'.

"To Scapula" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

We who are without fear ourselves do not wish to frighten you, but we
would wish to save all men if possible by warning them not to fight
against God.

illegal group

fields

"Let them (the Christians) have no burial grounds (areae)"; but the
result was that they themselves had no threshing-floors (areae), for
they did not gather in any harvest.

That apart, it seems from Tertullian's writings that he believed the heathen could live their own lives, enjoying a measure of prosperity and with freedom to behave as they liked. It was not until the day of reckoning that God would call them to account for their lives, and for their failure to recognise Him. Whether the heathen who passed his life according to the light of nature could ever be saved, appears never to have occurred to Tertullian, but holding the views that he did about the necessity of baptism for salvation, it can hardly be doubted that his reply, if asked, would have been in the negative. Their merits or demerits in this life would affect only the degree of punishment which would be meted out to them on the day of judgment but their merits or demerits could not affect the place of their eternal destiny. Whether this was true of even the most exalted and noble of the heathen is examined next.

VI.5 THE INADEQUACY OF THE BEST IN PAGANISM

After noting the relationship to God of the persecutors of the Church (the worst of all men, in Tertullian's eyes) it is appropriate to ask how he saw the best and highest in pagan life, in its relationship to God. Tertullian was far from despising what he recognised to be good in individual pagans and many examples from literature and from history enrich his works. For example, he commented on the wisdom of Socrates and Cato,¹ the dignity of Plato, the equanimity of Aristotle, the vigor of Zeno,² and the eloquence of Demosthenes and Cicero.³ He was no admirer of savages, and the worst abuse he could direct against Marcion was to call him "Scytha tetrior, Hamaxobio instabilior, Massageta inhumanior, Amazona audacior",⁴ (although in its proper place he paid tribute to the natural ability of the unsophisticated man to find the way to God). Writing to encourage the confessors in prison, when he might have been expected to use the examples of Christ and the apostles, Tertullian drew on his secular learning and appealed to the heroes and heroines of paganism - Mucius Scaevola, Heraclitus, Peregrinus, Empedocles, Lucretia, Dido, Cleopatra, and the indomitable African woman, the wife of Hasdrubal, who hurled herself into the flames with her children rather than yield, as her husband had done, to the conqueror Scipio. From such examples of pagan virtue and fortitude, Tertullian drew his conclusion; if the false sparkles of human vanity inspired so much firmness, what would not the true pearls of celestial glory arouse?⁵

¹ de sapientia Socratem - apol 11.15.70; omnium Socrates sapientissimus - I nat 4.7.12; Quis ... grauior et sapientior Catone? - apol 11.16.73-74.

² Platonis honor aut Zenonis uigor aut Aristotelis tenor - an 3.2.13-14.

³ de eloquentia Demosthenen! - apol 11.15.72-73; quis ... eloquentior Tullio? - apol 11.16.74-76.

⁴ I Marc 1.4.18-19.

⁵ mart 4.4.24-6.6 (the examples) and 4.9.22-24 (the application).

more uncouth than a Scythian, more unsettled than a Wagon-dweller,
more uncivilised than a Massagete, with more affrontery than an Amazon.

Socrates, renowned for wisdom ... Socrates (he said) was the wisest of
men ... who (is) more venerable or more wise than Cato.

the idealism (dignity) of Plato, the vigour of Zeno, the calmness of
Aristotle

Demosthenes, renowned for eloquence ... who surpasses Tully (Cicero)
in eloquence

These were, however, instances of purely pagan virtue and after he had paid tribute to the scholarship of Soranus, Tertullian had to acknowledge, perhaps a trifle wistfully in view of the use he had made of Soranus' works,¹ that Soranus was not a Christian:

Ita etiam ipse Soranus plenissime super anima commentatus quattuor uoluminibus et cum omnibus philosophorum sententiis expertus corporalem animae substantiam uindicat, etsi illam immortalitate fraudauit. Non enim omnium est credere quod Christianorum est. 2

Nevertheless, Tertullian was prepared to concede that pagan philosophers and scholars sometimes found, or stumbled on, parts of Christian truth.

Plane non negabimus aliquando philosophos iuxta nostra sensisse; testimonium est etiam ueritatis euentus ipsius. Nonnunquam et in procella confusis uestigiis caeli et freti aliqui portus offenditur prospero errore, nonnunquam et in tenebris aditus quidam et exitus deprehenduntur caeca felicitate, sed et natura pleraque suggeruntur quasi de publico sensu, quo animam deus dotare dignatus est. 3

He set out the five sources of pagan wisdom - pure chance, common sense, sacred (pagan) books, apocryphal books, and the Old Testament.⁴ The first four were human sources, and constituted no threat to Tertullian's theology. He saw nothing wrong, if it served his purpose, in appealing to common sense to demonstrate the truth of Christianity, and he could show without difficulty the point at which it had to yield to Christian revelation.

Est quidem et de communibus sensibus sapere in dei rebus, sed in testimonium ueri, non in adiutorium falsi, quod sit secundum diuinam, non

¹ Tertullian den Soran nicht bloss gelegentlich benutzt hat, sondern dessen Werk in seinem Aufriss zugrunde gelegt und im Sinne seiner Theologie überarbeitet hat". That is the theme of Heinrich Karpp's article "Sorans vier Bücher Περὶ Ψυχῆς und Tertullians Schrift De anima", Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft, 33 (1934), 31-47 - the quotation is from p 31. Karpp went on to show the points at which Tertullian had to differ from Soranus because he (Tertullian) believed the soul came from the breath of God, but that was Tertullian's only fundamental deviation from his model.

² an 6.6.48-52.

³ an 2.1.1-7.

⁴ an 2.1.1-4.37.

This same Soranus has written four volumes of exhaustive commentary on the soul and he has examined all the theories of the philosophers, too, though in the process of establishing the corporeality of the soul he has robbed it of its immortality. Unfortunately, it is not granted to all men to believe the truth which Christians hold.

Of course, I would not deny that the philosophers occasionally happen upon the truth: the very fact that they do testifies to the truth itself. Sometimes in the midst of a storm when the sailor can't tell sea from sky, by sheer luck the ship will sail into a safe harbour. At night by blind chance we will often find the right door in the dark. Most of our ideas about nature, however, are suggested by a kind of common sense with which God has endowed the soul of man.

Now it is possible even on the basis of popular ideas to be knowledgeable in the things of God, though for evidence of the truth, not in support of falsehood, to establish what is in accordance with the divine ordinance, not

Tertullian did not use Soran purely by chance but that his work is drafted on the basis of it and revises it in the sense of its theology.

"Soran's Four Books 'About the Soul' and Tertullian's Essay 'De Anima'," (periodical article in "Journal for New Testament Knowledge").

contra diuinam dispositionem. Quaedam enim et naturaliter nota sunt, ut immortalitas animae penes plures, ut deus noster penes omnes. Vtar ergo et sententia Platonis alicuius pronuntiantis: 'Omnis anima immortalis'; 1

The apparent similarities of pagan wisdom with the revealed truth of Scripture were more of a problem to him, as he saw that the arguments, often misleading because removed from their context, represented a more real danger to evangelical purity than did flagrant disagreement, immediately obvious as such. Accordingly, Tertullian took up the idea (often used by earlier Christian apologists) that the Greek philosophers had plagiarised and then distorted the prophetic writings,² not having recognised their divine character.

They have perverted what they found in scripture by altering what pleased them to suit their own designs, because being still in obscurity they lacked the means required for proper understanding of the scriptures. Some of them likewise have altered and corrupted the "newly given revelation" into a philosophic system, striking off from the one way many inexplicable ways. They have transformed the simplicity of the truth which they were too proud to believe and what was certain they, with their fastidious admixtures, have infected with uncertainty. Whatever in their own systems corresponds with prophetic wisdom they either ascribe to some other source or apply in some other sense.³

It was from the Old Testament Scriptures, which were the surest testimony to God available to pagans of old, that the philosophers had borrowed, or rather pilfered, various of their doctrines which seemed to coincide with Christian truths; yet they had so twisted anything in Scripture which displeased them that facta est argumentationum inundatio de stillicidio uno atque alio ueritatis.⁴ The outstanding example was their teaching about the Judgment;⁵ accordingly, when

¹ res 3.1.1-2.7; it appears from what follows that ψυχὴ meant a very different thing to Plato than anima did to Tertullian but, in fairness to Tertullian, he was not basing any argument on Plato's views but merely remarking that this was the kind of support he was prepared to accept from non-Christians.

² apol 47 (the whole chapter); II nat 2.5.12-19.

³ H.B. Timothy, The Early Christian Apologists and Greek Philosophy exemplified by Irenaeus, Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria, (Assen: van Gorcum & Comp, 1973) p 40-41.

⁴ II nat 2.5.20-22.

⁵ apol 47.12.52-14.66.

... what is opposed to it. For some things are known even by nature, as is the immortality of the soul among many people and is our God among all. Consequently I shall use the pronouncement of one Plato who declares, "All soul is immortal".

there arose from one or two drops of truth a perfect flood of argumentation.

soul (Greek) ... soul (latin)

Tertullian described the Advent of the Lord, it is little wonder that he included the poets and philosophers among those who would be dealt with at the Judgment Seat of the unexpected Christ.¹

Having conceded, however, that the best of human philosophy might uncover truth, or rather certain partial truths, by accident or by the common sense that all men had received - and possibly just because he had made such a concession - Tertullian went on to stress the inadequacy of paganism, even the very best of paganism, to enter into a correct relationship with God on its own account. Generally speaking, philosophers were regarded as embodying the highest and best of ancient life, and among them, Socrates was the wisest of all.² The story of his death was treasured as the holiest symbol of philosophical independence and freedom. Here, then, was a 'test case' and Tertullian opened de anima with a detailed comparison between the wisdom of Socrates and the sapientia Christiana. Here was a man, the princeps philosophorum, living before Christ and therefore ignorant of Christianity, led by his own immense knowledge, but ignorant of the true God. While the immediate problem for Tertullian was to refute Socrates' views on the immortality of the soul,³ his argument raised the whole question of how far a pagan, exemplified in the most exalted expression of paganism, could come to an understanding of God by his own natural processes. God has indeed spoken to every man, through nature, through the testimony of the soul, through dreams, but the pagan world chose to regard as wise and best

¹ spec. 30.2.5-5.24.

² sapientissimus Socrates secundum Pythii quoque daemonis suffragium - an 1.5.36-37; Socratem Apollo sapientissimum omnium cecinit - apol 46.5.30-31; omnium Socrates sapientissimus - I nat 4.7.12. Tertullian's references to philosophers are scattered throughout his works, but he dealt systematically with them in an 1-3, apol 46-50 and praes 7-9.

³ At the end of the preface to de anima, which occupies chapters 1 to 3, Tertullian said that the reason for his polemic against philosophy was that philosophers were the spiritual fathers of heretics.

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

Christian wisdom

the foremost of the philosophers

Socrates was pronounced the wisest of men by the voice of the demon who spoke from the Pythian shrine ... Apollo had praised Socrates as (declared Socrates to be) the wisest of all men ... Socrates (he said) was the wisest of men.

what was in fact a corruption and a distortion of God's message to man.

Hunc nacta philosophia ad gloriam propriae artis inflauit prae studio (non mirum, si istud ita dixerim) eloquii quiduis struere atque destruere eruditi magisque dicendo persuadentis quam docendo. Formas rebus imponit, eas nunc peraequat, nunc priuat, de certis incerta praeiudicat, prouocat ad exempla, quasi comparanda sint omnia, omnia praescribit, proprietatibus etiam inter similia diuersis, nihil diuinae licentiae seruat, leges naturae opiniones suas fecit; ferrem, si naturalis ipsa, ut compos naturae de condicionis consortio probaretur. ¹

This is precisely what philosophy refused to do. Philosophers, even the best of them, thought that they could solve, by themselves and without listening for the voice of God, problems which lay beyond the human horizon. That was the gravamen of Tertullian's criticism of the best of paganism; it relied on human reason and human reason alone - and in so doing it corrupted the truth which God had set before all men. The relationship between reason and revelation will be examined in detail in the next section, but it should be noted here that Tertullian's attack on the misleading teaching of the philosophers was not a condemnation of human reason as such, but a condemnation of that misuse of reason which led to heresy.² In other words, to follow human reason, without regard to the voice of God, might lead man to the heights - but it would be to the heights of folly.

¹ an 2.2.7-16.

² By abusing the reason which God had given to them and by exalting their own ideas above all others, philosophers obscured the way to God: siquidem uera quaeque et consonantia prophetis aut aliunde commendant aut aliorum subornant cum maxima iniuria ueritatis, quam efficiunt aut adiuuari falsis aut patriocinari. Hoc itaque commiserit nos et philosophos in ista praesertim materia, quod interdum communes sententias propriis argumentationibus uestiant, contrariis alicubi regulae nostrae - an 2.4.34-5.40. This may have been, in part, Tertullian's reaction against the gnostics, whose claims that knowledge took the place of faith made members of the Church like Tertullian acutely defensive about anything to do with philosophy. as a praeparatio evangelica. If the heretics could found on philosophy, then philosophy must be shown to consist of human speculation rather than revealed truth. Tertullian wished to be free to use philosophy when he wanted to - as shown in the next section - but the fact that philosophers sometimes arrived at the same truths as had been revealed to Christians simply proved the truth of Truth - they were equally likely to be wrong on other occasions and their teaching was no reliable guide to Christian truth.

This good sense has been appropriated by philosophers and, with a view to enhancing that glory of their own profession, they have blown it up to great size (in the context, the expression comes to me quite naturally) straining after that subtlety of expression which is more adapted to tearing down than to building anything up and which is cleverer at persuading men by talking than by teaching. Philosophy invents general laws for things and declares some univervally applicable and some only partially so. She makes uncertainties out of certainties, appeals to examples, as if all things could be compared: she defines anything, allotting different properties to the same objects: she grants nothing to divine power and treats her own private theories as if they were laws of nature. All this I could tolerate if only philosophy were faithful to nature and would admit that it sprang from the same source.

Whatever things are true (in their systems) and in accordance with the teaching of the Prophets, they either claim it was obtained from some other source or else they perversely twist it into some other meaning. They thus pervert the original truth, when they pretend that it is either bolstered by falsehood or that falsehood derives support from it. One of the principal points of difference between philosophers and ourselves in this matter is that they frequently clothe sentiments that are common to both of us in arguments which they themselves have invented, and which are in some respects contrary to our teaching.

preparation for the gospel

Tertullian's indictment of what the ancient world regarded as wisdom was simply a restatement of Paul's argument that the world by wisdom knew not God. The truths of Christianity could neither be evolved from nor understood by the processes of human reason. Their foundation was to be found deep in the heart of every man, but on this foundation the "wisdom" of man had erected a useless structure, which had to be swept away before the truth could be securely laid upon the base. Then, and only then, could man begin to build. It followed that those whom the pagan world regarded as their wisest men and their finest men had misled themselves and others and were considerably further away from God than the simple, the unskilled and the inexperienced who listened to the voice of God, uncluttered by human wisdom:

Sed non eam te aduoco, quae scholis formata, bybliothecis exercitata, academiis et porticibus Atticis pasta sapientiam ructas. Te simplicem et rudem et impolitam et idioticam compello qualem te habent qui te solam habent, illiam ipsam de compito, de triuio, de textrino totam. ¹

That was a theme to which Tertullian returned again and again - nature agreed with Christianity in acknowledging to God, but on no account must 'natural reason' be equated with the alleged wisdom of the philosophers and the poets.

Unlike the Greek apologists, who were ready to find some common basis for ethical criteria and the recognition of truth, Tertullian spent much of his time in correcting the errors of the greatest thinkers of earlier generations. Plato, Aristotle and others may have done their best, but they groped in the darkness. As far as finding God was concerned, the more they relied on human understanding, the further they wandered away from the truth.

Even if their teaching was commendable, Tertullian was ready to criticise their conduct. As will be seen in chapter VIII.3 below, manner of life was as important as belief in establishing a right relationship with God. However exalted the teaching of the best of these pagan moralists, they behaved in ways

¹ test 1.6.42-46.

But I do not summon you in the form in which you give vent to your wisdom when you have been shaped in the schools, trained in libraries, nourished in the Attic Academies and Porches. I address you in your simple, unskilled, unpolished, uneducated form, that is, of such a nature as they have you who have you alone, as you exist in the cross-road, the public square and the workshop.

which incurred the condemnation of Tertullian and which, in his view, estranged them from God. Socrates was a corrupter of youth¹ and allowed his wife to visit another man;² Plato was amor puerorum;³ Diogenes and Speusippus were immoral, ambitious, unchaste, untrustworthy, insincere, extravagant, traitorous; Anaxogoras did not respect a spoken bond; Aristippus, under a mask of austerity, led a life of debauchery.⁴ Chapter 46 of the apologeticum is a catalogue of the moral lapses of one philosopher after another, demonstrating by their conduct that philosophers were powerless to put into practice what they taught: 'doctrinae index disciplina est'. This idea is implicit in every treatise in which Tertullian broached the problems of morality, and he contrasted the lives of philosophers with the integrity of the common Christian, who knew little about philosophy, but who knew the truth about God. In de spectaculis he met the objection that there were upright and good men among the pagans, and yet they went to the theatre; they may have aspired to the good, said Tertullian, but their behaviour (approval of immorality and idolatry) contradicted their profession of high ideals. In the opening paragraph of de pudicitia he compared the best of pagan purity with true (Christian) purity:

nisi quod infelicioꝛ etiaꝛ, si stetisset ut infructuosa, quae non apud Deum egisset. Malim nullum bonum quam uanum. Quid prodest esse, quod non prodest? ⁵

While the text is difficult to follow, the meaning appears to be that even if

¹ lego partem sententiae Atticae in Socratem: corruptor adolescentium pronuntiatur - apol 46.10.48-50.

² Graeci Socratis et Romani Catonis, qui uxores suas amicis communicauerunt - apol 39.12.53-54.

³ Plato quidem non temere philosophorum animabus hoc (= immortalitatem) praestat, sed eorum qui philosophiam scilicet exornauerint amore puerorum. Adeo etiam inter philosophos magnum habet priuilegium impuritas. - an 54.2.7-10.

⁴ apol 46.10.52-16.73.

⁵ pud 1.4.16-19.

a lover of boys

"Apology" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

their conduct is a yardstick of their doctrine

"On the Shows" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

"On Modesty" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

It would have been the more unfortunate, if it had been preserved, for it would have been fruitless in as much as it would have been practiced apart from God. I should prefer no good at all to one which is useless. What is the good of being something which is good for nothing.

I read part of the sentence which the Athenians pronounced on Socrates: he was declared a corrupter of young boys.

the Greek Socrates and the Roman Cato, who shared their wives with their friends

Plato, it is true, does not destine the souls of all to heaven indiscriminately, not even all the philosophers, but only those who have enhanced the philosophic life by the love of boys. Such, indeed, is the great privilege which is accorded to impurity at the hands of philosophers.

pagans practised pudicitia, it would, because non apud deum egisset, do them no good in the sight of God, unless they recognised Him at the same time.

Having misled themselves by the false aggrandisement of their own ideas, philosophers and the other leaders of pagan life then misled others - both the pagans, whom they taught directly¹ and erring Christians, whom they influenced because they were the precursors of heretics²:

Si qua igitur in hunc modum de nidoribus philosophiae candidum et purum aerem ueritatis infuscant, ea erunt Christianis enubilanda et percutientibus argumentationes originales, id est philosophicas, et opponentibus definitiones caelestes, id est dominicas, ut et illa quibus ethnici a philosophia capiuntur, destruantur, et haec quibus fideles ab haeresi concutiuntur, retundantur. 3

If man used his natural faculties as God had intended him to do, putting aside all 'scholarly' ideas on the subject as his relationship to God, he would be rewarded as God responded to Him. What Tertullian was determined to demonstrate was that the highest and best of paganism, when following its own ideals and not the ways God intended, could not bring man into a right relationship with God. Just what part reason could play in the natural man's true relationship to God is examined next.

¹ Chapters 1 and 2 of de anima demonstrated how the philosophers misled the pagans.

² Chapter 3 of de anima extended the argument of chapters 1 and 2, to demonstrate how the philosophers, by being the precursors of the heretics, were a danger to Christians also.

³ an 3.3.18-24.

virtue/modesty

exercised not in the household of God (i.e., practiced apart from God)

(Literally: Accordingly, whatever noxious vapours, exhaled from philosophy, obscure the clear and wholesome atmosphere of truth, it will be for the Christians to clear away...:) = The philosophers with their vaporings becloud the clear sky of truth. These must Christians disperse, both by scattering the teachings of the philosophers about the origin of things and by using the heavenly teachings of the Lord. Thus, the doctrines by which the pagans are deceived and the faith of Christians weakened will be destroyed.

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

VI.6. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN REVELATION AND REASON (INSOFAR AS IT AFFECTED THE NATURAL MAN'S RELATIONSHIP TO GOD)

Tertullian's disavowal of the best of pagan thought as a way of bringing man to a saving relationship with God should not be misinterpreted, as some appear to have done, as a total rejection of human reason in the natural man's quest for God.

There is certainly no suggestion that God could be known by the exercise of human reason. It is true that Tertullian regarded the soul as originating in God and hence naturaliter christiana, but any possibility of communion with Him has been precluded by sin, which man is powerless to eradicate. ¹

If that were true, Tertullian's exhortations to the heathen to search for God with the expectation of finding Him - "Qui audierit, inueniet Deum; qui etiam studuerit intellegere, cogetur et credere" ² - would be meaningless. The point was that what the wise men of this world taught as wisdom was more likely to lead men away from God than to lead them to Him; worldly wisdom should therefore be discounted in so far as it detracted from the promptings of God through nature and the soul. If, however, a man exercised his reason in conformity with the self-revelation of God, God might well to some extent be "known by the exercise of human reason", and, despite man's sin, man could have some limited measure of "communion with Him".

Most discussions about revelation and reason in the works of Tertullian have followed one or other of the following three lines:

- (a) those which attribute to Tertullian the words "credo quia absurdum est", ³ although neither Tertullian nor any other Latin Father used

¹ Gerald Bray, "The Legal Concept", p 111-112.

² Apol 18.9. 40-42.

³ American authors seem particularly prone to attribute these words (erroneously) to Tertullian - the ones which I noted, in general reading, were: Wilhelm Windelband, A History of Philosophy, (New York: MacMillan & Co., 1901) p 225; Benjamin Apthorp Gould Fuller, A History of Philosophy, (New (continued on next page)

naturally Christian

He who listens will find God: he who exerts himself to understand
will also be led to believe.

"I believe it because it is absurd"

exactly that phrase.¹ Such writers see Tertullian as absolutely opposed to reason, the handmaid of philosophy, which was the mother of all heresies.

- (b) those which recognise that Tertullian did not use that particular phrase but which nevertheless claim "credo quia absurdum est" is a fair summary of his attitude,² - that of irreconcilable antagonism between

footnote 3 continued:

York: Henry Holt & Co., 1938) p 336; Robert T. Anderson and Peter B. Fischer, An Introduction to Christianity (New York: Harper & Row, 1966) p 22; Luther H. Harshbarger and John Arthur Maurant, Judaism and Christianity, (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1968) p 152; Clyde Leonard Manschreck, A History of Christianity in the World: from persecution to uncertainty, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1974) p 56. It must, however be confessed that neither British nor Continental scholars are blameless in the matter - e.g. "He (Tertullian) wishes to assert an absolute and radical discontinuity between Christianity and philosophy ... his ultimate Christian confession is the grinding paradox 'I believe it because it is absurd'", Henry Chadwick, Early Christian Thought and the Classical Tradition, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966) p 1-2, and Richard Henry Popkin, The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Descartes, (Assen: Van Gorcum & Co., 1960) p 93.

¹ Just who did originate the phrase I cannot trace, although at one stage I made a fairly thorough search; it does not appear to come into the works of any Latin Father. Certainly as far as Tertullian himself is concerned, all the extant manuscripts of carn 5.4 agree on credibile est, quia ineptum est, with a few adding prorsus before credibile. Prorsus does not appear in the best manuscripts but in any event it would not affect the argument in any significant manner. Prorsus simply means "straight-forwardly" or "immediately" and with it the sentence would translate, 'It is (straight-forwardly) credible because it is unfitting or improper.' The full context of the quotation is "Crucifixus est dei filius; non pudet, quia pudendum est. Et mortuus est dei filius; credibile est, quia ineptum est. Et sepultus resurrexit; certum est, quia impossibile" - carn 5.4.26-29.

² Although Tertullian did not literally say "credo, quia absurdum est", he did (as quoted in full in the previous footnote) say "credibile est, quia ineptum est", and "certum est, quia impossibile". This has led a number of scholars to regard the misquoted phrase as still an apt summary of Tertullian's views - e.g. "Das ihm nachgesagte 'credo, quid absurdum' ist zwar apokryh; aber Tertullian hat ähnlich sich ausgesprochen: Crucifixus ..." (then follows the text of carn 5); Loofs, op. cit., p 118; "Ce n'est pas littéralement le Credo quia absurdum, mais c'en est l'équivalent", G. Bardy, article 'Tertullien' already cited; "Het 'credo quia absurdum' moege dan legendair zijn, het geeft den inhoud van het bovenstaande (credibile est, quia ineptum est) goed weer", G.J. de Vries, Bijdrage tot de psychologie van Tertullianus, (Utrecht: Kemink en zoon, 1929) p 50.

Harry Austryn Wolfson and others, without putting it in words which can be quoted succinctly, said much the same - Wolfson, in The Philosophy of the Church Fathers, (3rd ed.; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), I;

(continued on next page)

"I believe it because it is absurd"

"it is credible because it is unfitting/silly"

straight-forwardly ... credible

The Son of God was crucified; I am not ashamed - because it shameful. The Son of God died: it is credible - because it is unfitting/silly. He was buried, and rose again; it is certain - because it is impossible.

"I believe it because it is absurd"

"it is credible because it is unfitting/silly" "it is certain because it is impossible"

"The saying attributed to him 'I believe what is absurd' is actually apocryphal, but Tertullian has expressed himself similarly:

It is not literally 'I believe because it is absurd', but it is the equivalent of it.

The "I believe it because it is absurd."

Although it may be legendary, it reflects very well the contents of the above. Contribution to the psychology of Tertullian.

natural reason and/or philosophy on the one hand, and the revealed Christian faith on the other,¹ and

- (c) those which maintain it is unfair to Tertullian to take such ideas out of their context and to use them as a total condemnation of reason in the investigation of religious truth; among such writers there have been some very able attempts to demonstrate that Tertullian held reason and revelation in a legitimate balance.²

The literature on the subject is extensive and has recently been surveyed in depth by Fredouille.³ One of the most important points to note for this thesis is that the argument of credibile est, quia ineptum est, and similar ideas expressed in other passages of Tertullian,⁴ were all addressed to heretics, not to pagan

footnote 2 continued:

102-106, and Étienne Henry Gilson, Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages (London: Schribner's 1950; first (American) edition, 1938) p 5-10, repeated in his later work History of Christian Philosophy in The Middle Ages, (New York: Random House, 1955) p 45. Quasten implied the same (op. cit II, 320) as did John Alexander Hutchison, Paths of Faith, (2nd ed.; New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975) p 439 and Ralph M. McInery, A History of Western Philosophy, (Notre Dame: Notre Dame Press, 1970) p 5.

¹ The book most widely quoted in support of Tertullian's supposed "rigorism" with respect to secular culture is Charles Norris Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968; first edition, 1940), especially chapter six. An even more rigorist view was expressed by André Labhardt, "Tertullien et la philosophie ou la recherche d'une position pure", Museum Helveticum, 7 (1950), 159-180, especially at p 176.

² "He tends to be credited with the assertion 'Credo quia absurdum', which he never used. And the passage is frequently invoked to prove his irrationality, or that he viewed religion as the realm of subjective and unreasoning emotion. If that was his true attitude, why did he ever descend to apparently rational argument?": Barnes "Tertullian" p 223. Tertullian is also defended against his critics by Robert H. Ayres, "Tertullian's 'Paradox' and 'Contempt for Reason' Reconsidered", Expository Times, 87 (1976), 308-311, Justo L. González, "Athens and Jerusalem Revisited: Reason and Authority in Tertullian", Church History 43 (1974), 17-25 and F. Refoulé, "Tertullien et la philosophie", Revue des Sciences Religieuses 30 (1956), 42-45.

³ op. cit., pp 326-337.

⁴ To heretics who denied to baptism by water the ability to wash away sins, Tertullian pointed out that simplicity was the true indication of divine works and asked them to believe the more as they understood the less; and to Marcion, who found the humiliations of Christ offensive, Tertullian showed how divine folly triumphed over human wisdom.

"it is credible because it is unfitting/silly"

"Tertullian and Philosophy", or the search for a position free from
taint. (periodical article in "Swiss History Museum")

"Tertullian and Philosophy" (periodical article in Review of Religious
Sciences)

seekers, and were not intended to prove the truth of Christianity to genuine enquirers. The heretics accepted the divinity of Christ, but distorted divine revelation by their peculiar whims of human reason. Tertullian's tone was altogether different when he was debating with pagans, and so this thesis must (not least for reasons of space) be confined strictly to the relationship between revelation and reason insofar as it bears on the relationship of man to God, and only up to the point in man's experience where he made his commitment to the Christian faith. That was, for Tertullian, an important turning point in the legitimate use of human reason in its relationship with divine revelation, the significance of which has not always been appreciated by those who have written in general terms about Tertullian's attitude to reason. He himself emphasised the point in his extended discussion (de praescriptione haereticorum chapters eight to ten) of Jesus' words "seek, and you shall find".¹ That did not (he said) warrant a search at random or an everlasting search, but it did permit a meaningful and free enquiry until such time as the Christian truth had been found. The non-believer should not, however, conduct his search among the heretics, as they themselves did not know the truth. Furthermore (chapter 12), once the Christian truth had been found, there was a very different basis for any further seeking, which could not then proceed on the broad basis of 'seek and you shall find' but which had to be strictly confined within the Rule of Faith. Even then, although Tertullian did not encourage such discussion, he did not condemn it:

Ceterum manente forma eius in suo ordine quantumlibet quaeras et tractes et omnem libidinem curiositatis effundas, si quid tibi uidetur uel ambiguitate pendere uel obscuritate obumbrari: . Nouissime ignorare melius est ne quod non debeas noris quia quod debeas nosti. ²

¹ Numerous attempts were made in the second century to interpret this verse (Mt. 6:7; Lk.11.9). The gnostics claimed that the one who must seek was the ordinary believer, who would find when he had gnosis. Tertullian claimed that the words were addressed to the Jews or to the pagans, but not to Christians, who had 'found' and who had then simply to keep fast what they had come to believe.

² praes 14.1.1-4 and 2.6-7.

"On the Prescription of Heretics" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

Provided the essence of the Rule is not disturbed, you may seek and discuss as much as you like. You may give full rein to your itching curiosity where any point seems unsettled and ambiguous or dark and obscure ... In the last resort, however, it is better for you to remain ignorant for fear that you come to know what you should not know.

Clearly, Tertullian was not speaking in that passage to the heretics, to whose erroneous ideas the treatise was chiefly devoted, but to faithful members of the Church. Even for them, Tertullian did not condemn all speculation, although he remained suspicious about the value for Christians of speculative research; for them it was better simply to hold fast to the regula fidei.

This thesis proceeds on the basis that, for the area covered by this section at any rate, only the third category (above) does justice to Tertullian's thought. He himself had carefully examined the claims of Christianity before committing himself to it and he did not demand less of others. He repeatedly referred to the rational character of the faith which he had adopted, and maintained that for God to have expected faith from rational man, without giving man the rational underpinning of that faith, would (this particularly against Marcion) have been an insult to man's intelligence. He therefore encouraged search and investigation into the credibility of the Christian faith for those who were still outside it, differentiating (as mentioned above) such enquiry from idle speculation after the acceptance of faith, which merely put revealed truth into doubt again. The former had faith as its goal, the latter disbelief.

Cum enim quaerunt adhuc, nondum tenent; cum autem nondum tenent, nondum crediderunt; cum autem nondum crediderunt non sunt christiani . . . Antequam defendant, negant quod credunt confitentur se nondum credidisse dum quaerunt. ¹

(A) THE MUTUAL SUPPORT

The mutual support of reason and revelation was worked out in de testimonio animae and adversus Marcionem, in both of which Tertullian argued that revelation was not the starting point for an understanding of God. Reason was a valid praeambulum fidei, and the Christian should make use of those things which were 'self evident' to human common sense in order to assist the non-Christian to come to faith. To that end, Tertullian frequently quoted Greek philosophers -

¹ praes 14.10.26-19 and 30-32.

the Rule of Faith

For while they are still seeking, they do not yet hold any convictions; and since they do not possess any convictions, they have not yet come to believe; and since they have not yet come to believe, they are not yet Christians....Yes, but before they defend it they deny it, since by their seeking they are confessing that they have not yet believed.

"On the Witness of the Soul" and "Against Marcion" (two of Tertullian's treatises)

preliminary to faith

258

knowing them better than did many of the Greek Fathers - not only to refute heresy (which was his first aim) but to demonstrate to learned pagans, with the assistance of their own literature, the truth of Christianity. For example, he used the beliefs of Zeno to explain the Christian view that the Logos was the Creator of the universe; he made use of Cle^Athes to show that the Spirit was the Creator of the worlds;¹ Christian belief in demons and in angels could be bolstered by reference to similar beliefs in Socrates and Plato.² Norris has shown, in a careful study,³ the extent to which Tertullian used contemporary thought, particularly Middle Platonist philosophy, to explain the Christian faith; Fredouille has to a large extent resolved the apparent dilemma between Tertullian's learning and intellect on the one hand and his condemnation of the misuse of reason on the other. Human reason, properly applied, had a very real place to play in bringing a non-Christian to a true understanding of the Christian faith. There were, for example, beliefs in the popular mind which were far less credible than the Christian faith and Tertullian tried to demonstrate to the outsider that his (Tertullian's) belief in apparently incredible things was both reasonable and rational.

To this end, Tertullian drew analogies between the natural and the supernatural, claiming that they mutually illustrated and confirmed each other. The doctrine of the resurrection of man, for example, was a particular stumbling-block to the heathen, so Tertullian pointed out the analogies of resurrection which were to be found in nature - everywhere new life sprang from dead seed. Nature was therefore a school of God "in which He reached His hand

¹ apol 21.10.44-50.

² apol 22.1.1-2.10.

³ Richard A. Norris, God and World in Early Christian Theology: A Study in Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian and Origen. (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1966) p 99-126.

Word

out to faith" so that the "pupils of nature" could believe more easily what had been revealed to them;¹ divine education guided them in such a way that they had a preparatory school for the great in the little.² In the quest for faith, human reason should therefore be an ally, not an enemy, and Tertullian believed in making as much use as possible of reason to direct the outsider to the acceptance of the Christian faith. In short, unspoiled human reason provided an important, legitimate and valuable approach to the faith, and by it the Christian should be able to show the pagan that faith did not contradict reason. At the same time, Tertullian recognised there were limits to rational argument, and these are examined next.

(B) THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN REASON AND REVELATION

The differences between revelation and reason were worked out by Tertullian in de anima and in de praescriptione haereticorum, where he showed that while human reason might be a useful praeambulum fidei, revelation was essential before man could enter into a correct relationship with God. While Tertullian's contemporary, Clement of Alexandria, teaching in a Hellenistic-Jewish background, saw Greek philosophy as a school-master to bring the Greek mind to Christ, in the same way as the law should have brought the Hebrews,³ Tertullian had little time for the evangelistic value of religion as taught by pagan philosophers and poets. Thales, the founder of physics, had, in spite of more and more time for reflection, never known anything certain to reply to

¹ Praemisit tibi naturam magistratam, summissurus et prophetiam, quo facilius credas prophetiae discipulus ante naturae, - res 12.8.29-31.

² II Marc 5.7.20-28.

³ Clement, teaching in a Hellenistic-Jewish background, saw philosophy as a school master to bring the Greek mind to Christ, in the same way as the law should have brought the Hebrews (Stromateis 1.28). Philosophy was one of the gifts of God to man, at a particular stage in his development, and one of the achievements of the divine Logos was to assist man towards a relationship with God. Tertullian saw things very differently - philosophy as such had nothing to do with bringing a man into a correct relationship to God.

"On the soul" and "On the Prescription of Heretics" (two of Tertullian's treatises)

preliminary to faith

He first gave you nature for a teacher, intending also to add prophecy, so that as previously a disciple of nature, you might the more readily believe prophecy.

Croſus who searched for the deity. Plato asserted that it would not be easy to find the overseer of the world, and if one did find him, it would be difficult to make it known to all. On the other hand, every Christian worker had already found God.¹ The essence of Christianity lay in an historic revelation, embodied now in the Rule of Faith, which had to be accepted by faith and not constructed or even proved by human reason.

Since this section is concerned only with the relationship between revelation and reason in the search of the non-believer for God, it is not appropriate to comment in any detail on the many texts where Tertullian dealt with the dangerous consequences, both for the faithful and for heretics, of purely human speculation. For example, the famous passage in de carne Christi 5.4.² from which the myth of the credo quia absurdum has arisen, is part of an argument against Marcionites and other heretics, not against outsiders or catechumens,³ and the distinction is an important one, as was set out earlier in

¹ apol 46.9.43-47 and II nat 2.4.8-11.

² Three possible attitudes seem to dominate the extensive literature about the interpretation of de carne Christi 5.4. One is to explain it as a rhetorical overstatement, and therefore not to be taken too seriously - "This is one of the most defiant paradoxes in Tertullian, one of the quick, telling sentences in which he does not hesitate to wreck the sense of words in order to make his point. He deliberately exaggerates, in order to call attention to the truth he has to convey". (James Moffatt, "Aristotle and Tertullian", Journal of Theological Studies, 22 (1916), 170. A second attitude is to look in detail into the context, tracing it back to Paul's words in I Corinthians 1: 23-24 about Christ crucified, foolishness to the gentiles but to the believer the power and wisdom of God, and to see the phrase simply as an extension of Pauline thought. González (op. cit.) wrote: "If one is to claim that the common interpretation of Tertullian typified by the 'credo, quia absurdum' is incorrect, this must be done, not by simply asserting that he never did say such a thing - as a matter of fact, he practically did - but by showing, to begin with, that this text, placed in its proper context and correctly understood, intends to convey neither a sweeping condemnation of reason, nor a general praise of absurdity," (p 19) and González proceeded to do just that in a most stimulating article. The third attitude is to take the aphorism at face value and to see in it evidence that Tertullian was biased against philosophy and reason. "Paradoxe choquant pour l'esprit qui raisonne, mais que le contexte interdit absolument d'attenuer." (Labhardt, op. cit p 177).

³ In chapters 4 and 5 of de carne Christi, Tertullian set out to prove to Marcion and certain other heretics that the incarnation of Christ was neither
(continued on next page)

"On the Flesh of Christ" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

I believe because it is absurd

A disturbing paradox for the reasoning mind, but one that the context absolutely forbids us to moderate

this section. Likewise, in the context of de praescriptione haereticorum, Tertullian obviously expected the answer 'nothing' to his rhetorical question about the relationship between Athens and Jerusalem,¹ but he himself drew substantial benefit, if not from Athens, at least from Ephesus, because he borrowed extensively from Soranus of Ephesus in composing his own work de anima.² Furthermore, Tertullian cannot have been unaware that when Paul was preaching on Mars Hill in Athens, he took a verse from the Stoic poet Aratus as a text from which to proclaim the fatherhood of God. This Stoic doctrine (like many others to which Paul referred in his writings) was treated by Paul as embodying an elementary truth, and as a starting-point for fuller knowledge. Tertullian adopted precisely the same approach himself, and made a very similar use of Stoic thought when, in de testimonio animae, he demonstrated how the soul of man could witness to the Christian truth.

The importance of Stoic influence on Tertullian at this point was developed in detail by Lortz, in a chapter which began as follows:

Dass die aus dem Kosmos gewonnene Gotteserkenntnis eine unvollkommene sei, dass dagegen die wünschenswerte Vollkommenheit erst durch direkten Verkehr mit Gott erreicht werden könne, ist eine in der Stoa seit Poseidonius weit verbreitete Erkenntnis. Eine ähnliche Steigerung erfährt die natürliche Gotteserkenntnis des Christen durch die direkten und ausdrücklichen Mitteilungen, die Gott den Menschen in der Offenbarung gegeben hat. T. hat es unmissverständlich und mit allem Nachdruck ausgesprochen, dass ihm die Offenbarung unendlich höher stehe als die rein natürliche Erkenntnis, die Gottes Wesen immer nur undeutlich, wie aus der Ferne erkennt . . . 3.

If, then, Tertullian believed in the mutual support of revelation and

footnote 3 continued:

unbefitting nor undignified. His argument, while indirectly dealing with revelation and reason, does not bear on the use of reason for the non-Christian - he was arguing with heretics who should have accepted certain doctrines as matter of revelation, not looked for reasons for the m. The position of enquirers after the Christian faith was altogether different, as this section endeavours to show.

¹ praes 7.9.32-33.

² As set out on p 227 above, footnote 1.

³ Lortz; op. cit., I, 248.

"On the Prescription of Heretics" (one of Tertullian's works)

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's works)

"On the witness of the Soul" (one of Tertullian's works)

That the understanding of God, obtaining from the cosmos, is incomplete, that, contrary to this, the desired perfection can only be arrived at through direct intercourse with God, is an understanding in the Stoa wide-spread since Poseidonius. The natural understanding of God of the Christian experiences a similar increase through the direct and explicit information which God has given man in revelation. Tertullian has stated unmistakably and emphatically that, in his opinion, revelation stands infinitely higher than the purely natural understanding which always recognises God's essence indistinctly, as if from a distance...

reason and yet at the same time was aware of their differences, how did he relate them to each other in the quest of the natural man for God?

(C) THE BALANCE FOUND IN THE REGULA FIDEI

Attention has often been drawn to the apparent inconsistency between Tertullian's denunciation of the reasoning of the philosophers, and his own frequent use of human reason and philosophical ideas, when it suited his purpose.¹ Any apparent inconsistencies between Tertullian's disapproval of philosophy and his own use of it are reconciled by reference to the principle that he himself laid down - idque dumtaxat quod salua regula fidei potest in quaestionem deuenire.² It was permissible for Christians to claim the support of popular reason and popular ideas so long as these were in accordance with the Rule of Faith and not in opposition to it. Any contrary ideas, however widespread or plausible, had to be rejected.³ The enquirer after Christianity would find that Rule of Faith did contain certain articles which could not be known or established by natural reason; indeed from the human point of view, they might seem absurd - "Stulta mundi elegit deus, ut confundat sapientia."⁴ Such beliefs had, however, to be accepted by faith, before a man could become a Christian, no matter how irrational they might seem to be.

¹ But Tertullian blamed the philosophers for abusing their intelligence, not for using it. He himself used philosophical weapons against the philosophers - e.g. Ayers, op. cit. p 309, "A reading of the Tertullian corpus will demonstrate that his treatises are full of such philosophical, linguistic and logical arguments", and on the whole matter see Evans, "Resurrection", p xix, Sider, op. cit. and another work of Ernest Evans, not previously cited, Tertullian's Treatise on the Incarnation, (London: S.P.C.K. 1956) p x.

² praes 12.5.12-13.

³ Communes enim sensus simplicitas ipsa commendat et compassio sententiarum et familiaritas opinionum, eoque fideliores existimantur, quia nuda et aperta et omnibus nota definiunt; ratio autem, diuina in medulla est, non in superficie, et plerumque aemula manifestis - res 3.6.28-32.

⁴ carn 4.5.40-41.

and let us seek only what can come into question without disloyalty to the Rule of Faith.

"God has chosen the foolish things of the world, that he may put to shame the things that are wise."

collection of works

For popular ideas are commended by their very simplicity and by the agreeableness of their pronouncements and the familiarity of the thoughts, and are considered the more trustworthy in that they define things open and apparent and generally known: whereas divine reason is in the marrow, not on the surface, and is frequently in opposition to things as they seem.

The true source of all knowledge was the Scriptures; the proximate source was the Rule of Faith, which embodied the authentic teaching of the Scriptures in a form guaranteed both by its historical origins and by the common assent of the churches through the world. The relationship between the Rule of Faith and the Scriptures was not expressly worked out by Tertullian or indeed by anyone of his time;¹ for all practical purposes, the Rule of Faith provided both the framework and the limit for human speculation and reason. Within it there was a place for human reason, drawing conclusions from and expanding on the revealed truth; beyond it no one might go.

Sed omnis inaequalitas sententiae humanae usque ad dei terminos. In nostras iam lineas gradum colligam, ut quod philosophis medicisque respondi, Christiano probem. De tuo, frater, fundamento fidem aedifica 2

Ceterum manente forma eius in suo ordine quantumlibet quaeras et tractes et omnem libidinem curiositatis effundas, si quid tibi uidetur uel ambiguitate pendere uel obscuritate obumbarari: 3

infinitas enim quaestiones apostolus prohibet. Porro non amplius inueniri licet quam quod a deo discitur; quod autem a deo discitur, totum est. 4

si quid de anima examinandum est, ad dei regulas diriget, certa nullum alium potius animae demonstratorem quam auctorem. A deo discat quod a deo habeat, aut nec ab alio, si nec a deo. Quis enim reuelabit quod deus texit? Vnde sciscitandum est? Vnde et ignorare tutissimum est. Praestat per deum nescire, quia non reuelauerit, quam per hominem scire, quia ipse praesumpserit. 5.

¹ Heinrich Karpp set out the relationship as he understood it in Tertullian in the lengthy and useful section "Die Bedeutung der Glaubensregel für die Schriftauslegung" of his book "Schrift und Geist bei Tertullian", (Gutersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1955) pp32-46.

² an 26.1.1-4.

³ praes 14.1.1-4.

⁴ an 2.7.68-71.

⁵ an 1.6.50-56.

"But all this confusion of (merely) human opinions (only) extends to the limits of (the word of) God" (i.e. "ceases to matter as soon as we come to Holy Scripture".) Hence, I shall withdraw within our boundaries and there make a stand so that I may prove to the Christian the answer I have given to the philosophers and physicians. Build your faith, my brother, on the foundation that is yours!

Provided the essence of the Rule is not disturbed, you may seek and discuss as much as you like. You may give full rein to your itching curiosity where any point seems unsettled and ambiguous or dark and obscure.

The Apostle has forbidden us to indulge in endless questions. We can learn no more about the soul than God has revealed and His revelation is the sum and substance of the whole matter.

let us study the question in accordance with the teachings of God, sure that no one can tell us more of the soul than its Creator. Learn from God about that which you have received from God: if you don't learn it from God, you never will from anyone else. For, who can reveal what God has concealed? Whom would we ask? If we are ignorant, let us be content. It is safer and better to be ignorant, if God has not revealed it, than to know something which human presumption has discovered.

"The Meaning of the Rule of Faith for the Interpretation of Scripture"
(part of a book entitled) "Scripture and Spirit in Tertullian."

(D) CONCLUSIONS FOR THIS SECTION

The relationship between revelation and human reason¹ in Tertullian's thought has been much discussed and some very strange conclusions have been reached. McGiffert, for example, believed that Tertullian opposed revelation and reason in order to make faith meritorious simply because it was unreasonable,² Neve, working along the same line, thought that faith would become stronger if it was forced to accept the rationally unbelievable,³ and Phillips, "On Rereading Tertullian", wrote, "What is faith but the accepting of teachings that seem incredible? The harder they are to believe the more merit in your faith."⁴

Whether or not these statements are justified for the relationship between revealed truth and human reason in so far as it affected the Christian believer and the heretic is outside the scope of this enquiry. It does, however, seem clear that Tertullian's apologetic literature was, with rare exceptions, addressed to the intellect of the reader. Tertullian was not calling the non-Christian to a sacrificium intellectus,⁵ but only to an appropriate limitation of

¹ This section has been (perhaps artificially) restricted to the relationship between revelation and the use of the human mind. Clearly the innate testimony of the soul and the impact of nature were important elements in man's relationship with God, but to avoid repetition, they are not covered again here. Tertullian's arguments for a knowledge of God and certain of his attributes based on the evident of the soul and from nature, were examined in detail in chapter V, sections five and six respectively.

² "The more unreasonable it appears to us, so Tertullian seems to think the greater the merit of our faith", McGiffert, op. cit., p 16.

³ "Faith is consent in a state of absolute obedience. The more unreasonable the articles of faith are, the more opportunity there is for faith to develop its strength", J.L. Neve, A History of Christian Thought, (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1946) p 43.

⁴ George Phillips, "On Rereading Tertullian", Congregational Quarterly, 28 (1950), 237.

⁵ The phrase of the Zurich psychologist C.G. Jung, Types Psychologiques, (Geneva: 1958) pp 16-17.

intellectual suicide

the intellectual hubris of man, according to whatever God Himself was saying, whether through the specific teaching of the Christian faith or (for those not in contact with Christians or without access to the Scriptures) through nature or through man's own soul. What the enquirer had to realise was that even if he followed the Scriptures where they led, he would have to be aided by divine grace, and would have to be led beyond human understanding, before ever he could come into a saving relationship with God. Analogies from nature, however, made it possible for man to enjoy a deeper understanding of the Faith and a deeper insight into God's plan of salvation. Christianity embraced a range of truth which surpassed man's natural ability to understand it, but it did not contradict it; it was precisely in this "something other" that the work of salvation consisted.

The inability of the natural man to comprehend divine truth was no reason for discouraging some rational investigation into the faith before the enquirer was called upon to accept it, so long as the enquiry was conducted within the terms of the Rule of Faith. Reason and revelation should therefore not be made to stand in opposition to each other, but be put in a working relationship to each other. The revelation of God, brought by Jesus Christ, transmitted through the apostles and the churches and embodied in the Rule of Faith, was a perfect revelation; the rational faculty in man was implanted by God, who was Himself rational. Stemming as they both did from the one divine source, they should stand in harmonious relationship to each other. If one takes certain passages out of Tertullian's writings, and especially if one takes them out of context and with no respect for their individuality, it could be concluded that Tertullian despised philosophy and banished reason completely for Christian truth - but that would be a most erroneous conclusion. Tertullian had a real sense of the supra-rational, yet not irrational, nature of revelation. Reason could support but could not judge faith; the only real criterion of truth was the revelation of God.

What, then, was the position of the man who lacked normal intelligence or understanding? That is examined next.

insolence (in the sense of unrestrained strength/uncontrolled power

VI.7 INTELLECTUAL INCAPACITY

Although Tertullian has left no specific teaching about the relationship to God of those affected by mental illness, (either full insanity or diminished responsibility¹) certain deductions can be drawn from what he wrote about the relationship of man to God in dreams and in ecstasy (amentiae instar²), and what he wrote about the relationship of animus to anima. Before these are examined, note should be taken of the fundamental and oft-repeated contention of Tertullian, that God looked not only at man's outward actions but also at his heart, and judged accordingly. Because of the nature of the soul, and the wiles of the devil, every man would in some way fall short of the standards of God, sciens volens or otherwise; nevertheless, it was the prerogative of God to search the heart of man and to see whether or not an objectively sinful act had stemmed from a subjectively sinful motive. (In the same way, it was the prerogative of God to give man no credit for an objectively good act which was done for a wrong motive.³)

¹ The main areas, apart from those taken up in this section, where Tertullian dealt with insanity, are: (a) where he defended the reliability of the senses against various philosophers, whose arguments that illusions demonstrated the unreliability of sense-perception, endangered Tertullian's teaching on the unity of the soul. Under reference to Orestes, the classic example of madness, Tertullian showed that illusions were the result of insanity of mind or mental illness, not the unreliability of the senses - Qui insaniunt, alios in aliis uident, ut Orestes matrem in sorore et Ajax Vlixen in armento, ut Athamas et Agaue in filiis bestias. Oculis hoc mendacium exprobrabis, an furiis? - an 17.9.55-57; (b) where he attributed it to the influence of demons on the priests of Apollo who used to drink the water from Colophon before prophesying - aut lymphaticos efficit Colophonis scaturigo daemonica - an 50.3.15-16.

² an 45.3.13. Tertullian stated in an 45:5.25 that ecstasis was not real insanity, but only an image of it - a withdrawing of sense-perception, not a shattering of the mind - because he was talking in that chapter about dreams and complete amentia would have annihilated the recollection of dreams. Elsewhere, where the context did not prevent it, Tertullian called ecstasy simply amentia, an 21.2.11 and V Marc 8.12.22, in ecstasi, id est in amentia.

³ As will be seen from the texts dealing with paenitentia in chapter VIII.3.

an image of insanity

spirit - soul

knowingly and willingly

Madmen think they see other people than they really do: Orestes looks at his sister and thinks she is his mother; Ajax sees Ulysses in the slaughtered cattle; Athamas and Agave see wild beasts in their children.

at Colophon the waters of a fountain, through diabolical influence, make men mad.

ecstasy

insanity

in ecstasy, that is in madness

repentance

Homo in faciem, Deus in praecordia contemplatur. Et ideo cognoscit Dominus qui sunt eius, 1

Si et adicit: scit autem deus corda uestra, illius dei uim commemorabat, qui lucernam se pronuntiarat scrutantem renes et corda. 2

Deus autem non uocis, sed cordis auditor est, sicut conspector. 3

Neque enim, si mediocritas humana facti solummodo iudicat quia uoluntatis latebris par non est, idcirco etiam crimina eius etiam sub deo neglegamus. Deus in omnia sufficit; nihil a conspectu eius remotum unde omnino delinquitur. 4

Si enim scrutatorem et dispectorem cordis deum legimus, si etiam prophetae eius occulta cordis traducendo probabatur, si deus ipse recogitatus cordis in populo praeuenit: quid cogitatis in cordibus uestris nequam? si et Daud: cor mundum conde in me deus, et Paulus corde ait credi in iustitiam, et Iohannes corde ait suo unumquemque reprehendi, si postremo qui uiderit feminam ad concupiscendum, iam adulterauit in corde, 5

Sed nec omnia opera optima cum carnis ministerio anima partitur; nam et solos cogitatus et nudas uoluntates censura diuina persequitur. Qui uiderit ad concupiscendum, iam adulterauit in corde. 6

These last two quotations link Tertullian's general teaching of God as the searcher of hearts with Tertullian's specific and frequent reference to Matthew 5.28 in order to demonstrate that a lustful look was not only seen by God but was regarded by Him as the equivalent of the act of adultery.⁷

From Tertullian's teaching about the relationship of man to God in dreams, certain parallels can be drawn to give an answer to the question of the relationship to God of the insane and the intellectually impaired.

¹ praes 3.7.20-8.21.

² IV Marc 33.6.18-20.

³ orat 17.2.8-9.

⁴ paen 3.9.35-10.39.

⁵ an 15.4.21-30.

⁶ an 58.6.33-36.

⁷ an 15.4.28-30 (just quoted); an 40.4.21-23; an 58.6.35-36; II cult 2.4.25-26; ex 9.12.11-13; idol 2.2.25-3.30; paen 3.13.50-53; pud 6.6.26; res 15.4.12-16.

Man looks on the outward appearance, God looks on the heart. And for that reason the Lord sees and knows who are His.

And as he says next, But God knows your hearts; this was a reference to the power of that God who declared Himself a shining light, searching the reins and the hearts.

But God is not one who heeds the voice; rather, it is the heart which He hears and beholds.

For even though human short-sightedness considers no sins wrong but those of deed, being incapable of penetrating the coverts of the will, we should not, on this account, ignore sins of the will, as God sees them. God is all-sufficient; nothing which causes sin in any way escapes.

For when we read that God is the searcher and examiner of the heart; for when His prophet, to whom God has revealed the secrets of the heart, is approved; for when God Himself shows that He knows the workings of men's hearts; 'Why do you think evil in your hearts? For when David prayed: 'Create a clean heart in me, O God' and St. Paul said 'with the heart we believe unto righteousness', and St. John said 'by his own heart is each man condemned'; finally, when Christ Himself said: 'Whosoever shall look upon a woman to lust after her, has already committed adultery with her in his heart,' ...

But, during life, the soul does not share all its operations with the flesh, for in God's judgment even secret thoughts and unfulfilled volitions can be accounted sinful. "Whosoever shall look on a woman to lust after her, has already committed adultery with her, in his heart."

Denique et bona facta gratuita sunt in somnis et delicta secure; non magis enim ob stupri uisionem damnabimur quam ob martyrii coronabimur. ¹

That in itself does not prove that a man, whose mental faculties were impaired, did not sin, because in the apologeticum ² Tertullian asserted there were four ways in which sin could be committed - by evil thoughts, by desires, by words and by deeds. If, by virtue of mental incapacity (and on the analogy of dreams) a man was not held responsible for his thoughts and his desires, any more than a man was held responsible by God for his dreams, he could still sin in word and in deed. Since, however, God looked on the heart, it may well be that, if Tertullian had been asked about the responsibility to God of those who, by virtue of intellectual incapacity, were permanently unaccountable as masters of themselves, he would have replied that God did not hold them accountable for their actions, any more than He held them accountable for their thoughts and desires. Certainly, Tertullian did draw a distinction between voluntary and involuntary sins, and from that it seems a reasonable inference that he believed the absence of subjective guilt could excuse a man from the consequences of an objectively sinful act.

As examined in chapter IV and in particular in section five of it, Tertullian recognised a state of innocence of soul even although the soul was affected by original sin and the body had begun to commit objectively sinful deeds. What then was the relationship between an impaired mind and its soul, and where did the ultimate responsibility lie for man's relationship with God? In de anima chapters 12 and 13 and again in chapter 18, Tertullian argued that the mind (animus or mens) was a power proper to the soul, through which it acted and thought, but that the soul must always take precedence:

¹ an 45.4.21-23.

² apol 36.4.15-16. Male velle, male facere, male dicere, male cogitare.

In our dreams, any good actions we perform are without merit and our crimes are blameless. We will no more be condemned for debauchery committed in a dream than we will be crowned for dreaming we were martyrs.

"Apology" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

spirit or mind

to desire evil, to do evil, to speak evil, to think evil of anyone -
(all are equally forbidden to us).

non aliud quid intellegimus quam suggestum animae ingenitum et insitum et natiuitus proprium, quo agit, quo sapit, 1

Videmus autem nihil istorum animam experiri, ut non et animo deputetur, quia per illum et cum illo transigatur. 2

In other words, the mind was the faculty by which sense-data was fed into the soul and through which the soul acted but ultimately the soul, not the mind, was the part of man responsible to God. The mind was never an independent substance - as was examined in chapter I.6 - but only a function of the soul, as Tertullian demonstrated in de anima chapter 13, first from everyday speech, then from philosophical and medical works, and finally from Holy Scripture. Close though the relationship might be, it was ultimately the soul which was answerable to God, not the mind:

Habes animae principalitatem, habes in illa et substantiae unionem, cuius intellegas instrumentum esse animum, non patrociniū. 3

That being so, the sanity or insanity of the mind was only one, but not necessarily the determinative factor, in the relationship of the soul to God. It was certainly an important factor as Tertullian expressly recognised:

Nam et cum dementit homo, anima dementit non peregrinante, sed compatiēte tunc animo - ceterum animae principaliter casus est. 4

If Tertullian recognised other conditions where a man could be without control over himself - such as ecstasy and dreams - and if in these situations a man was not to be praised or blamed for his thoughts and (in dreams) his supposed deeds, it would seem to follow that God would not hold a man responsible for his thoughts or his deeds while committed during periods of insanity or intellectual incapacity. The man would presumably be judged by God on the same basis as children below the age of fourteen⁵ who had no sapientia of good or evil.

¹ an 12.1.2-3.

² an 12.4.27-29.

³ an 13.3.18-20.

⁴ an 18.9.76-78. The use of ceterum at the beginning of the closing phrase is presumably to contrast it with the preceding words compatiēte .. animo: i.e. " ... the mind suffering with the soul, but (though the mind also suffers), it is the soul which is wrecked in the first place".

⁵ Chapter IV.5 above.

By 'mind' I mean merely that faculty which is inherent and implanted in the soul and proper to it by birth and by which the soul acts and gains knowledge.

But, we see that the soul experiences none of these things unless the mind is also affected, for it is the mind which really effects all these things.

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

Therefore, we may conclude that the soul is superior, and to it the mind is united with the mind as servant (instrument) and not as master (ruling power).

When a man is insane, it is the soul which is mad, not because the mind is absent but because it is the fellow sufferer of the soul. In fact, the soul is the principal sufferer in such a contingency.

discernment

indeed/in fact

a fellow-sufferer with the soul

VI.8 ROMAN LAW FOR THIS AREA

Four of the sections of this chapter have included phrases or concepts familiar to Roman law, and these must now be examined. In section two, it was established that Tertullian was a firm believer in the freedom of the human will. The underlying ethos of Roman law was the belief that men were under obligation to obey the law and that, if they failed to do so, they deserved punishment. Subject to that, they were free to choose whether they would obey or not. That is precisely the attitude of Tertullian toward the relationship of the natural man to God. To a variety of prima facie legal terms, he gave a religious or moral meaning; every man was, in the sight of God, liber, a free man, not a slave with a determined destiny; every adult was sui arbitrii, his own master, not a minor under tutelage; every man was suae potestatis, under his own control, not like a wife in manu et potestate uiri. On the other hand, the free-will of which he spoke was, as Tertullian himself set out, a common philosophic conception, no doubt underlying the Roman law but certainly much wider than Roman jurisprudence; secundum communem autem opinionem prouidentia et fatum et necessitas et fortuna et arbitrii libertas. Nam haec et philosophi distinguunt, et nos secundum fidem disserenda suo iam uouimus titulo.¹ Indeed, while arbitrium was a word of Roman law,² it is its wider sense of 'power' or 'authority' that reflects in Tertullian's expression liberum arbitrium.³

Reference was made, in the corresponding section of the last chapter, to the use which Tertullian made of court procedure to authenticate the testimony of the soul. Similar use of rhetorical (court) argument was noted by Sider in

¹ an 20.5.34-38.

² A judgment in equity concerning not the fact of obligation but the amount: "iudicium est pecuniae certae, arbitrium incertae", Cicero, Pro Rosc. Com. 4.10.

³ e.g. "rei Romanae arbitrium"; Tacitus, Annales VI.51.

spirit

on the face of it

free

his own master

under his own control

under the control and authority of her husband

In the view of ordinary men they are: providence, fate, necessity, fortune, and free will. The philosophers use all these terms; for my part, I have already written a special treatise on fate in the light of our faith

choice/judgment/decision/authority/power

free choice/free-will

A judgment deals with a definite sum, arbitration with an indefinite sum.

Cicero: Speech in defence of Quintus Roscius, the comedian.

Arbiter of the Roman world.

Tacitus: Annals

Tertullian's defence of the Creator against the charge of responsibility for man's sin:

His reply is an adept treatment of the familiar rhetorical themes of motive, responsibility, and rewards and punishments. He will not allow the responsibility to be shifted from man to God, since man was able to act as a free agent. Against the charge that God is guilty of a criminal act both in creating man free and then failing to prevent man's crime, he employs the topic of motive (causa, 6.1). God acted then for a worthy end - man's own interest. It was in man's own interest to be created with liberty of will because only thus could he merit the reward of good, or, if necessary, of evil (6.7). Significantly, we find in these chapters the appropriate language of the courts. For example, in 6-8 man, or rather man's will, is called the 'defendant' in the case: Denique et bonitas dei a primordio operum perspecta persuadebit nihil a deo mali evenire potuisse, et libertas hominis recognitata se potius ream ostendet eius, quod ipsa commisit; and again in 7.4, Ipsa (man) legi reus fuisset ... Aut legislator ipse fraudem legi suae faceret, non sinendo praescriptum eius impleri. ¹

Section three showed the extent to which the natural man was accountable to God, and at first sight there might appear to be legal imagery in the juxtaposition, in the apologeticum ² of the trial before the magistrate and the trial apud Deum iudicem:

"quas demerendo sibi disciplinas determinauerit, quae ignoratis et desertis et observatis his praemia (Deus) destinarit: ut qui prodacto aevo isto iudicaturus sit suos cultores in uitae aeternae restitutionem, profanos in ignem aequae perpetem et iugem, suscitatis omnibus ab initio defunctis, et reformatis et recens ad utriusque meriti disputationem." ³

Closer investigation, however, will show that Tertullian was contrasting, not comparing, the Roman law with the position of the natural man before God. The trial of the unbeliever before God would proceed on a very different basis from the trial of the Christian before the magistrate. At last, merita would be relevant to the judgment, and no longer (as in the case of Christians on trial for their faith) would veritas and innocentia be condemned. Tertullian served notice to the heathen that in that other iudicium, in which the pagans would be on trial,

¹ Sider, op. cit., p 81-82.

² apol 1.2; 17.6; 23.13; 39.4; 41.3.

³ apol 18.3.12-17.

motive

To conclude, God's goodness, brought into full view since the beginning of his works, will give assurance that from God no evil can have proceeded: while the man's freedom, if taken full account of, will prove that itself, and not God, was guilty of that which itself committed ... The man himself would be guilty before the law ... There could be no question of the Lawgiver infringing his own law by preventing its conditions from being carried out. You would with good right ... (II Marc 6.8.67 and 7.4.12 + 13-14)

"Apology" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

before God as judge.

What regulations has He prescribed for placing men under obligation to Himself! What recompense has He determined for those who are ignorant of those regulations/laws, those who neglect them, and those who observe them; for, after the present life is ended, He will sit as Judge, and His worshippers He will repay with life eternal, and the profane He will condemn to fire as perpetual and unceasing.

Then, all those who have died from the beginning of time will be revived. Their bodies will be reformed. There will be a general review, and everyone will be examined according to his own merits.

the merits of the case

truth and innocence

judicial investigation

the criteria of human judgment would be reversed - cum damnamur a uobis, a Deo absoluimur - and with that he closed his apologeticum.

Of greater significance for this study is Tertullian's regular use of delictum for 'sin', as opposed to the more common word 'peccatum', and his creation of a new word, delinquentia, for 'sinfulness'. The Thesaurus Linguae Latinae ascribed this latter word to the Itala, (Romans 6.1-2) but that can hardly be right, because apart from Tertullian, the Thesaurus cited the word only in Faustinus and Maximus Taurus.¹ If the word had been in the Itala, it would surely have survived, either in the Vulgate or in one of the writers who preferred the Itala to the Vulgate. However that may be, Tertullian preferred delictum to peccatum and delinquere to peccare, not only in discussions of his own phrasing but also in citing scriptural quotations; one counts, in all of his works, 89 occurrences of delinquere and 250 of delictum, against 17 of peccare and 35 of peccatum. It seems to be commonly assumed that Tertullian preferred delictum because it was a word of Roman law which expressed an offence against a person, not against a law, and that Tertullian found it useful (in contrast to the more general peccatum) to express sin as a breach of personal relationship with God. Thus:

the term seems to be used in its legal sense, with a general application to all cases where a defendant asks pardon of the plaintiff or seeks the indulgence of the court. In the succeeding sentences its sense is restricted to offences against God, and it means 'sin', as commonly in ecclesiastical writers. A tort, delictum, is a wrong done not to the state or to society, but to a person: which makes it an appropriate word for offences against God, who is personal in himself and condescends to enter into personal relations with men.²

With respect to Evans, it may be questioned whether Roman law is necessarily the influence on Tertullian here. In the Vetus Latina, delictum is Paul's regular

¹ vol. V (1910) column 458.

² Ernest Evans, Tertullian's Tract on The Prayer, (London: S.P.C.K., 1953) p 50.

when we are condemned by you, we are acquitted by God

"Apology" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

fault/offence/trespass/crime/transgression/wrong/defect

sin/fault/error/mistake/transgression

sinfulness

Treasury (Encyclopaedia) of the Latin Language

fault - sin - to fail - to sin

Old Latin Translation of Scripture

word for 'sin', and its use there is practically limited to Paul alone. Might not Tertullian have been attracted to Paul's expression of the relationship of the sinner, as guilty before God, and so have used Paul's word for sin? Certainly when Tertullian was dealing with the letter to the Romans, he constantly used delinquentia, although on occasion he changed to peccatum. Once more, it is probably not possible to be certain whether Tertullian expressed the relationship of man to God in terms of Roman law or in terms of some other influence, but at least the question-mark is there and makes one hesitate to be dogmatic about Tertullian's thought. It may be of relevance to the conclusions of this chapter to note that both delictum and peccatum (which appear to be interchangeable in Tertullian) have the implication of culpa, as delictum did in pagan usage.¹

Finally, in respect of the third section, note should be taken of Tertullian's statement that man had no excuse before God - no exceptio: Cum autem etiam ignorantes dominum nulla exceptio tueatur a poena, quia deum in aperto constitutum et uel ex ipsis caelestibus bonis comprehensibilem ignorari non licet.² Exceptio, in legal terminology, was a plea by the defence, alleging a circumstance which barred a claim without denying its prima facie validity.³ Man had no such defence before God.

Regarding section four, and when man was accountable to God, there is one significant sentence in the adversus Marcionem: Venio nunc ad ordinarias sententias eius, per quas proprietem doctrinae suae inducit, ad edictum, ut ita dixerim, Christi:

¹ Thesaurus Linguae Latinae

² paen 5.4.12-15.

³ Buckland, op. cit., p 653 ff, Stirnman, op. cit., p 17-20.

sinfulness - sin

fault

sin

blame/guilt

exception/restriction/limitation:

But since there is no excuse which saves man from punishment even when they know not the Lord - for ignorance of God is not excusable, since He is set plainly before men and can be known through the very gifts we have received from heaven - how much more perilous it is to despise Him once He is known.

on the first view

"Against Marcion" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

I come next to those customary judgments by which he builds up his own special doctrine, what I may call the magisterial Edict of Christ:

"beati mendici." ¹ Tertullian seems to imply, by his reference to the edictum of Christ, that the principle on which mankind would be judged by God at the day of judgment (the beatitudes and woes of the Gospel) would be applied in the manner of the perpetual edict of the praetor. Certainly Tertullian was of the view that no wrong should go unpunished, and while Roman law had no concern with punishment which was wholly future, Tertullian demonstrated that the whole human race lay under the condemnation of God for its guilt, and the way of salvation was conceived largely as escape from the punishment due to sin.

The seventh section of the chapter dealt with intellectual impairment, a subject treated extensively in Roman law because diminished responsibility was (then as now) one of the facts of life, and legal systems have to provide for it. Physical defects also could give rise to legal incapacity (for instance, the deaf (surdi), the mute (muti), or deaf and dumb (surdi et muti), but Tertullian made no reference to such affecting the relationship of man to God and they are not covered in this chapter except in so far as deafness might affect the capacity to understand.

A person's responsibility for legal acts might be limited or qualified, either wholly or partially, by the mental condition of the individual. This might be due to tenderness of age and consequent inexperience (which was covered in chapter III.6 above) or to actual mental unsoundness, which was the subject of section seven of this chapter. Roman law seems to have made distinctions, though not very clearly marked, between the dangerous (furiosi), who had lost all intellectual faculties; the demented (mente capti), in whom certain faculties were wanting; imbeciles (dementes) and the prodigal (prodigi). The legal incapacity of the insane was absolute. Such persons were regarded as having no will of their own and were incapable of incurring any obligations involving consent; they entirely lacked understanding (intellectus) and judgment (iudicium),

¹ IV Marc 14. 1.1-3.

"Blessed are the indigent"

Edict

Chief Magistrate

deaf - mute - deaf and dumb

full of madness/raging/furious

demented/insane

out of one's senses/foolish/distrated

spendthrift

understanding - judgment

and so were not accountable for their actions. A person suffering from insanity might have periods of clear and normal mental conditions, known in modern phraseology as "lucid intervals" and Roman Law recognised that valid legal acts might be performed and obligations be incurred and consent be given during such periods. No doubt Tertullian would have applied just such criteria to the capacity of the intellectually impaired to have a relationship with God, but since he did not refer to the matter at all, it is scarcely appropriate to pursue the point any further here.

VI.9 CONCLUSIONS FROM CHAPTER SIX

The theme of this chapter has been the accountability of the natural man to God. He was accountable because he was free to enter into a correct relationship with God (and to receive the benefits of that) or to reject God's initiative toward all men (and to take the consequences). Against Marcion's criticism of the Creator and against gnostic determinism, Tertullian stressed man's freedom from both external coercion and inner compulsion. He had, however, to be careful not to imply that some men rejected God just because they were free to do so, as if there was some necessary connection between human freedom and evil. God had (as Tertullian put it to Marcion) left "elbow-room for battle", so that man could knock his enemy (the devil) to the ground and thus furnish proof that the guilt was his and not God's. Tertullian's point, as established in the second section of the chapter, was that any man who rejected God did so in exercise of the free choice given as a right by God to all mortal beings.

That very freedom, or rather the misuse of it, made man accountable to God; section three set out the grounds on which man was culpable if he neglected to respond to the voice of God in his own soul or to the evidence of God in the works of nature. Although satan had corrupted the divine nature in man, (so that it had become in effect an altera natura ¹⁾) God still gave adequate data to every man to enable him to acknowledge God. Tertullian's second reason, then, for the accountability of the natural man to God, was that "they would not acknowledge what they could not deny". The condemnation and culpability of paganism was not unjust because sufficient consciousness of God had been made available to every man; the knowledge of God did not depend on human teaching or

¹ an 16.7.41-50; this interpretation of the passage is confirmed by Waszink, 'De Anima', p 230. So also omnia a diabolo esse mutata - cor 6.3.21.

another nature

"On the Soul (Waszink's Book on Tertullian's treatise of that name)
all these things have been changed by the devil

philosophical theories, nor was it based on tradition or custom; nature was the tutor of all. From creation without and the soul within, God proclaimed Himself to every man, and so the accountability of the natural man to God was unequivocally set out by Tertullian in his apologetic works.

Reference was also made in section three to Tertullian's use of Cicero's juridical argument, namely that ignorance was no excuse. The history of this idea is outside the scope of this study¹ but Cicero's 'Partitiones' and 'Topica' touched on the culpability at law of voluntary and involuntary ignorance (chapters 42-43 and 62-64 respectively) and then the theme was developed in detail in "De Officiis" chapter one. Tertullian's argument about the accountability of the natural man before God likewise rested on the assumption that ignorance was culpable, and Fredouille² has suggested that the format, if not the idea, came to Tertullian from his reading of Cicero's works. "Dans la premiere, (i.e. I nat) Tertullien montre pourquoi et comment les paiens s'obstinent dans leur ignorance: aussi se place-t-il à un point de vue juridique, puis logique and philosophique".³ The link here with Roman law is, however, rather remote and is not pursued, but clearly Tertullian regarded error and sin as linked and ignorance could not serve the heathen as an excuse and release them from their responsibility to respond to God.

Although God could and would call every man to account, this accounting was not normally begun until after death, when interim rewards or punishments

¹ Fredouille demonstrated the extent to which Socrates, Plato and Aristotle had taught that man was responsible for not keeping himself informed: op. cit., p 71-72.

² ibid., p 74.

³ ibid., p 76.

In the first, Tertullian shows why and how the pagans are obstinate in their ignorance: therefore he takes a juridical stand, then a logical and philosophical one.

meanwhile/intermediate

were given to the soul; the final accounting was not until the resurrection of the body, as was set out in section four. Following that, sections five and six tried to assess the extent to which Tertullian differentiated between the heathen as a class and as individuals, in their relationship to God. While he recognised some good in pagan life, there is no indication that he believed even the best of paganism could ever bring a man into a saving relationship with God. The worst of paganism certainly incurred his specific condemnation, whether it was seen in the perversion of man's sense of deity expressed in the worship of idols or the perversion of natural reason to which philosophers were prone. Tertullian distinguished the legitimate use of natural reason by the heathen, in their search for God, from the self-aggrandisement of the wise men of this world, which led them away from God.

If, then, every soul was under obligation to collate the evidence which God provided for it, as it advanced in observation and understanding, and could come to the realisation that it had a Creator to whom it must answer, what was the position of those who lacked normal intelligence and understanding? Tertullian did not say, but there are indications that he would have said, if asked, that God would treat those with impaired mental faculties as He would treat children, who had inherited the vitium originis of all mankind, who might have performed deeds which were objectively sinful, but who nevertheless could be regarded as innocent of evil in their hearts. It was the relationship of the soul to God which would at all times dominate the accountability of man to God, and while ignorance was no excuse, inability to form a reasoned judgment might well be.

In that respect, Tertullian's outlook was at one with Roman law, although there is no indication that his view of diminished responsibility (i.e. his assumed view of it) was derived from Roman law. In all the other areas covered by this chapter, the extent to which Tertullian used the medium of Roman law, to express the accountability of man to God, is perhaps more apparent than real.

fault of origin

The criteria for judgment before God were expressly contrasted with the criteria by which the Roman Magistrates acquitted or condemned on religious issues. Free-will, while an underlying motif of Roman law, was a concept from fields much wider than jurisprudence. Delictum, which expressed personal responsibility, may well have owed more in Tertullian to the Pauline epistles than to Roman law. On the other hand, there has been more judicial language in this chapter than in any of the previous five; exceptio and edictum^{were}/directly borrowed from the language of the Courts and the defence of the Creator against the charge of responsibility for man's sin showed a marked similarity to Court procedure.

fault

exception - Edict

CONCLUSION TO PART TWO OF THESIS

It is no part of this thesis to dispute or to denigrate what is clearly a use by Tertullian of Roman law, but merely to put that use into the context of his overall description of the relationship of man to God. These fifth and sixth chapters have, together, set out what Tertullian appears to teach on the relationship of the natural man to God. Behind most of the points of difference between Christianity and paganism lay the fundamental difference of their views as to the nature of the Deity; from that stemmed their different views of the relationship of man to the Deity. Tertullian found himself trying to express in Latin a conception of God and of God's relationship to the world which had no precise parallel in Greek thought and there is no doubt that he found it useful to borrow certain words from Roman law to express that relationship - libripens and lex naturae were noted in chapter five, delictum (perhaps), exceptio, and edictum in chapter six; at other times he presented his argument in terms of Court procedure, as noted in both chapters.

Although these words provided useful illustrations for his teaching - he said as much about libripens - it is also evident that he used these legal words (with technical meanings) in less than technical senses, and knew that they would be so understood by his readers. The extent to which he was dependent on Roman law to express the relationship seems then to be very limited, and Roman law can hardly be said to have "shaped his thinking". To use legal metaphors, knowing that they would illustrate his work and that they would be understood as metaphors by his readers, was to follow no less an example than Paul in his Epistles - but no one says of Paul what Gwatkin said of Tertullian - "his writings are not only full of the maxims and technical terms of Roman law, and of allusions to its procedure: they present every doctrine from a legal standpoint".¹ It is hoped that the analysis contained in the two chapters now

¹ Henry Melvill Gwatkin, The Knowledge of God and its Historical Development, (2nd ed.; Edinburgh: T & T. Clark, 1908) II, 163.

balance-holder (at nominal legal transactions)

natural law

delict - exception

Edict

concluded will demonstrate that words and thoughts from Roman law form a fairly insignificant percentage of Tertullian's overall presentation of the relationship of the natural man to God, and certainly not sufficient to justify some of the more extravagant generalisations quoted in the preface to the thesis.

It was Tertullian's sincere wish that the natural man would come from a natural understanding of God to a correct and saving relationship with the deus Christianorum. The remainder of this thesis will therefore set out the relationship to God of those who, from knowing God only by natural means, progressed to the point where they could be admitted into membership of the Christian Church.

God of the Christians

apoi 16.12.53.

PART THREE: THE RELATIONSHIP OF CATECHUMENS TO GOD

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE RELATIONSHIP AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CATECHUMENATE

VII.1 INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER SEVEN

It was presumably by catechetical instruction that Tertullian himself became familiar with the doctrines of Christianity. There is no trace in his writings of the influence of a Christian father or mother, and according to his own testimony, he came to the Church as an adult convert.¹ His writings do not refer to his own catechumenate, although his conversion must have been:

un événement pour les chrétiens de Carthage: c'était là une recrue tout à fait exceptionnelle. Comme Apulée, son illustre compatriote, il possédait toute l'érudition de l'époque, philosophie, droit, histoire, littérature, sciences naturelles, médecine, même et occultisme. De plus, pour exploiter ce trésor de science, il avait un talent peu commun de rhéteur, ...²

These talents he immediately put at the disposal of the Church, not least for the instruction of catechumens.³ He seems to have been free from the necessity of

¹ He had aliquando laughed at the Christian doctrines of One God, the Creator and Preserver of the Universe, His Revelation of Himself in the Scriptures, the Resurrection of the Dead, and future Judgment - "Haec et nos risimus aliquando. De uestris summus: fiunt, non nascuntur Christiani." - apol 18.4.17-18; furthermore, adulteria commississe (res 59.3.13) is clearly intended to be a reference to unregenerate days. His habits before his conversion seem to have been neither better nor worse than those of his pagan contemporaries; for example, he recalled how he had witnessed, and had been amused at, the cruelties of the amphitheatre; apol 15.5.20-25; spec 19.5.20-21. While he made only a few references to his pagan youth, and he never moralised over them, he never forgot that he had been peccator ... omnium notarum ... nec ulli rei nisi paenitentiae natus paen 12. 9.37-38; he could remind his readers of hoc genus hominum quod et ipsi retro fuimus, caeci, sine domini lumine - paen 1.1.2-3.

² Pierre Guilloux, "L'Évolution Religieuse de Tertullien", Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique de Louvain, 19 (1923), 7.

³ bapt, cult, orat, paen and spec are generally held to be explicitly intended for catechumens, but Rauschen, in his note to paen 1.1, claimed that that treatise was not addressed primarily to catechumens but was intended for all Christians. The audientes, he condended were all those of whom it was said: seruis tuis dicere uel audire contingat. Gerhard Rauschen, Tertulliani De Paenitentia et De Pudicitia recensio nova, (Bonn: Peter Hanstein, 1915).

an event for the Christians of Carthage: he was a quite exceptional recruit. Like, Apuleius, his illustrious fellow-countryman, he possessed all the erudition of his time: philosophy, law, history, literature, natural sciences, even medicine and occultism. Furthermore, to exploit this hoard of knowledge, he has uncommon talent as rhetor ...

formerly

These are points at which we too laughed in times past. We are from among yourselves; Christians are made, not born!

I committed adulteries (that is what the text says and adulterium has no other meaning, but Tertullian must be speaking of 'fornication')

a sinner ... of every dye/mark of infamy ... born for nothing save repentance

that kind of men which even we ourselves were in days gone by, blind and unenlightened by the Lord

"The Religious Development of Tertullian" (periodical article in "The Louvain Review of Ecclesiastical History")

hearers

May it be granted to your servants to speak (of the discipline of penitence) or to hear of it ... (only when catechumens)

New Edition of Tertullian's Treatises on Penitence and on Modesty
(Book)

working for a living, and thus able to give the best years of his life to combating heresy and establishing the claims of the Christian faith.

He came at just the right time for the Church. The increase in the number of Christians in the Severan era (beginning A.D. 193) was bringing certain problems to the Church and while Tertullian the apologist delighted to make a strong point of this increase, to Tertullian the enthusiast and rigorist it constituted something of a problem. Many now called themselves Christians because of family tradition rather than personal conviction or conversion, and Tertullian believed that catechetical instruction for them (and also for some of the new converts) was being perfunctorily received, perhaps even inadequately given.¹ He was concerned, because he believed it essential to lay a solid foundation for the faith, during the catechumenate. There were grave dangers in going forward to baptism without adequate preparation, because Christians who sinned after baptism had, at best, only one further opportunity of paenitentia, painful and humiliating.² It was no good to plead, for post-baptismal sin, that one had been inadequately grounded at the catechumenate stage:

nullum ignorantiae praetextum patrocinator tibi, quoad domino adgnito praeceptisque eius admissis, denique paenitentia delictorum functus, rursus te in delicta restituis. ³

clementia illa Dei malentis paenitentiam peccatoris quam mortem ad ignorantes adhuc et adhuc incredulos spectat, quorum causa liberandorum uenerit Christus, non qui iam Deum norint et sacramentum didicerint fidei. ⁴

¹ "qui similiter credidisse contenti non exploratis rationibus traditionum temptabilem fidem per imperitiam portant" - (bapt 1.1.5-7); "nam et multi rudes et plerique sua fide dubii et simplices plures, quos instrui dirigi muniri oportebit" (res 2.11.58-59; "Simplices enim quique, ne dixerim imprudentes et idiotae, quae maior semper credentium pars est" - Prax 3.1.1-2; "plerosque uero in uentum et si placuerit Christianos ..." Scorp 1.5.11-12.

² It is outside the scope of this thesis to refer to post-baptismal sin, but, in addition to whole chapters like paen 9-12, texts like bapt 8.5.28-29 and pud 16.5.18-20 make the point very forcibly.

³ paen 5.2.4-7.

⁴ pud 18.17.75-78.

repentance

No plea of ignorance excuses you, for you have known the Lord, you have accepted His law and then, after doing penance for your sins, you give yourself over to sin again.

That mercy of God by which He prefers the penance of a sinner to his death, is meant for those who are still in ignorance and still unbelievers. It is to save these that Christ has come. It is not meant for those who have already come to a knowledge of God and learned the mystery of faith.

who, content to have believed in simplicity, have not examined the reasons for what has been conferred on them, are burdened with a faith which is open to temptation,

For there are many unlearned, and a number doubtful of their own faith, and not a few plain men, who will need to be equipped, guided and protected,

For all the simple people, not to say the unwise and ignorant, who always constitute the majority of believers,

and a very great number in truth are Christians who veer about with the wind and conform to its moods

It was fundamental to Tertullian's theology of salvation that a solid basis for a man's future relationship with God should be established during the catechumenate. Accordingly, he set himself to bring catechumens ad paenitentiam semel capessendam et perpetuo continendam.¹ He emphasised that if a catechumen had not truly dealt with all his sins before he was baptised, he would never deal with them at all:

Quis enim seruus, posteaquam libertate mutatus est, furta sua et fugas sibi imputat? quis miles, postquam castris suis emissus est, pro notis suis satagit?²

In view of this, Tertullian's involvement with catechumens and his concern for them is readily understood; the foundations laid during their catechumenate would probably determine their relationship to God for all eternity.

This chapter investigates the relationship of the catechumen to God at the very beginning of the catechumenate, and does so from two points of views: -

(a) Tertullian insisted that catechumens should be seen to occupy a distinctive place in the Church - symbolic of that relationship to God which differed from those in full membership of the Church. First to be investigated, then, is the distinction in the relationship to God between catechumens and Church-members, including the distinction between catechumens at the beginning of the catechumenate and those at later stages of instruction. This is examined in section two of the chapter.

(b) Even the enquirer could have a relationship to God which differed in some respects from that of the complete outsider; section three therefore investigates the challenge put to the enquirer. If he responded to it, there was a difference, even at the beginning of the catechumenate, in his relationship to God.

The basic attitude, which had to be inculcated, before the catechumen would make any progress in the faith, was to fear God and this is examined in section four. Section five looks at the Roman law which is relevant for this area of the study and section six draws certain conclusions from this chapter.

¹ paen 6.1.1-2.

² paen 6.7.30-33.

to a penitence which is undertaken but once and permanently preserved.

For what slave, once his condition is changed for that of freedom, feels shame for his thefts and truancy? What soldier, after his discharge from the army, bothers about his brands?

VII.2 RELATIONSHIPS NOT OPEN TO CATECHUMENS

Tertullian believed strongly that catechumens who, at least in the early stages of their instruction, cum maxime incipiunt diuinis sermonibus aures rigare quique ut catuli infantiae adhuc recentis necdum perfectis luminibus incerta reptant,¹ should be seen to occupy a distinctive place in the Church; this was because they had a distinctive relationship to God, cum pendente uenia poena prospicitur, cum adhuc liberari non meremur,² He censured the heretics for failing to make an adequate distinction between those who were under instruction and those who had completed the catechumenate: 'quis catechumenus, quis fidelis incertum est',⁴ and Ante sunt perfecti catechumeni quam edocti.⁴ In particular, the followers of Marcion and their catechumens pariter adeunt, pariter audiunt, pariter orant.⁵ Tertullian may be referring here to three different classes of catechumens⁶ namely, those who were not allowed into the gathering of Christians at all, those who were admitted as hearers only, and those who were admitted to the prayers; if that is so, Tertullian is expressing his disapproval of catechumens taking part in these activities 'together with' the Christians. If, on the other hand, "adeunt" refers to the approach to the altar itself, this would charge the heretics with allowing unbaptised persons at the celebration of the Eucharist.⁷

¹ paen 6.1.5-7.

² paen 6.6.28-29.

³ praes 41.2.4-5.

⁴ praes 41.4.12-13.

⁵ praes 41.2.5.

⁶ Whether Tertullian recognised different groups within the catechumenate, and whether they stood in different relationships to God, is examined in chapter VIII. 1 below.

⁷ Marcion opposed the separation between catechumens and the baptised entitled to communion, and the dismissal of the former from certain prayers (continued on next page)

have just recently begun to give ear to the flow of divine discourse
and who, like puppies newly born, creep about uncertainly, with eyes
as yet unopened,

when pardon is in abeyance and punishment in prospect, when we do not
yet merit deliverance,

it is uncertain who is a catechumen and who is a baptised believer,
their catechumens are perfected before they are instructed.

all alike approach, all alike hear, all alike pray,

they approach

While catechumens would be given instruction about God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit - because candidates for baptism were required to affirm their belief in the Three Persons of the Trinity - it is outside the scope of this thesis to explore the relationship of the catechumen to Christ and to the Holy Spirit. As was mentioned in the preface to the thesis, the catechumen had no significant or abiding relationship with Christ until baptism, and would not receive the Holy Spirit, as a permanent possession, until he had completed all the baptismal ceremonies - immersion in water, anointing with oil, and the Laying on of the Hand - as examined in Chapter X.3. below.

It will become increasingly evident throughout this and the following two chapters, that the position of catechumens in the Church was symbolic of a deeper and more fundamental distinction - they stood in a distinctive relationship to God the Father; Tertullian was careful to distinguish even those qui cum maxime ad Deum acceditis from those qui iam accessisse uos testificati et confessi estis.¹ It was only cum de illo sanctissimo lauacro noui natalis ascenditis et primas manus apud matrem cum fratribus aperitis . . .² that they could enjoy the full relationship to God which He intended for His children.

On the other hand, while there were some relationships to God which were open only to baptised Christians and not to catechumens, it must also be

footnote 7 continued:

which were connected with the supper. In the orthodox Church, the eucharistic service was in two sections, the first of which, a service of Bible-reading and instruction, might be attended by non-Christians. Then unbaptised persons and those under discipline were required to leave, so that the congregation, for the Eucharist itself, was exclusively Christian. Whether or not a disciplina arcana was the reason for excluding profane persons from the Eucharist, or whether it was merely from reverence for the eucharistic celebration proper, is outside the scope of this study. That debate is reviewed in detail by Dom E. Dekkers "Tertullianus en de geschiedenis der Liturgie" (Amsterdam: de Kinkhoren, 1947) in an Excursus entitled "De 'disciplina arcana'" from p 78 to p 82.

¹ spec 1.1.5-6.

² bapt 20.5.28-30.

who are just now entering upon God's service

who have already solemnly sworn allegiance to Him.

when you come up from that most sacred washing of the new birth, and
when for the first time you spread out your hands with your brethren,
in your mother's house ...

discipline which is kept secret from outsiders

"Tertullian and the History of Liturgy" (Book)

said that they were reckoned in some ways, right from the beginning, as belonging to the Christian community and under its care. Although still under instruction and on the fringe of the Church, there were at least two areas where the relationship had the potential of change. First, whenever the catechumen associated himself with the Christian Church, he exposed himself to the danger of martyrdom. If he was accused by the authorities and if, however inexperienced he was in the faith, he stood firm in his profession, he would have been counted by Tertullian among the martyrs for the faith - that most privileged group, who stood in the highest relationship to God. His experience of the Church on earth might scarcely have passed beyond the enquiry stage, but:

Since baptism was not conferred without serious preparation, and as a rule only at Easter and Pentecost, it could (and apparently did) happen that in time of persecution a catechumen was brought to death by martyrdom: since without baptism there is no salvation the question was bound to arise whether such persons were saved. The answer was universally given that they were baptized in their own blood. ¹

Second, if a catechumen became seriously ill - even if he was one of those ut catuli infantiae adhuc recentis necdum perfectis luminibus² - he would be baptised, by a layman if need be in an emergency.³ It would already have been made clear to him that his natural relationship to God was estrangement by sin, and that he had to confess faith in Christ and be baptised if he was to receive the forgiveness of sin.⁴ While therefore in normal cases the catechumenate was not the time when the relationship to God was materially

¹ Evans "Baptism", p 94. Nevertheless, Evans (loc. cit.) believed that if Tertullian had been pressed on the meaning of that, he would have said that martyrdom saved in the same sense as baptism saved, i.e. not by its own merit but by the precious blood of Christ.

² paen 6.1.6-7.

³ bapt 17.3.15-17.

⁴ The relationship between paenitentia, faith and baptism is examined in chapter VIII.6 below.

like puppies newly born, with eyes as yet unopened

repentance

altered, but the time when the foundation for a new relationship to God was being laid, the very fact of entering into the catechumenate brought the enquirer into the situation, where, if martyrdom or terminal illness intervened, he had the opportunity of entering into a saving relationship with God.

These two apart, it is clear that, in the view of Tertullian, a saving relationship to God was not open to the enquirer until (a) he had been instructed in the truth revealed only to the Church (b) he had amended his life in line with that truth, and (c) he had been baptised. The inference must be that normally the relationship of the catechumen to God, at the commencement of his catechumenate, differed only potentially, but not actually, from that of a pagan, in so far as his salvation was concerned. When the relationship began to alter depended on when, and to what extent, the catechumen was prepared to face up to the choices presented to him, and that is examined next.

VII.3 THE CHOICE PUT BEFORE THE ENQUIRER

Tertullian has not recorded when the name 'catechumen' was first given to applicants for Church membership, but there must have been some preliminary enquiry, on both sides, before any commitment was made to the catechumenate. On the part of the Church, there was some reluctance (although Tertullian berated the heretics for too much secrecy¹) to disclose the details of Christian truth and Christian morality until the enquirer was known to be serious. On the part of the enquirer, there would not doubt be certain questions he would wish to ask before committing himself to a catechumenate which would radically alter his life and his life-style. Tertullian has not described in detail what was put before an initial enquirer at Carthage, but the practice at Rome illustrates the caution on the part of the Church² and the practice at Alexandria illustrates the caution on the part of the enquirer.³

Tertullian himself implied that there was some preliminary discussion. When he set out in the apologeticum chapter 8 (paralleled in the first book ad nationes chapter 7) to dispel certain rumours spread by the heathen about offensive rites at Christian meetings, he asked his readers to visualise an initiation ceremony: Atquin uolentibus initiari moris est, opinor, prius patrem illum sacrorum adire, quae praeparanda sint describere.⁴ Tertullian then

¹ Val 1.1.7-3.15; Val 1.3.19-04; Val 1.4.11-12. The whole chapter is a fine example of Tertullian's withering irony. Even to a bona fide enquirer, Tertullian pictured the hierophant replying with stern face and frowning brow, 'Tis too deep a matter'.

² The 'Apostolic Tradition' of Hippolytus (Part II, Chap 16, Sections 1 and 2) described the practice of the Roman Church at the beginning of the third century. The enquirer, accompanied by those who had led him to the 'true light', had first to present himself to a priest or a deacon and request to be received into the Christian Church. Hippolytus described how he was then submitted to a preliminary examination, before being accepted as a catechumen.

³ Clement of Alexandria described a stage of a precatechesis, for the benefit of Gentiles whose attention was beginning to be aroused towards Christianity. -Paedagogus 1.6.

⁴ apol 8.7.24-26, paralleled at I nat 7.23.12-14.

"Apology" and "To the Gentiles" (two of Tertullian's treatises)

Yet, I suppose, it is customary for those who wish to be initiated to approach first the father of the sacred rites to arrange what must be prepared.

genuine (in good faith)

satirically described the colourful (imaginary!) scene in which the 'pater' told the candidate to bring a child, who was to be slaughtered . . . and asked his audience whether anyone would endure either initiation into such a religion, or, indeed, silence about the knowledge he would have gained if initiated. Within the general argument, Tertullian implied that the serious enquirer would indeed be given some preliminary information - Christians did not (he protested) trap the unwary into their ranks. In another place, when extolling the disciplines of the Church, he referred to the (lex) propria Christianorum, per quam ab ethnicis agnoscimur et examinamur, haec accendentibus ad fidem proponenda et ingredientibus in fidem inculcanda est, ut accendentes deliberent'.¹ No doubt some basic minimum of doctrine and precept was set before the enquirer - some short statement of truths to be held and of sins to be put off at the very outset. If the enquirer accepted these, he would be received into the catechumenate and progressively introduced to the truth of Christian doctrine, as opposed to the falsehood of paganism, the purity of Christian morals, as opposed to pagan licentiousness and the brotherhood of Christian fellowship, as opposed to the selfishness and cruelty of paganism.

This section of the chapter is particularly concerned to set out the choice which was placed before the enquirer, by Tertullian, relative to his relationship with God, when an application was received for Church membership. As was noted in section VII.1 above, Tertullian made himself available for the teaching of catechumens, and Nisters has made the interesting suggestion that it was the rejection of his (Tertullian's) views on how catechumens should be instructed and the refusal of the Church to enforce his views which led to Tertullian's break with the Church.² Certainly, if his uncompromising advice to

¹ idol 24.3.28-3.

² Bernard Nisters, Tertullian, Seine Persönlichkeit and sein Schicksal, (Münster: Aschendorff, 1950) p 124. There is unfortunately no one sentence which can readily be quoted in support of this - there is a long and sustained argument to that effect.

"Father" (of the ceremony)

our own Christian (law), through which we are recognised and put to the test by the heathen. This law must be set before those who approach the faith, and inculcated into those who enter upon the faith, that they may take thought as they approach,

"Tertullian - His Personality and his Destiny"

catechumens in de spectaculis was typical of his instruction, one can almost hear him saying to an enquirer:

"Bonum est paenitere an non?" Qui reuoluis? deus praecepit! Atenim ille non praecipit tantum, sed etiam hortatur (et); inuitat praemio: salute; iurans etiam, uiuo dicens cupit credi sibi. O beatos nos quorum causa deus furat, o miserrimos si nec iuranti domino credimus! 1

"Choice" was the key phrase. The goodness and the severity of God were not only one of Tertullian's most cogent means of urging catechumens to adopt Christianity, by setting before them the alternatives of everlasting bliss or everlasting fire (the texts are examined below) but the two were constantly emphasised by him as constituting the fundamental basis for man's understanding of God:

Quodsi utraque pars, bonitatis atque iustitiae, dignam plenitudinem diuinitatis efficiunt omnia potentis . . . Magis enim eos coniungunt, quos in eis diuersitatibus ponunt, quae deo congruunt . . . 2

Olim duplicem uim creatoris uindicauius, et iudicis et boni, littera occidentis per legem et spiritu uiuificantis per euangelium. 3

From the Scriptures, Tertullian frequently and gladly showed God's mercy to penitent sinners.⁴ At the same time, he wanted the enquirer to be in no doubt as to what Christianity would mean in practical terms - he would have to live in a hostile society, with its idolatry and ridicule, and if he was to succeed in the Christian life, he would have to make as clean a break as possible with the world. The new convert would in all probability have to give up his occupation⁵ and, out

¹ paen 4.7.28-8.33.

² II Marc 29.1.2-4, then 2.8-9.

³ V Marc 11.4.14-16.

⁴ Examined in chapter V.3 above.

⁵ Idolatry was so interwoven with the texture of daily life that the Christian was necessarily debarred from many occupations; those which Tertullian considered unsuitable for a Christian were itemised in idol, spec and cor. Some heathen trades, such as astrology, sorcery and divination, were obviously closed to a Christian, either to undertake or to patronise, but idolatry (continued on next page)

"On the Shows" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

Why do you keep asking yourself, "Is repentance good or is it not?" God has commanded it! Rather, He not only commands, He even exhorts, He coaxes us to it by offering salvation as its reward. He yearns to be trusted, even taking His oath, with the words 'I live'. O blessed are we for whose sake God binds Himself by oath: most wretched, if we believe not the Lord, even on His oath.

Both aspects, the goodness and the judgment, combine to produce a complete and worthy conception of a divinity to which nothing is impossible: ... Instead of dividing, those antitheses do rather combine into unity the two whom they place in such oppositions as, when combined together, give a complete conception of God.

I have long ago established my contention that the Creator's power is two-fold, that he is both judge and kind, that by the letter he kills through the law, and by the Spirit he makes alive through the gospel.

of working hours, would be well advised to keep away from the theatre, the arena, and the circus, partly because they were immoral, but primarily because of their connection with idolatry.

Tertullian's treatise on idolatry was ~~the~~ the first writing in Latin patristic literature (as far as is known) to be entirely devoted to the daily life of Christians and it shows that Tertullian was under no illusion that society was going to make allowances for the Christian conscience. It was better to face the issue now:

Plane impensius respondebo ad excusationes huiusmodi artificum, quos numquam in domum dei admitti oportet si quis eam disciplinam norit. Iam illa obici solita vox, non habeo aliud quo uiuam, districtius repercuti potest: uiuere ergo habes? quid tibi cum deo est si tuis legibus uiuis?¹

The choice confronting the enquirer was a stark one, and Tertullian did not shrink from it; he had very much in mind the Lord's parable of the prudent

footnote 5 continued:

did not consist only in offering sacrifices or incense to idols. It began with the various industries, which were connected in varying degrees of nearness or remoteness with idolatry; for example, sculpting, painting and decorating were legitimate enough in themselves, but a Christian craftsman must never employ his skills to build temples, or make images or anything else explicitly for use in the pagan cultus; a Christian business man must never sell wares, such as incense or wine, for idolatrous purposes. The profession of the schoolmaster involved the tacit, but incriminating, recognition of the heathen gods; business contracts concluded with heathen religious formalities ought to be broken off; no plea of the necessity of providing for one's children could excuse a man for participating in any such activity. Furthermore, a Christian actor or comedian, or a Christian trainer of gladiators, was a contradiction in terms; to those who complained to Tertullian that they had no other way of earning their living, Tertullian indignantly retorted that they should have thought out the implications, before becoming Christians. From these passages it is clear that the occupation and manner of living of the catechumen was regarded by Tertullian as critical in determining his relationship to God, and to demonstrate this in practical terms, the Church would not admit to baptism those who would not give up certain occupations. Pushed to its logical conclusion (about not doing anything which could contribute, however indirectly, to idolatry) Tertullian's teaching would make it impossible to have any occupation at all. Tertullian did not in fact insist on the logical end of his own argument, except when he was mocking at the excuses put forward by some 'compromising' Christians. He was, however, perfectly serious in asserting that in the last resort the convert had to be prepared to suffer the loss of everything for his faith; there was more than one kind of martyrdom.

¹ idol 5.1.13-17.

Of course, I shall reply with all care to the excuses of such craftsmen, men who should never be admitted into the house of God by anyone who knows the Christian rule of life. The words they so often put forward, "I have nothing else to live by", can be retorted immediately and sharply: "You can live then? If you are living on your own terms, why do you come to God?"

builder who, before erecting a tower, sat down to count the cost.¹ Earlier writers had made use of the description of 'two ways';² while Tertullian did not use that phrase, he bluntly confronted the enquirer with the choice of heaven or hell, this world or the next, God or the devil, eternal life or eternal death.

ecce proponimus uobis disciplinae nostrae sponsionem: uitam aeternam
sectatoribus et conseruatoribus suis spondet, e contrario profanis et aemulis
supplicium aeternum aeterno igni comminatur; 3

Eo iudicio iniquos aeterno igni, pios et insontes amoeno in loco dicimus
perpetuitatem transacturos; 4

siquidem meliores fieri coguntur qui eis credunt, metu aeterni supplicii et
spe aeterni refrigerii 5

and he reminded the readers of aduersus Marcionem:

Nam et ita praemiserat: ecce posui ante uos benedictionem et
maledictionem. Quod etiam in hanc euangelii dispositionem portendebat. 6

Accordingly Tertullian promised to all who would both enter and complete the catechumenate, that God would forgive their sins - sins of the flesh and of the spirit, sins of deed and of the will.⁷ For the catechumen who proceeded to baptism, there were no unforgiveable sins. To the end of his days, Tertullian

¹ idol 12.1.2-5.

² Found in the Doctrina and in a more developed form in the Didache and the Letter of Barnabas. A useful outline of the origin and use of the concept of 'two ways' was given by Danielou, who traced it back to the Mosaic law, through the New Testament and down to Irenaeus - Jean Danielou, Le Catéchèse aux Premiers Siècles (Fayard - Mame: École de la Foi, 1968) pp 127-131.

³ I nat 7.29.1-4.

⁴ I nat 19.6.2-4.

⁵ apol 49.2.6-8.

⁶ IV Marc 15.5.17-20. There are many such texts in Tertullian setting out a stark choice, but they are directed to Christians and it would not be appropriate to use them to illustrate his teaching to catechumens.

⁷ paen 4.1.1-2.6 - Although this passage refers to the efficacy of paenitentia generally, its context (the early chapters of de paenitentia) deals with sins committed before baptism.

behold, we set before you the promise which our sacred system offers. It guarantees eternal life to such as follow and observe it: on the other hand, it threatens with the eternal punishment of an unending fire those who are profane and hostile.

By the award of the judgment, we say that the wicked will have to spend an eternity in endless fire, the pious and innocent in a region of bliss.

for men who believe them are bound to become better through the fear of eternal punishment or the hope of eternal consolation.

"Against Marcion" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

For he had long ago set it down in that form: Behold I have set before you blessing and cursing - which was also an early indication of this double aspect of the gospel.

"Doctrines" "Teaching (of the Twelve Apostles)"

"Catechism in the First Centuries" (Book)

repentance

"On Repentance" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

believed in the forgiveness of God for all who repented of what he called 'sins committed in ignorance', i.e. before baptism, and he assured catechumens of that forgiveness, in the baptism which followed true repentance.

At this point, however, the initiative passed squarely to the catechumen. While nothing was more worthy of God than man's salvation, it went to the root of Tertullian's theology that when man was shown his situation, he had to do something about it. It was not that man had, within himself, the power to form, out of his own self-sufficiency, a holy temper and disposition, merely by exercising a choice to that end. That was the prerogative of God, given in baptism; but the catechumen had, of his own free will, to resolve to give up his former way of life, to undertake paenitentia prima, to receive instruction in the faith, and, in due course, to be baptised. He was offered no spiritual resources at this stage, no guidance from the Holy Spirit, no fellowship with Christ. The catechist showed him God's offer of salvation; whether he undertook and persevered in paenitentia prima was essentially the choice of the catechumen himself. His response to the divine initiative might not be active enough to secure the forgiveness of his sins; he had not only to commence, but to carry through to completion, paenitentia prima. The burden lay with man to form, in himself, the disposition which would make his baptism effective.

What would motivate men and women to break with their past, their attachments, probably their employment, possibly their family, and to embark on the catechumenate?

The western European thinks of God as a loving Father who sent His only Son into the world as the Redeemer of mankind. The emphasis is on the love and mercy of God, the liberating power of Christianity, and the example of Christ's perfect life. But this was not the outlook of either Donatists or Catholics in Africa. Their religion seems to have been concentrated on the prospect of Judgment hereafter, and on the consequent necessity of propitiating the wrath of God. It was a religion of fear and dread, not of love. So Tertullian in De Cultu Fe. minarum, ii. 2 'Timor fundamentum salutis est.' While this attitude was common to Christians throughout the Mediterranean area, it seems to have taken on a more pronounced form in Africa. ¹

¹ Frend, "The Donatist Church", p 97.

repentance before baptism

"On Women's Apparel" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

fear is the foundation of salvation

While that paragraph was written with reference to the Donatist controversy, and the text from Tertullian was addressed to Christians and not to catechumens, there is no doubt that Tertullian did believe the basic and the sustaining relationship with God, which would take a man or woman through the catechumenate and beyond, was a proper understanding of the fear of God, and this is now examined.

VII.4 THE FEAR OF GOD TO BE INCULCATED

Tertullian took it for granted¹ that a reverential fear of God was an essential part of paenitentia prima, (which, together with instruction, formed the basis of the catechumenate.²) There is no indication in his writings that the fear of God would by itself improve the catechumen's relationship with God, but due reverence for God and fear of His punishments provided the necessary motivation for the catechumen to give up sin completely, and so to qualify for baptism, in which he would receive the forgiveness of sins. The relationship between paenitentia prima and baptism will be examined in chapter VIII.6, but meantime it should be noted that metus integer was so fundamental to the relationship of man to God that, in a striking oxymoron, Tertullian described the catechumen with metus integer as actually iam corde loti:

Non ideo abluimur ut delinquere desiimus sed quia desinamus, quoniam iam corde loti sumus: haec enim prima audientis intinctio est. Metus integer exinde quod dominum senserit. 3

As soon as Tertullian came to teach a catechumen about God, he would begin by supplementing the existing (inadequate) teaching of nature about God, by the explicit teaching of Scripture on this point:

Quem non penitus admiserant, neque nosse potuerunt neque timere nec inde sapere, exorbitantes scilicet ab initio sapientiae, id est metu in Deum. 4

Nam et diuina alias enuntiatio Solomonis: "Initium," inquit, "sapientiae metus in Deum." Porro timoris origo notitia est: quis enim timebit, quod ignorat? Itaque Deum timuerit, ignotio omnium, Deum omnium notitiam et ueritatem assecutus plenam atque perfectam sapientiam optinebit. Hoc autem philosophiae non liquido successit. 5

¹ In de paenitentia alone he referred to the fear of God as the motive for repentance and amendment of life in chapters 2,5,6,7,9,10 and 12.

² Instruction in the faith, as part of the catechumenate, is examined in chapter VIII.2 and paenitentia prima in chapter VIII.3 below.

³ paen 6.17.61-64.

⁴ II nat 2.9.1-3.

⁵ II nat 2.3.6-12.

repentance before baptism

perfect fear

already clean of heart

We are not baptised so that we may cease committing sin but because we have ceased, since we are already clean of heart. This surely is the first baptism of the catechumen. His fear is perfect, because he has been in contact with the Lord.

The God whom they had so imperfectly admitted, they could neither know nor fear: and therefore they could not be wise, since they wandered away indeed from "the beginning of wisdom", that is, "the fear of God".

Besides, there is that divine oracle uttered by Solomon. "The fear of the Lord," says he, "is the beginning of wisdom." But fear has its origin in knowledge: for how will a man fear that of which he knows nothing? Therefore he who shall have the fear of God, even if he be ignorant of all things else, if he has attained to the knowledge and truth of God, will possess full and perfect wisdom. This, however, is what philosophy has not clearly realised.

"On Repentance" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

repentance before baptism

One of Tertullian's fundamental criticism of heretics (who were the offspring of philosophy) was:

Negant Deum timendum: itaque libera sunt illis omnia et soluta. Vbi autem Deus non timetur nisi ubi non est? ubi Deus non est, nec ueritas ulla est; ubi ueritas nulla est, merito et talis disciplina est. At ubi Deus, ibi metus in Deum qui est initium sapientiae. Vbi metus in Deum, ibi grauitas honesta et diligentia attonita et cura sollicita, et adlectio explorata et communicatio deliberata et promotio emerita et subiectio religiosa et apparitio deuota et processio modesta et ecclesia unita et Dei omnia. 1

Marcion had invented a god:

qui nec offenditur nec irascitur nec ulciscitur, cui nullus ignis coquitur in gehenna, cui nullus dentium frendor horret in exterioribus tenebris: bonus tantum est. 2

Atque adeo prae se ferunt Marcionitae, quod deum suum omnino non timeant. "Malus enim", inquit, "timebitur, bonus autem diligetur". Stulte, quem dominum appellas negas timendum, cum hoc nomen potestatis sit, etiam timendae? At quomodo diliges, nisi timeas non diligere? 3

Marcion deum suum timeri negat, defendens bonum non timeri, sed iudicem, apud quem sint materiae timoris, ira saeuitia iudicia uindicta damnatio. 4

Tertullian totally rejected the concept of a god who was not to be feared, and asked Marcion why he practised baptism, when his god did not judge sin in any event:

Cui enim rei baptisma quoque apud eum exigitur? Si remissio delictorum est, quomodo uidebitur delicta dimittere qui non uidebitur retinere, quia, si retineret, iudicaret? 5

Marcion's answer - "absit, inquis, absit" - is examined in the conclusion of this chapter, and it was rejected by Tertullian out of hand. Tertullian was concerned that the catechumen should not only begin his paenitentia through the fear of God, but that the fear of God should dominate the whole period of the

¹ praes 43.3.6-5.14.

² I Marc 27.2.13-16.

³ I Marc 27.3.18-23.

⁴ IV Marc 8.7.12-15.

⁵ I Marc 28.2.28-02.

They deny that God is to be feared. Consequently all things are to them free and without restraint. But where is God not feared save where His Presence is wanting? And where God is not present, neither is there any Truth. And where there is no Truth, there naturally follows such a system of life as theirs. Whereas where God is present there also is fear towards God, which is the beginning of wisdom. And where there is fear towards God, there is a becoming gravity and awe-struck diligence, and anxious solicitude, and well-assured election and well-considered communion, and well-deserved preferment, and religious submissiveness, and loyal attendance, and modest appearance, a united Church, and all things godly.

Who is neither offended nor angry nor inflicts punishment, who has no fire warming up in hell, and no outer darkness wherein there is shuddering and gnashing of teeth: he is merely kind.

And in fact the Marcionites make it their boast that they do not at all fear their god: for, they say, a bad god needs to be feared, but a good one loved. Fool: you call him lord, but deny he is to be feared, though this is a term suggesting authority, and with it fear. Yet how shall you love, unless you fear not to love?

Marcion says that his god is not an object of fear, claiming that the object of fear is not the kind god but the judge, with whom are to be found the materials of fear, which are wrath, severity, judgments, vengeance, and condemnation.

For to what purpose, in his sight, is even baptism required? If there is remission of sins, how shall one be supposed to remit sins who is supposed not to retain them? He could retain them only by judging them.

Oh no, you answer, far from it.

repentance

catechuminate -

its beginning:

dominum simul cognoueris timeas, simul inspexeris reuereris!¹

its continuation:

modum denique paenitendi temperarent quia et delinquendi tenerent, timentes dominum scilicet. Sed ubi metus nullus, emendatio proinde nulla: 2

and its end - (otherwise there would be no successful end):

Quem censeas digniorem nisi emendatiorem? quem emendatiorem nisi timidiorem et idcirco uera paenitentia functum? Timuit enim adhuc delinquere, ne non mereretur accipere. At ille praesumptor cum sibi repromitteret, securus scilicet, timere non potuit: sic nec paenitentiam impleuit, quia instrumento paenitentiae, id est metu, caruit. 3

It was only insofar as the catechumen feared God that he would find himself sinning less frequently and as a result would have fewer occasions to practice paenitentia. Thus sin was held within limits by the fear of God, and there would be a progressive improvement in the catechumen's relationship with God, leading up to the point where he was ready to be baptised.

It is outside the scope of this study to examine why Tertullian believed that man's fear of God did not stand in opposition to God's love for man, but of necessity belonged to it, albeit as an accidens which followed only after the fall of man. Miller⁴ examined the question in great detail, not specifically with reference to the thought of Tertullian (although he did mention Marcion's failure to reconcile love and fear as attitudes toward the same God⁵) but generally as to

¹ paen 6.14.54-55.

² paen 2.1.4-6.

³ paen 6.22.80-23.85.

⁴ Roy F. Miller, The Fear of God: A Study of the Fear of God in the Christian Religion, an unpublished Ph.D. Thesis presented to the University of Edinburgh on 25th October 1930.

⁵ *ibid.*, p 102.

As soon as you know the Lord you must fear Him: as soon as you have made His acquaintance you must revere Him.

In fact, they would restrict their repentance because they would also restrict their sins, checked, as is evidence by their fear of the Lord. But where there is no fear, there likewise, is no conversion.

Who do you think is worthier of it, if not the man who commits fewer sins? Who commits fewer sins, if not the man who has the greater reverential fear and who, on this account, has undertaken to perform the proper penance? For he has feared to continue sinning, lest he should not deserve to receive it. (baptism). On the other hand the man who receives is presumptuously since he has promised it to himself, (as being his due), with perfect assurance (literally "is more amended"), could not have had reverential fear: and thus his repentance was defective because it was without the instrument of repentance, which is fear.

repentance

something which happened/occurred

how the relationship of man to God could be both of fear and of love at one and the same time, and how the love could alter the fear. To develop the matter here would lead into an extended discussion of the relationship of the Christian to God, and so this section closes by referring back to Tertullian's emphasis on the love of God for man (examined in chapter V.2 above) and the comment that God's love for man and man's fear of God should never be treated in isolation from the other. The extent to which Tertullian was influenced by Roman law in coming to these views is dealt with next.

VII.5 ROMAN LAW FOR THIS AREA

The emphasis of the section just concluded, namely that reverential fear was the basis of a right relationship with God, provides the only major contact with Roman law for this chapter, although brief mention will be made, at the end of the section, of the pagans' accusation to Christians that 'non licet esse vos'; no one commencing on the catechumenate could be unaware that his new religion was diametrically opposed to the established order.

While the fear of God's punishment was repeatedly given in Scripture as a motive for repentance and amendment of life,¹ another 'model' lay near at hand for Tertullian, namely the relationship within the family unit, one of the fundamental institutions of Roman law and society. Roman lawyers recognised and took pride in the fact that the relationship between the head of the Roman family and all his descendants in the male line was unique throughout the known world.² The head of the family was known as the paterfamilias, and the almost unlimited authority which he exercised over his descendants, the filiifamiliae, was called patria potestas. A daughter was a member of her father's family, only so long as she was unmarried; on marriage she passed into the potestas of her husband's paterfamilias, and her children belonged to her husband's family. Even grown-up children stood under the 'disciplina' of the head of the family and owed him obedience; Cicero praised Appius Claudius³ because, in spite of being

¹ e.g. Psalm 2.12; Proverbs 15.27; Ecclesiastes 1.27, and 5.7 ff; Matthew 10.28; Luke 3.3 ff; John 5.14.

² Gaius 1.55-107, 127-136, taken up by Justinian, Institutes 1.9.2 which (translated) states "the power which we have over our children is peculiar to the citizens of Rome; for no other people have such power over their children as we have." So also Ulpian 5 and 10. The Roman jurists maintained the patria potestas with singular tenacity against the influence of other systems with which they came in contact.

³ "Tenebat non modo auctoritatem sed etiam imperium in suos, metuebant servi, verebantur liberi, carum omnes habebant" - ad Catalinam, 34. Cicero added, as proof of that statement, "vigebat in illa domo patrius mos et disciplina".

it is not lawful for you to exist

the head of the household

children in subjection to the head of the household

the complete power of the Roman father over his descendents

jurisdiction and control

discipline/government

He wielded not just authority, but absolute power over his household; his servants feared him, his children were in awe of him, everyone held him in esteem. Speech against Catiline.

A father's rule and discipline flourished in that household.

old and blind, he was still lord and master over four grown-up sons and five daughters. The absoluteness of the obedience demanded by the 'domestica disciplina' is evidenced by the acceptance of the concept of 'severitas' as part of the 'disciplina', in the Roman understanding of home discipline. Dionysius recorded an incident where a distinguished consul, Spurius Cassius Viscellinus by name, having been convicted of misconduct in office, was taken home by his father and executed.¹

Some of the features of the paterfamilias/filiifamiliae relationship are clearly not applicable to the relationship of God to man,² but the underlying concept seems to provide a better 'model' for Tertullian's emphasis that reverential fear should characterise the approach of man to God, better than is the 'legal' or "judicial/criminal" relationship which featured so strongly in the quotations in the preface to this thesis. It was therefore a matter of surprise to find that only one of the many works read in the preparation of this thesis took up the theme:

Thus when he turns to write an exposition of the Lord's Prayer, we find ... that in the opening clause of the prayer, God, viewed on the severe model of a Roman family father, is honoured as possessing his unique 'power' over his domestic establishment, and that the Church is here explicitly referred to as the 'family' 'embracing God and those who belong to him by legal right'.³

Perusal of two (non-religious) studies⁴ confirmed the positive contribution which

¹ II. 26; also Livy II.41.

² For example, the absolute right to kill or expose unwanted children, to sell free-born children as slaves, to pledge them, to withhold the consent to marry, etc; but these powers were (in any event) severely curtailed during the Imperial period and by the time of Tertullian were even more restricted. (Alexander Severus limited the power of the father to simple chastisement). These extraordinary powers must have in general been sensibly and equitably used, or they would have been discarded much earlier.

³ Robert F. Evans, One and Holy: The Church in Latin Patristic Thought, (London: S.P.C.K., 1972) p 9.

⁴ E. Burck, "Die altrömische Familie," in von Helmut Berve (editor) Das Neue Bild der Antike (Leipzig: Koehler & Amelang, 1942) II, 48 ff, and L. Wenger "Hausgewalt und Staatsgewalt im römischen Altertum" in Misc. F. Ehrle, (Rome: 1924) II, 1 ff.

family discipline/government

strictness/severity

discipline/government

head of the household/children of the household

"The Ancient Roman Family" (article in "The New Picture of Antiquity"

"Domestic Authority and State Authority in Roman Antiquity" (article)

further reading about patriapotestas could make to understanding Tertullian's expression of the relationship of man to God. For example,

(a) it held the balance between pietas and potestas; the Lord's Prayer was a reminder, said Tertullian, that frequentissime dominus patrem nobis pronuntiavit deum, ... dicendo autem patrem, deum quoque cognominamus: appellatio ista et pietatis et potestatis est.¹ In thus applying pater to God, both here and elsewhere,² Tertullian was able to emphasise, at one and the same time, both filial confidence and obedience - precisely the relationship of the Roman family community with its paterfamilias.

(b) it preserved Tertullian's emphasis that God was personal - an important emphasis against the "metaphysical infinite" or the "all-inclusive whole" of rival theologies. God was indeed a ruler, majestic, sovereign, yet at the same time a personal Being, to whom the catechumen^{en} could be related. The superior moral life which was taught during the catechumenate stemmed from the Christian idea that God had to be reverentially feared; his 'children' should follow His will out of that mixture of love and respect which characterised the paterfamilias/filiifamiliae relationship of Roman law.

The fear of God, as the basis of a right relationship with God throughout the catechumenate, was an important concept for Tertullian, but to regard the 'judgment' of God as the judicial determination of a case before a Roman judge for sentence does not seem to fit easily into Tertullian's thought. It would be of course be wholly inappropriate to make this suggestion about the significance of

¹ orat 2.2.5-6 and 2.4.11-12.

² Specifically in apol 34, where Tertullian's point was that pater was a more appropriate word in the family situation than dominus, because it carried the element of affection which dominus lacked - gratius est nomen pietatis quam potestatis. Etiam familiae magis patres quam domini uocantur, apol 34.2.7-8.

the complete power of the Roman father over his descendants

dutiful conduct toward the gods = affection

power or control = authority

the Lord frequently declared that God is to us a Father ... But when we say 'Father' we also give God a name; this form of address involves both affection and authority.

Father

head of the household

head of the household/children of the household

father

lord

Yet this title ("Father" as well as "Lord", applied to the Emperor) is an acceptable one, too, implying paternal affection rather than power. Even in the family we speak of "Fathers" (heads of the household) rather than "lords".

the paterfamilias model without recognising the use by Tertullian, particularly in de paenitentia, of the word iudex about the relationship of man to God, for example in chapter 2: Bonum factum deum habet debitorum, sicuti et malum, quia iudex omnis remunerator est causae. At cum iudex deus¹. . . Commentators have regularly used the opening chapters of this treatise to "illustrate" a judicial relationship between man and God in Tertullian's thought.² What they have not always appreciated is the structure of the treatise de paenitentia. Chapters 1 to 4 were introductory, speaking of paenitentia as a virtue in general terms; from chapter 7 onward, Tertullian was dealing with post-baptismal sin. It was only chapters 5 and 6 which professed to deal with paenitentia as an initial conversio; only chapter 6 was directed expressly to catechumens; the word iudex does not appear once in either of these chapters. Care must therefore be taken not to transfer to the catechumenate stage, concepts which were used by Tertullian for the Christian.

Having said that, and indeed in light of that, it is here suggested that the mixture of discipline and yet affection which marked the attitude of a paterfamilias toward those under his jurisdiction, seems to be reflected in Tertullian's descriptions of God, such as the following, written in fact to Marcion, but more widely applicable:

Vsque adeo iustitia etiam plenitudo est diuinitatis ipsius, exhibens deum perfectum, et patrem et dominum, patrem clementia dominum disciplina, patrem potestate blanda dominum seuera, patrem diligendum pie dominum timendum necessarie, diligendum, quia malit misericordiam quam sacrificium, et timendum, quia nolit peccatum, diligendum, quia malit

¹ paen 2. 11.44-12.46.

² For example, "The influence of Tertullian's legal training upon his theology is particularly noticeable in his treatise De Poenitentia. The nature of the subject here dealt with is such as to illustrate admirably the legal cast of his thought....(i.e. God is the Judge administering justice)..God is, however, not only the Judge who administers the law; He is the Giver of the law. It is because He has commanded that man must obey....The fundamental relation of man to God is that of fear (timor). Roberts, op. cit., p 28-29.

head of the household

"On Repentance" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

judge

A good deed has God as its debtor, just as a bad deed has too, because every judge settles a case on its merits. Now since God presides as judge ...

repentance

conversion

judge

head of the household

To such a degree as this is justice even the plenitude of divinity itself, that it reveals God in his perfection both as Father and as Lord: as Father in clemency, as Lord in discipline: as Father in kindly authority, as Lord in that which is stern: as Father to be loved from affection, as Lord to be necessarily feared: to be loved because he would rather have mercy than sacrifice, to be feared because he forbids to sin: to be loved because he would rather have ...

"On Repentance"

fear

paenitentiam peccatoris quam mortem, et timendum, quia nolit peccatores sui iam non paenitentes. Ideo lex utrumque definit: diliges deum et: timebis deum. Aliud obsecutori proposuit, aliud exorbitatori. ¹

As soon as an enquirer associated himself with the Christian Church, he exposed himself to the accusation, hurled by the pagans at the Christians, "non licet esse vos". Whether Tertullian's earlier apologies were written against any specific law condemning Christianity, as many French and Belgian scholars believe, ² or whether the persecutions were based on the common law, a catechumen's first step toward a 'right' relationship to God put him ipso facto into a 'wrong' relationship with Roman law. However, as noted in chapter VI.8 above, Tertullian contrasted, not compared, the relationship of the Christian to God with the relationship of the Christian to Roman law, so the point need not be examined further here.

¹ II Marc 13.5.17-26.

² The voluminous literature on this topic was well reviewed by J.W. Ph. Borleffs in "Institutum Neronianum", Vigiliae Christianae, 6 (1952), 129-145. Borleffs believed that there was no specific legislation - "Tertullien ne souffle mot de la base juridique des persecutions, d'une loi sur laquelle cette condamnation aurait été fondée, et institutum Neronianum prend virtuellement le sens de coutume, d'usage de condamner et de punir les chrétiens" - p 144. It must of course be added that in A.D. 202, Severus passed a law which forbade, under severe penalties, conversion either to Judaism or to Christianity: "Judaeos fieri sub gravi poena vetuit. Item etiam de Christianis sanxit" - Aelii Spartiani Severus, c.17.

... a sinner's repentance than his death, to be feared because he refuses such as do not now repent. For that reason the law lays down both these commandments, Thou shall love God, and, Thou shall fear God: the one it sets before the obedient, the other before the transgressor.

it is not lawful for you to exist

automatically/by the fact itself

"The Regulation/Ordinance of the Emperor Nero" (periodical article)

Tertullian does not utter a word about the juridical base of the persecutions, about a law upon which this condemnation might be founded, and 'institutum Neronianum' virtually has the meaning of custom, the habit of condemning and punishing Christians.

He forbade people to become Jews under sanction of severe penalties. Likewise he forbade under penalty the same about Christians.

VII.6 CONCLUSION FROM CHAPTER SEVEN

It was fundamental to Tertullian's theology that a sound basis for the faith should be laid during the catechumenate. During it, pardon was still in prospect and the fear of God had to be inculcated as the very basis of a correct relationship. To emphasise and illustrate the fact that catechumens were still on the fringe of the Christian faith, Tertullian distinguished between catechumens and full members of the Church - only after baptism and admission to the Eucharist could they enjoy a full relationship with God.

Tertullian therefore placed a stark choice before enquirers - and insisted that they examine the religious implications of everything they did. In detail he may have been too scrupulous, but his challenge was sound in principle. Modern excuses like 'art for art's sake', 'business is business', 'political necessity' would have brought the retort from Tertullian that the catechumen should consider what God offered and what God threatened, and then make up his mind which way he wanted to go. There was no fence on which to sit, no halfway house.

The concept that men and women had to make a choice, when they reached the age of responsibility, was common throughout antiquity. It was sometimes symbolised by the letter Y, the vertical spike being the road common



to all men until they reached the age of reason and responsibility, when they had to choose between the right or the left branches. The former appeared from the foot to be steep and rough - the hard road of virtue - but those who climbed it would obtain at the summit a well-deserved rest.¹ The other path appeared from the foot to be level and pleasant, but it led to an abyss, into which those who followed it would fall. There was therefore nothing novel in Tertullian's application to the catechumenate of a choice between short-term and long-term gain, and certainly nothing drawn directly from Roman law. What requires more consideration, however, is the place of reverential fear in the relationship of the catechumen to God.

When Tertullian challenged Marcion's concept of the God of the New Testament as only loving and with no capacity to judge (section four, above) he anticipated and rejected the Marcionite reply to such criticism - "absit, inquis, absit!"² Tertullian's own understanding of God may well be defective here, in the emphasis he placed on the fear of punishment and the hope of reward as the basis of the relationship; the love of God is diminished if one overemphasises His judgment and retributive righteousness. This chapter is not concerned to strike the correct balance between the goodness of God and the justice of God, but it is concerned with the view, evidenced by the quotations in the preface to the thesis, that Tertullian taught reverential fear in these circumstances because of his own legal training. Many of these general statements are applicable only when merit and satisfaction enter into the relationship, that is when the forgiveness of postbaptismal sin is under discussion. However, confining the

¹ The illustration on the previous page of this 'Y' concept was reproduced photographically from an ancient funeral relief by August Brinkmann in "Ein Denkmal des Neupythagoreismus", Rheinisches Museum für Philologie, 66 (1911), 622. The photograph shows, in the bottom part of the stele, a dead man accomplishing the labours of his career; at the top of the stone he is shown stretched at ease on a couch.

² I Marc 27.5.7.

Oh no, you answer, far from it.

"A Monument of Neo-phythagoraneism" (periodical article in "The Rheinland Museum for Philology").

enquiry to the relationship between the catechumen and God, and bearing in mind the significance in Roman life of the patriapotestas, it is here suggested that this, rather than the judicial model, reflects Tertullian's view. Judgmental systems operated in the home and in the family, where the Roman father had the unquestioned right to decide how the family should be run, yet his discipline was exercised within the context of a personal relationship with those under his control. So, at the same time as the catechumen was being taught the fear of God to bring him to the commencement of paenitentia, he was being taught that there was an attainable goal, a worth-while goal, namely that God would, under certain conditions, establish a new relationship with men. What the catechumen had to do if he wished to move toward that relationship is considered in the next chapter.

the complete power of the Roman father over his descendents

repentance

CHAPTER EIGHT - THE RELATIONSHIP DURING THE CATECHUMENATE

VIII.1 INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER EIGHT

Tertullian's chief concern for catechumens was to prepare them for the worthy and profitable reception of the sacrament of baptism. Accordingly the duration of their catechumenate was variable, depending on the aptitude, the age and the circumstances of the candidate - itaque pro cuiusque personae condicione ac dispositione, etiam aetate cunctatio baptismi utilior est.¹

Most scholarly comment on that passage consists of cross references to the practices at Rome and at Alexandria, as described by Hippolytus, Clement and Origin. The only substantial investigation into the views of Tertullian himself appears to be that of Dekkers, whose valuable chapter on the preparation of catechumens includes the comment that:²

De duur van den voorbereidingstijd voor het Doopsel was niet strikt bepaald, maar werd aangepast aan den stand, de gesteltenissen en ook aan den ouderdom van iederen geloofsleerling; doch de strenge moralist, die reeds vóór het Doopsel een volledige zedelijke bekering eiste en slechts met tegenzin sprak over een vergeving van de zonden, die na het Doopsel werden begaan, gaf onomwonden zijn voorkeur te kennen voor een langeren voorbereidingstijd: "Pro cuiusque personae condicione ac dispositione, etiam aetate, cunctatio baptismi utilior est" (De bapt. 18). Vooral kinderen zal men niet te vroeg toelaten: "Veniant dum adolescunt . . . fiant christiani,

¹ bapt 18.4.22-24.

² Dekkers, op. cit., pp 164-166. Since Dutch does not appear to be widely used in patristic writings, the liberty is taken of offering a rough translation of the passage: "The length of the preparation time for baptism was not fixed, but it was adapted to the rank, circumstances and age of each catechumen, but the strict moralist who already demanded a full moral conversion before baptism and who only spoke with dislike about a forgiveness of the sins which were committed after baptism, stated frankly his preference for a longer time of preparation: (Pro - 18). Especially children should not be admitted too early: (Veniant - ibid). With great care he states why the Ethiopian eunuch and St. Paul were baptised so quickly. At the other hand he laughs at the eleusinian mysteries and their 5 year long time of preparation which he compares with the secrecy of the Valentinians: (Diutius - 177); he also reacts against those who postpone baptism to be able to enjoy as long as possible a sinful life: (Omne -24); Furthermore he protests against the action of Marcion, who (neminem -451).

It follows that deferment of baptism is more profitable in accordance with each person's character and attitude and even age.

The length of the preparation time for baptism was not fixed, but it was adapted to the rank, circumstances and age of each catechumen, but the strict moralist who already demanded a full moral conversion before baptism and who only spoke with dislike about a forgiveness of the sins which were committed after baptism, stated frankly his preference for a longer time of preparation: "deferment of baptism is more profitable in accordance with each person's character and attitude and even age" (bapt 18). Especially children should not be admitted too early, "let them come while they are growing up ... let them become Christians ...

cum Christum nosse potuerint" (ibid.). Met zorg verklaart T. waarom de ethiopische eunuch en Paulus zo spoedig gedoopt werden. Anderzijds lacht hij toch met de eleusinische mysterien en hun vijfjarigen voorbereidingstijd, waarmede hij de geheimdoenerij van de Valentinianen vergelijkt: "Diutius initiant quam consignant, cum epoptas ante quinquennium instituunt" (Adv. Val. 1); ook reageert hij tegen hen, die het Doopsel uitstellen om zolang mogelijk van een zondig leven te genieten: Omne praeterea cunctationis et tergiversationis erga paenitentiam vitium praesumptio intinctionis importat. Certe enim indubitatae veniae delictorum, medium tempus interim furantur et commeatum sibi faciunt delinquendi quam eruditionem non delinquendi" (De paen. 6,3); verder protesteert hij tegen de handelwijze van Marcion, die "neminem tingit, nisi caelibem aut spadonem, morti aut repudio baptismata servat" (Adv. Marc. IV,11).

When a candidate's preparedness ^{for} baptism had been established, he was no longer catechumenus, because his instruction was complete, and he joined the ingressuri baptismum,¹ those actively preparing for baptism. (Their special relationship to God is examined in section five of this chapter.) Until then, candidates were variously described by Tertullian as catechumeni,² audientes,³ auditores⁴ or nouitioli;⁵ on one occasion Tertullian included catechumens among the fideles⁶ but normally he used "fideles" only for those who had been baptised and who were taking part in the Eucharist.

¹ bapt 20.1.1. Later in the same chapter he addressed them as benedicti, normally used by Tertullian without reference to catechumens, but in this context it must mean them - benedicti quos gratia dei expectat, cum de illo sanctissimo lauacro noui natalis ascenditis - bapt 20.5.28-29.

² cor 2.1.3; praes 41.2.4-5; praes 41.4.12-13. The adoption by Latin - Tertullian is the earliest example - of this Greek word was set out in detail by Matti Antero Sainio, Semasiologische Untersuchungen Über Die Entstehung Der Christlichen Latinität, (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1940).

³ paen 6.15.58; paen 6.17.63-64; paen 6.20.75-76; paen 7.1.1-3.

⁴ paen 6.14.53.

⁵ paen 6.1.4. - the first reference in Christian literature to religious recruits as 'novices', an expression which shows rather more compassion toward them than Tertullian's critics normally allow.

⁶ omnes (fideles) ita obseruant a catechuemnis usque ad confessors et martyras. - cor 2.1.2-3.

... when they have become able to know Christ." (ibid.) With great care he states why the Ethiopian eunuch and St. Paul were baptised so quickly. At the other hand he laughs at the eleusinian mysteries and their 5 year long time of preparation which he compares with the secrecy of the Valentinians. "They require a long initiation before they enrol (their members), even instruction during five years for their perfect disciples (Adv. Val. 1);" He also reacts against those who postpone baptism to be able to enjoy as long as possible a sinful life. * Furthermore he protests against the action of Marcion, who "refuses baptism except to the celibate or the eunuch, keeping it back until death or divorce. (Adv. Marc. IV, 11)."

* it is a rash confidence in the efficacy of Baptism which leads to all of this culpable delay and hesitancy in the matter of penitence. Since they are certain of an assured pardon for their sins, they steal, meanwhile, the intervening time and make of it an interlude for sinning, rather than for learning not to sin.

one who is being taught the rudiments of Christianity, preparatory to baptism

those who are on the point of entering upon baptism

"one who is being taught the rudiments of Christianity, preparatory to baptism", "learners", "auditors", "novices"

faithful

blessed ones

You blessed ones, for whom the grace of God is waiting, when you come up from that most sacred washing of the new birth.

"Semantic Researches about the Origin of Christian Latin" (Book)

Everyone (of the faithful), from catechumens to confessors and martyrs, observes this custom.

Tertullian referred to the catechumenate as a whole as tirocinium.¹

Within it there may have been, at Carthage, some distinction between:-

- (1) those who had just entered their period of probation,²
- (2) those who had been accepted into much of the life of the Church without any immediate intention of being baptised, (a group of which Tertullian did not approve; while he would never hasten a catechumen to baptism before he was ready for it, he expressed strong disapproval of catechumens who were not steadily moving toward baptism and full membership of the Church), and
- (3) those who had sufficiently advanced in Christian knowledge and practice to be making active preparations for baptism - the ingressuri baptismum mentioned above.

Many attempts have been made not only to identify such groupings within the catechumenate as described by Tertullian, but even to classify the audientes as a distinct group, not members of the catechumenate at all;³ that is not

¹ paen 6.14.53. The 'tirocinium' was defined by Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short (A Latin Dictionary, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879) as "the first military service or first campaign of a young soldier", "young troops, raw forces, recruits", hence, more generally, "the first beginning of anything." (abbreviated)

² Examined in chapter VII.3 above.

³ Suicer divided the catechumens into two classes, one called "audientes", who had only begun to hear the Word of God; the other "competentes", who had made such advances in Christian knowledge and practice as to be qualified to appear at the font - Joannes Caspar Suicer, Thesaurus Ecclesiasticus e patribus Graecis, ordine alphabetico exhibens quaecumque phrases, ritus, dogmata, haereses et hujusmodi alia spectant. (3rd ed.; Amsterdam: 1746) II, 72. Dekkers went to the other extreme -

Het feit T. enkel in het De paenitentia, dat zich waarschijnlijk tot deze uitverkoren catechumenen richt, het woord „audientes" bezigt, terwijl hij overal elders „catechumeni" zegt en tevens dezen laatsten term zonder meer gebruikt als tegenhanger van „fidelis", maakt het waarschijnlijk dat „catechumenus" de algemene naam was voor allen, die wensten gedoopt te worden, terwijl „audiens" of „auditor" voorbehouden was voor diegenen onder de geloofsleerlingen, die zich reeds op een spoedig ontvangen van het Doopsel voorbereidden, de eigenlijke „ingressuri baptismum", (op. cit., p 168-169).

A rough translation of the quotation is: "The fact that Tertullian only in the de (continued on next page)

(translated in footnotes)

those who are on the point of entering upon baptism

learners/hearers

competent persons

Ecclesiastical Treasury (Reference Book) from the Greek Fathers, in alphabetical order and giving certain phrases, rites, dogmas, heresies, etc.

investigated here, because there seems to be no evidence in Tertullian's writings, especially in light of the conclusions of chapter 7 above, that even if there were different groups, they stood in any distinctive relationship to God, distinctive that is from catechumens as a whole.

Furthermore, there is no suggestion that Tertullian's interest was divided, as appears to have been the case with the catechists at Alexandria and Antioch, between those who were to be initiated into the higher mysteries of the Christian faith, and the 'ordinary' catechumens, who formed the great body of believers. In de praescriptione haereticorum chapter 26, Tertullian denounced the heretics for attempting to make such distinctions; he maintained that all who were to be admitted to baptism were entitled to the same instruction into the mysteries of the faith. Just as he had argued that the natural knowledge of God was available to all by the testimonium animae, so he believed that this further step in a man's relationship with God, the introduction to the regula fidei, was to be given equally to all genuine enquirers in so far as they were able to receive it.

There were apparently two basic ingredients of the catechumenate - instruction in the doctrine of the church, examined in section two of this chapter and paenitentia prima, examined in section three.

. . . in fides God teaches intellectual truth - the truth of Himself and his works - the content of that right belief which it is necessary for man to hold in order to be saved, disciplina teaches practical truth, the things to be done or not to be done, for performance and observation, for the good life necessary for salvation. ¹

footnote 3 continued:

paenitentia which is probably directed to the elected catechumens, uses the word "audientes" while at other places he speaks of "catechumeni" and also uses this last term as the counterpart of "fidelis", makes it probable that "catechumenus" was the general name for all those who wished to be baptised, while "audiens" or "auditor" was reserved for those among the pupils who were preparing themselves for an early baptism, the real "ingressuri baptismum", (translation mine). Le Saint listed the earlier literature on this debate, op. cit., p 161.

¹ E. Langstadt, "Tertullian's Doctrine of Sin and the Power of Absolution in de pudicitia", in Studia Patristica II (1957), 253. Although written about post-baptismal sin, the quotation above is an apt summary of the two areas of instruction for the catechumen.

"On the Prescription of Heretics" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

the testimony of the soul

the Rule of Faith

repentance before baptism

faith (i.e. the Rule of Faith)

discipline

"On Repentance" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

learners - catechumens/those instructed

faithful - catechumen/instructed

learner - hearer

about-to-enter on baptism

"On Modesty" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

"Patristic Studies" (series of Conference Reports)

In opening his treatise de spectaculis, Tertullian declared that to catechumens (qui cum maxime ad deum acceditis) as well as those who had already been baptised (qui iam accessisse uos testificati et confessi estis) he would explain the essence of the Christian faith (qui status fidei), the nature of truth (quae ratio veritatis), the precepts for Christian morals (quod praescriptum disciplinae) -all of which forbade visiting the shows. This might seem to imply three, not two, areas for the catechumens' instruction, but a closer look¹ makes it clear that Tertullian has expressed the same idea twice in different terms, for the sake of rhetorical effect, and that status fidei is here virtually synonymous with ratio veritatis. Unless and until the catechumen had been instructed and tested in both of these areas, he would not make that progress in his relationship with God which would bring him, in baptism, to the forgiveness of sins.

Tertullian's insistence that salvation could be found only in the church, and not in heretical movements calling themselves Christian, is looked at in section four, followed in section five by an examination of the distinctive relationship to God during the short period of final preparation for baptism. In light of all that has then been said, section six then seeks to set out the relationship of paenitentia prima to baptism and of both to the work of Christ. Finally, such Roman law as is relevant to this area is mentioned (section seven) and conclusions are drawn in section eight.

It would, however, be inappropriate to imply that this period of initiation consisted only of intellectual and moral training. The preparation^{at} was at heart spiritual; de oratione seems to have been written with catechumens especially in mind and prayer was a spiritual exercise which depended for its worth on the right mind and right intention of the suppliant. That was precisely the attitude towards God which Tertullian tried to implant in the heart of all the catechumens under his instruction.

¹ Pieter Gijsbertus van der Nat, "Tertullianea II - the Structure of De Spectaculis", Vigiliae Christianae, 18 (1964), 138. A similar case is found in the opening sentence of idol: Principale crimen generis humani, summus saeculi reatus, tota causa iudicii idololatria (idol 1.1.3-4). Here too, the first two expressions are virtually synonymous.

"On Shows" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

who are just now entering upon the service of God

you who have already sworn solemn allegiance to Him (literally, 'you who have witnessed and borne your testimony that you have already made that approach to God!')

what principle/condition of faith

what reason inherent in truth

what rule in our way of life (literally, 'law of our discipline')

principle/condition of faith

reason inherent in truth

repentance before baptism

"On Prayer" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

"About Tertullian" (periodical article)

"On Shows" (one of Tertullian's treatises) in periodical called
"Christian Vigils"

The principal charge against the human race, the highest guilt charged upon the world, the all-inclusive cause of judgment, is idolatry.

VIII.2 INSTRUCTION IN THE REGULA FIDEI

"Le candidat au christianisme doit accepter l'enseignement traditionnel, tel qu'il lui est donné par l'Église et cet enseignement comporte un certain nombre de dogmes qui s'imposent à lui sans réserve".¹ Whether the enquirer came to the catechumenate with very little understanding of the Christian faith, or whether he had some prior knowledge of it, one of the first duties of the catechist was to ground the enquirer in certain doctrines of the faith. No examples of actual catechetical instructions have survived from the ante-Nicene age, but it appears that catechumens were expected to answer questions on doctrine, over and above the actual formula put to them at baptism.² From the opening paragraph of de spectaculis, it appears that fairly detailed instruction was envisaged, in which the status fidei, the ratio veritatis, (together with the praecepta disciplinae) were taught. Certainly the candidate was expected to have some understanding of the trinitarian formula used in the baptismal ceremony, which was fundamental for his becoming a Christian. At the same time, the catechist would no doubt set out, at least in outline, what truths were certain, what speculations were allowable and which heresies were to be avoided.

The main heads of teaching and the way in which they were put together for practical purposes, are contained in the regula fidei³ - (or regula veritatis⁴) -

¹ Gustave Bardy, La Conversion au Christianisme durant les Premiers Siècles, (Paris, Aubier, 1949) p 171.

² José-Maria Restreop-Jaramillo sought to demonstrate this in 'Tertuliano y la doble formula en ei simibolo apostolico', Gregorianum 15 (1934), 3-58, especially at p 36. Whether the catechumens had to learn some formula by heart, or whether they affirmed their belief in it by responses, there is no indication, but no catechumen was exempted from answering detailed questions on doctrine, in Tertullian's ideal at least. The regula fidei or something like it must have been explained and rehearsed until the catechumen knew it thoroughly.

³ Tertullian's use of the word regula was fully set out by Ellen Flessman-van Leer, Tradition and Scripture (Assen: van Gorcum, 1954) pp 161-170. She demonstrated that while a single doctrine could be designated as a "regula fidei", so that Tertullian could speak of "regulae" in the plural to designate various (continued overleaf, together with footnote 4)

Rule of Faith

The candidate for Christianity must accept traditional teaching, such as is given to him by the Church. This teaching comprises a certain number of dogmas which are imposed on him without reserve.

"On Shows" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

reason inherent in truth

Rule of Faith (or Rule of Truth)

Conversion to Christianity during the First Centuries (Book)

Tertullian and the double formula in The Apostolic Creed

Rule of Faith

Rule of Faith - Rules

a summary exposition of the chief headings of revealed doctrine, variable in its precise wording¹ but immutable in its dogmatic substance, quam ecclesiae ab apostolis, apostoli a Christo, Christus a Deo tradidit.² These were the specifically Christian doctrines, which a catechumen had to accept, not just to improve his intellectual understanding of the faith but in order to secure a saving relationship with God.

Cum enim quaerunt adhuc, nondum tenent; cum autem nondum tenent, nondum crediderunt; cum autem nondum crediderunt non sunt christiani. ³

footnote 3 and 4 continued:

doctrines of the Christian tradition, "regula" with Tertullian was mainly equated with Christian doctrine in its totality. "So we can say that the regula is a summary, formulated according to the need of the moment, of the entire christian faith." (p 165). The "regula fidei" was therefore the content of the faith or - which is the same - the whole educational content of the Holy Scriptures which had been faithfully preserved in the apostolic communities. The matter was also usefully discussed by Bergt Hägglund, 'Die Bedeutung der 'regula fidei' als Grundlage theologischer Aussagen', Studia Theologica, 12 (1958) 19-29.

⁴ In apol 47.10.41 (only) Tertullian used that word as a synonym for regula fidei.

¹ Tertullian's shortest summary of the Rule (virg 1.3.17-23) includes just three items: belief in one God, Creator of the Universe; belief in Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary and Son of the Creator-God; and belief in the resurrection of the flesh. These heads of belief were, however, capable of expansion, to meet the circumstances of any particular challenge. The Rule set out in praes. 13.1.1-5.16 is much longer and is clearly anti-Gnostic, with a strong emphasis on the fact that the one God is Creator, and on the reality of the human nature of Christ (against docetism). The rule was stated rather differently again in Prax 2.1.1-16 to meet the Sabellianism of Praxeas, and Tertullian there introduced expressions to define a doctrine of the Trinity and to specify the nature of the incarnate Word. The order in which the dogmata are enumerated is basically the same in all three (they are set out in parallel columns in E. Evans, Tertullian's Treatise against Praxeas, (London: S.P.C.K., 1948 p 189-192). It should be noted that "Es ist gar kein Widerspruch, wenn die 'regula' in einem Falle auf ein einziges Dogma, in einem anderen Falle auf eine kurze Zusammenfassung der ganzen christlichen Lehre oder auf den inneren Gehalt der göttlichen Offenbarung hindeutet. Es ist der Glaube selbst (sozusagen die 'fides quae crediture'), oder die göttliche Offenbarung als solche, die als 'regula' im eigentlichen Sinne (nach Flesseman-van Leer 'Regula' im Unterschied zur 'regula') gilt." (Hägglund, op. cit. p 21).

² praes 37.1.2-3.

³ praes 14.10.26-29.

which the Church has handed down from the apostles, the apostles from Christ, and Christ from God.

In that they are still seeking, they do not yet hold any convictions.
In that they possess no convictions, they have not yet come to believe.
In that they have not yet come to believe, they are not Christian.

Rule (of Faith)

"The Meaning of the Rule of Faith as a Foundation for theological Declarations" - periodical article in "Theological Studies".

It is no contradiction at all when the "regula" indicates at one time a single dogma and at another time a brief summary of the whole Christian doctrine or the inner content of divine revelation. It is faith itself (the "fides quae crediture" so to speak) or divine revelation as such which is considered as "regula" in the true sense (according to Flesselman-van Leer "Regula" as opposed to "regula").

quibus competat fides ipsa, cuius sint scripturae, a quo et per quos et quando et quibus sit tradita disciplina qua fiunt christiani. ¹

Adeo non erit Christianus qui eam negabit, quam confitentur Christiani, et his argumentis negabit, quibus utuntur non Christiani. ²

Marcion, who at one time had repudiated the physical birth^{of} Christ and the events surrounding it, was, by his own action (in denying these basic Christian beliefs) no longer a Christian - non es Christianus, non credens^d quod creditum Christianos facit. ³

The insistence of the Church, that catechumens should accept certain basic doctrines, might be explained as an attempt to safeguard the Church against heresy, but Tertullian went far beyond that - his purpose was to communicate to the catechumen the true revelation by God of Himself, so that the catechumen could enter into a new and saving relationship with God. As Tertullian put it in another context - Non est leuior transgressio in interpretatione quam in conuersatione. ⁴ Fiducia had to be preceded by at least some grasp of fides - i.e. the regula fidei - because fiducia was the inner conviction and godward relation only of those who had accepted the Rule of Faith. ⁵ Immo neque Iudaeos, conuertere neque ethnicos inducere potuissent nisi, quod credi ab eis uolebant, ordine exponerent. ⁶ If the catechumen was not

¹ praes 19.2.6-8.

² res 3.5.23-25.

³ carn 2.4.20-21.

⁴ pud 9.22.100-101.

⁵ Fides in Tertullian appears to be the formal content of the faith, while fiducia is the personal commitment to God - or at least so it appears from Tertullian's description of the content and purpose of Christian worship in apol 39 - Certe fidem sanctis uocibus pascimus, spem erigimus, fiduciam figimus, disciplinam praeceptorum nihilominus inculcationibus densamus: apol 39.3.11-14, and also from carn 3, Quam tu ad fiduciam reputas ... carn 3.3.17.

⁶ praes 26.7.17-19.

Who holds the Faith to which the Scriptures belong? From whom and through whom, and when, and to whom was the doctrinal teaching delivered whereby men are made Christians?

Besides, he will be no Christian who denies (that resurrection which) Christians confess and he will deny it by those arguments which the non-Christians use.

for you are not a Christian seeing you do not believe that which, when believed, makes men Christians.

Bad exegesis is no less serious than bad conduct. (Literally: 'A transgression in interpretation is no less serious than one in behaviour (conversation)').

Faith (belief)

the doctrines of faith (the Rule of Faith)

No, they could have converted neither Jews nor Gentiles unless they had systematically set out what they wanted them to believe.

Faith (in the sense of the Rule of Faith)

Faith (in the sense of 'belief')

Certainly, we nourish our faith with holy conversation, we uplift our hope, we strengthen our trust, intensifying our discipline at the same time by the inculcation of moral precepts.

How much, do you think, does it count toward our confidence in Him...

1896

adequately taught about God, he could neither enter into nor maintain a meaningful relationship with Him - he would face the problems of those who credidisse contenti, non exploratis rationibus traditionum temptabilem fidem per imperitiam portant.¹

The task of the catechist was therefore to be satisfied that the catechumen had, according to his intellectual capacity, accepted the meaning and the implications of the Christian faith. Tertullian not only urged that great care should be taken to admit no one to the ceremony of baptism who had not been adequately prepared for it² - he also urged that the content of what was taught should be only the regula fidei as it had been received by the instructor on the authority of the Church, the apostles, and of Christ, and delivered by him with no less authority to his catechumens. The catechumen had to see that the Rule took priority over any other ideas, however good, which he had brought with him or which might have picked up elsewhere. Within the terms of the Rule of Faith, he could debate and question, but only within its terms - haec regula a Christo, ut probabitur, instituta nullas habet apud nos quaestiones nisi quas haereses inferunt et quae haereticos faciunt.³ What Tertullian wrote in other contexts could well be applied to the catechumenate - urguemur a communione naturalis disciplinae conuerti ad proprietatem Christianae . . .⁴ and to Marcion:

¹ bapt 1.1.5-7.

² Part of the attraction of gnosticism was that it claimed to communicate secret knowledge to its adherents. It was the gnostics' practice (for which they were severely criticised by Tertullian) to baptise first and to instruct afterwards. Applicants for baptism and Church membership had to be given a clear understanding of the God with whom they sought a relationship in baptism. For those coming from a pagan background, the catechist had not only to teach the convert the basic doctrines of the Christian faith, but, to avoid syncretism, had also to persuade the catechumen to abandon and renounce the ideas of his pagan ancestors.

³ praes 13.6.16-18. One of the characteristics of the rule of faith emphasised by Tertullian was its "totality"; the "regula fidei" contained the whole truth, so no one should question or investigate over and above it.

⁴ cor 7.2.6-8.

content to have believed in simplicity, have not examined the reasons (grounds of the traditions) for what has been conferred upon them, and because of inexperience are burdened with a faith which is open to temptation.

Rule of Faith.

This Rule taught (as it will be proved by Christ) admits no questionings amongst us, save those which heresies introduce and which make heretics.

I see myself compelled to turn from the teaching of nature, which we share with mankind in general, to the specific Christian teachings...

Nos definimus deum primo natura cognoscendum, dehinc doctrina recognoscendum, ex operibus, doctrina ex praedictionibus.¹ The catechumen was therefore first instructed, and then tested, in the basic doctrines of the Christian Faith, until the catechist was sure that the catechumen accepted the Rule of Faith as his belief. When a man accepted these articles he stood on Christian ground, and the recognition of them brought him to the state of mind called Faith. "Mais la conviction intellectuelle ne suffit pas; l'essentiel est de provoquer à cet approfondissement de la conversion qui est la loi même d'une foi vivante."² The other aspect of the catechumenate was to learn the discipline of the Christian Faith, and that is examined next.

¹ I Marc 18.2.11-13.

² Jacques Fontaine, Q. Septimi Florentis Tertulliani de Corona (Tertullien sur la couronne), (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1966) p 9.

I postulate that a god ought first to be known by nature, and afterwards further known by doctrine - by nature through his works, by doctrine followed by official teaching.

But intellectual conviction is not enough: the main impulse is to provoke that intensity of conversion which is the very law of a living faith.

Q.S.F. Tertullian's treatise "On the Soldier's Crown" (Tertullian on the Crown) (Book)

VIII.3 PAENITENTIA PRIMA

The duty of the catechist was not only to teach sound doctrine to the enquirer after the Christian faith; of equal importance was his duty to teach, and to supervise, the performance of paenitentia prima.¹ Before the content of that is examined, brief reference should be made to the word 'disciplina'. Further use of the word will deliberately be avoided after this paragraph, for two reasons. First, while Tertullian used it most commonly as the complement or couple of regula fidei (which had a fixed and delimited content), in which case all the rest of the Christian faith (moral laws, rites, disciplinary problems and doctrinal questions which were susceptible to development under the guidance of the Spirit) were denoted by disciplina,² he sometimes used disciplina for the whole of Christianity,³ sometimes for one particular doctrine⁴ and sometimes for the practice of the faith as opposed to the doctrine of the faith.⁵ Secondly, Tertullian used the word disciplina chiefly in reference to Christians, so while catechumens were no doubt given some insight into the obligations which would be incumbent on them when they joined the faithful in full membership of the

¹ For the spelling paenitentia rather than poenitentia, see Stephan W.J. Teeuwen "De voce paenitentia apud Tertullianum", Mnemosyne, 55 (1927), 419. The phrase paenitentia prima does not appear in Tertullian's works, but three times he used paenitentia secunda - paen 7.10.36; paen 7.12.46; paen 9.1.1 - so paenitentia prima is a useful way of referring to the repentance of conversion, before entry in the Church, the paenitentia of catechumens, where forgiveness was freely obtained and sealed in baptism by the Church. Paenitentia secunda, by contrast, was the penance of the sinner after conversion, within the Church, the paenitentia of the Christian, where forgiveness was painstakingly obtained and sometimes not recognised by the Church during the life-time of the penitent.

² Valentin Morel, "Disciplina - le mot et l'idée représentée par lui dans les oeuvres de Tertullien", Revue d'Histoire Ecclesiastique, 40 (1944-45), 17-24.

³ ibid, 14-16; also the same author in "Le développement de la 'disciplina' sous l'action du Saint-Esprit chez Tertullien", Revue d'Histoire Ecclesiastique, 35 (1939), 254.

⁴ ibid., p 24.

⁵ ibid., p 26-41.

repentance before baptism

discipline/conduct

Rule of Faith

"Concerning the word 'repentance' in Tertullian"

repentance before baptism

repentance after baptism

"Discipline - the word and the idea represented by it in the works of Tertullian" - periodical article in the "Review of Ecclesiastical History"

"The development of 'discipline' under the influence of the Holy Spirit in Tertullian", - periodical article in the "Review of Ecclesiastical History"

Church, it seems appropriate, for both of the reasons mentioned, to refer to the practical instruction of catechumens only under the title paenitentia prima.

There were compelling practical reasons¹ why the Church should supervise the conduct of a catechumen and reject his application for baptism, if he failed to pass her scrutiny, but Tertullian's requirements went far beyond any reasonable apprehension that the Church might be discredited. He believed that a catechumen would fail to establish a saving relationship with God if he did not only undertake paenitentia² but also persevere with it right up to the time of his baptism. The task of the catechist was therefore two-fold. He had to teach the catechumen the distinctive features of Christian paenitentia, and at the same time he had to supervise the catechumen, as far as it was humanly possible, to ensure that the teaching was carried out in practice.

¹ Tertullian was concerned that Church members should not bring discredit on the Church. He invited (and wanted to be able to invite) the critics of Christianity to go into the prisons, and to inspect the criminal records: among the murderers, thieves and debauchees, how many would they find who would at the same time be noted as Christians? Not a single one. In the apologeticum and ad Scapulam, he confidently asserted that Christians were honest citizens, prompt tax-payers, and loyal to the Emperor. His fight to secure toleration for the Church would be discredited if members of the Church were brought before the courts on criminal charges, particularly if charged with crimes which threatened the welfare of the State. He recognised that, inevitably, a few would be received into the Church and then prove an embarrassment to her, but it was important to him to keep these renegades to a tiny minority of members - Maior boni portio modico malo ad testimonium sui utitur. Cum tamen aliquos de nostris malos probatis, iam hoc ipso Christianos non probatis. Quaerite sectam cui malitiae deputatur. Ipsi in conloquio, si quando aduersus nos, "cur ille," inquitis, "fraudator, si abstinentes Christiani? cur immitis, si misericordes?" - I nat 5.3.19-5.24.

² No attempt is made here to translate 'paenitentia'. Some editors have used the English words 'repentance' and 'penance' for paenitentia prima and paenitentia secunda respectively, with a third word, 'penitence' when both concepts seem to be intended. There is no one word which will adequately convey all that Tertullian meant by paenitentia, and to leave it in Latin avoids the problems which Saint ran into when he wrote, "In the translation 'repentance', 'penance', and 'penitence' will be used as seems most appropriate in each context." (op. cit. p 135). His reviewers did not approve of his choice of what was appropriate in each context - particularly Ernest Evans, in the Journal of Ecclesiastical History, II (1960), 228-229.

repentance before baptism

repentance

"Apology" and "To Scapula" (two of Tertullian's treatises)

The goodness of the larger portion is well attested by the slender flaw. But although you prove that some of our people are evil, you do not hereby prove that they are Christians. Search and see whether there is any sect to which a partial shortcoming is imputed as a general stain. You are accustomed in conversation yourselves to say, in disparagement of us, Why is so-and-so deceitful, when the Christians are so self-denying? Why merciless, when they are so merciful?

repentance

repentance before baptism - repentance after baptism

Paenitentia was a common enough concept and the word was in everyday use in Tertullian's time (although not found in classical Latin), so Tertullian had first of all to teach his catechumens the difference between the Christian and the pagan uses of the word.¹ He singled out three distinctive features of Christian paenitentia:

- (a) Christian paenitentia always made men better, for Christians never repented of good opinions, but only of bad ones; pagan paenitentia could, ironically, make men worse instead of better - "Quam autem in paenitentiae actu inrationabiliter deuersentur, uel uno isto satis erit expedire, cum illam etiam in bonis factis suis adhibent."² When they were rebuffed, they repented that they had shown loyalty, love, generosity, patience, mercy and similar virtues; because they had been slighted, they resolved never to do good again.³ Christian paenitentia by contrast could never grieve for a good deed and would never repent of what was good in order to adopt what was evil.

"Ceterum ratio eius, quam cognito domino discimus, certam formam tenet, ne bonis umquam factis cogitatisue quasi uiolenta aliqua manus iniiciatur. Deus enim reprobationem bonorum ratam non habet utpote suorum."

¹ Paenitentiam hoc genus homines quod et ipsi retro fuimus, caeci sine domini lumine, natura tenus norunt passionem animi quandam esse quae obueniat de offensa sententiae prioris - paen 1.1.2-5.

ignorantes quique deum quoque eius ignorent necesse est quia nullius omnino thesaurus extraneis patet - paen 1.3.9-10.

Samuel McComb in the article 'Repentance' in Hasting's Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1918) vol 10, at p 734, criticised Tertullian for introducing into theology an imperfect understanding of Christian paenitentia, giving the above passages as Tertullian's definition of repentance. Tertullian, however, was deliberately setting out the pagan concept of repentance, in order to contrast it (in the following chapter) with the Christian concept, and to reject the pagan concept as inadequate. Tertullian wanted to make it clear that no one could understand Christian paenitentia unless he had been taught it by a Christian.

² paen 1.4.13-15. The same idea is found in II Marc 24.

³ paen 1.4.15-5.20.

⁴ paen 2.8.34-9.38.

repentance

How unreasonably they conduct themselves in the practice of penitence will be sufficiently shown by this single circumstance, that they give themselves to it, even when their deeds are virtuous.

Now the nature of repentance, which we learn when we come to know the Lord, establishes the definite rule that no violent had so to speak, must ever be laid on any good deed or design. God we may be sure will not sanction the reprobation of good deeds.

Men who are as we ourselves once were, blind and unenlightened by the Lord, see in repentance nothing more than nature teaches them a certain affection of the soul caused by a past decision which gives offence.

All those who are ignorant of God are, of necessity, ignorant also of what is His, for no one's property is ever laid open to strangers.

Those who undertook Christian paenitentia would sin less and less frequently, because under Christian tuition they would acquire a right understanding of paenitentia and would realise that it had to be restricted to things that were sinful¹ - "... ita in paenitentiae quoque causa iustitiam deo praestandam esse? Quod quidem ita impleri licebit, si peccatis solummodo adhibeatur."²

(b) Christian paenitentia was always directed towards God.

The second distinction between pagan and Christian paenitentia was that Christian paenitentia was directed toward God, whereas pagan paenitentia gave no place to the offensiveness of the past action in the sight of God. (The nearest which classical Latin had got to the concept of paenitentia was the impersonal sense of remorse represented by phrases like poenitet me or pudet me.) Christian paenitentia, by contrast, was performed to restore a sinner to a right relationship with God and it was not only directed toward God, but it was accepted by Him - Omnibus ergo delictis . . . ueniam per paenitentiam spondit . . .³ Christian paenitentia was required only because the relationship with God had been disrupted, and the purpose of such paenitentia was to restore the sinner to the friendship of God and so to effect his salvation.

(c) Christian paenitentia always had practical outworkings.

Christian paenitentia was further distinguished from pagan paenitentia in that the latter might be nothing more than a "passio animi quandam . . . quae obueniat de offensa sententiae prioris."⁴ Tertullian stressed, particularly in chapter five of de paenitentia, that Christian paenitentia

¹ paen 2.1.1-5

² paen 2.12.49-51.

³ paen 4.1.1. and 3.

⁴ paen 1.1.3-5.

repentance

... so too in the case of repentance, justice must be rendered to God?
And this can be done properly only if repentance is restricted to
things that are sinful.

it brings regret to me - it brings shame to me

For all sins He has promised that pardon will follow upon repentance ...

a certain affection of the soul, caused by a past decision which gives
offence.

"On Repentance" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

always involved conversio, an actio as well as a passio; it was something one did, not simply something one felt or experienced - figere paenitentiam in corde; paenitentiam incubare; in actu paenitentiae; per paenitentiam delinquere, recte facere. It is true - as these expressions show - that paenitentia could be, even for pagans, an activity and not merely a psychic state, but for Tertullian the idea of passio animi was quite over-shadowed by the conversio of life, which he regarded as essential if paenitentia was to bring a sinner to a new relationship with God. "ubi emendatio nulla, paenitentia necessario uana, quia caret fructu suo suo cui eam deus servit, id est hominis salute."¹

Since both body and soul had shared the guilt of sin, each must have its part in the paenitentia which dealt with sin.² Accordingly, both sorrow for sin and conversio to a new way of life were required.³ It was quite wrong, Tertullian believed, to say that conduct did not affect one's relationship to God, so long as one's attitude purported to be reverent. To those who argued thus, Tertullian wrote:

Sed aiunt quidam satis dominum habere si corde et animo suscipiatur, licet actu minus fiat; itaque se saluo metu et fide peccare, hoc est salua castitate matrimonia uiolare, salua pietate parenti uenenum temperare. Sic ergo et ipsi salua uenia in gehennam detrudentur.⁴

Since it was no more possible to sin and at the same time to improve one's relationship to God, than it was possible to commit adultery and to keep one's

¹ paen 2.2.6-8.

² This is the theme of de paenitentia chapter 3, summed up by Tertullian himself in these words - Hoc eo praemisimus ut non minorem alteri quam utrique parti, si quid deliquerit, paenitentiae necessitatem intellegamus impendere; communis reatus amborum est, communis et iudex, deus scilicet; communis igitur et paenitentiae medella - paen 3.7.25-29.

³ As illustrated by the verbs which he used - amplexari (4.2), inuadere (2.13:4.2), capessere (6.1), cogere (2.10), adsumere (6.1), adhibere (2.12), adimplere (6.4), includere (6.1), suscipere (5.1), fungi (5.2).

⁴ paen 5.10.36-40.

conversion/change of lifestyle - action - feeling

to affix/fasten repentance in one's heart; to rest upon/brood over repentance; in the doing of/delivery of repentance; to be wanting/to fall short through repentance, to act correctly.

repentance

feeling of the soul

conversion/change

and where there is no conversion, repentance must needs be vain, since it fails to produce the fruit for which God planted it, that is, the salvation of man

Some say, however, that God is satisfied if He be honoured in heart and mind, even though this be not done externally. Thus they sin, yet lose not reverential fear and faith. That is to say, they lose not chastity and commit adultery! They lose not filial piety and poison a parent! So also will they lose not pardon and be cast down into hell, seeing that they sin and lose not reverential fear.

"On Repentance" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

This we have said, by way of preface, so that we may understand that penance is no less necessary to one component than it is to the other, if in anything it should have sinned. Both have a common guilt and a common judge, I mean God: therefore the remedy of penance is also common to them both.

to embrace; to take hold of/go into; to seize eagerly/to take hold of with zeal; to press/bring together; to take to oneself/receive; to apply; to fill full/perform; to embrace/keep; to undertake/enter on; to busy oneself/perform/observe.

chastity, or to poison one's parents and to keep one's filial duty, the catechist had not only to teach the catechumen the meaning of Christian paenitentia, but he had to persuade the catechumen:-

- (a) to undertake paenitentia in such a way that it would not only pass the external scrutiny of the Church but would pass the scrutiny of God, who Himself would examine the paenitentia, and
- (b) to cover every aspect of his life in his paenitentia, and
- (c) to persevere in that paenitentia right up to the moment of baptism.

These three, fundamental to establishing a right relationship with God, are all brought out in one passage of de paenitentia; it will shortly be quoted in full, and then the three aspects will be examined separately. It is a passage which reflects Tertullian's determination to dispel any notion that the mere fact of commencing, or even of appearing to complete, paenitentia prima could in itself improve a catechumen's standing before God. He argued that God was not obliged to honour paenitentia as such, even if it led the Church into baptising the candidate; God would honour only paenitentia which passed His own scrutiny. As a merchant examined a coin, to see whether it was clipped or plated or counterfeit, before concluding a contract of sale, so the Lord would test paenitentia, to see whether the catechumen had genuinely turned from sin, before granting forgiveness of sin. The passage is quoted in full as it appears in the text of Tertullian's works, but for clarity it is (artificially) divided into three paragraphs to denote the three points to be examined, and these are taken up in reverse order to the text; the passage reads as follows:

dicunt quidem pristinis renuntiare et paenitentiam adsumunt, sed includere eam neglegunt. Interpellat enim illos ad desiderandum ex pristinis aliquid ipse finis desiderandi, uelut poma, cum iam in acorem uel amaritudinem senescere incipiunt, ex parte aliqua tamen adhuc ipsi gratiae suae adulantur.

Omne praeterea cunctationis et tergiuersationis erga paenitentiam uitium praesumptio intinctionis inportat. Certi enim indubitatae ueniae delictorum medium tempus interim furantur et commeatum sibi faciunt delinquendi quam eruditionem non delinquendi.

repentance

"On Repentance" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

repentance before baptism

They say, indeed, that they renounce the past, and they do begin to do penance, yet they fail to bring it to completion. The very termination of desire incites them to embrace something of their old desires, just as fruits which have already begun to turn bitter and sour with age, still flatter themselves, to some extent, upon their charms.

It is a rash confidence in the efficacy of Baptism which leads to all of this culpable delay and hesitancy in the matter of repentance. Since they are certain of an assured pardon for their sins, they steal, meanwhile, the intervening time and make of it an interlude for sinning, rather than for learning not to sin.

Quam porro ineptum, quam peruersum paenitentiam non adimplere et ueniam delictorum sustinere, hoc est pretium non exhibere et ad mercedem manum emittere! Hoc enim pretio dominus ueniam addicere instituit, hac paenitentiae compensatione redimendam proponit inpunitatem. Si ergo qui uenditant prius nummum quo paciscuntur examinant ne scalptus ne uersus ne adulter, non etiam dominum credimus paenitentiae probationem prius inire tantam nobis mercedem, perennis scilicet uitae, concessurum? ¹

(a) Paenitentia was scrutinised by God Himself

The passages in which Tertullian emphasised that God looked at the heart as well as the deed, looked behind the outward performance to the motive, were listed in chapter VI.7. It is a relevant emphasis for this chapter also. The lengthy passage just quoted concluded with the picture of God scrutinising paenitentia as a merchant scrutinised a coin offered to him in a commercial transaction, to see whether or not it was genuine.

To a degree, the Church could supervise the paenitentia of the catechumen, but only to a degree. She could test his knowledge and life-style as she saw them; she could refuse baptism if his understanding of the faith or if his manner of life was not worthy of his profession of faith; but catechists could not see into the hearts of their catechumens.² So Tertullian warned catechumens that a saving relationship with God, normally to be secured by baptism at the end of the catechumenate, might elude the catechumen if he went through the forms of paenitentia without a corresponding change of heart. The price at which the Lord had agreed to sell (addicere) His merchandise (uenia delictorum) was adimpletio paenitenitae. If the price was not paid, sin would not be forgiven. It was no good to state publicly that one had given up the specious pleasures of the world, if inwardly one was cultivating worldly desires. External paenitentia without heartfelt renunciation of sin would not satisfy God, and would not bring

¹ paen 6.1.7-5.26.

² Furto quidem adgredi et praepositum hius rei adseuerationibus tuis circumduci facile est - paen 6.10.39-40.

What folly it is, what perversity, to practice an imperfect repentance and then to expect a pardon for sin! This is to stretch forth one's hand for merchandise and not to pay the price. And the price which the Lord has set on the purchase of pardon is this - He offers impunity to be bought in exchange for repentance. If, then merchants first examine a coin, which they have stipulated as their price, to see that it be not clipped or plated or counterfeit, do we not believe that the Lord also, pre-examines our repentance, seeing that He is going to give us so great a reward, to wit, life everlasting?

repentance

to see/make over (judicially = to award/judge)

the pardon of sins

completed (full) repentance

It is easy of course to approach it dishonestly, and to cause the one who is in charge of this affair to be deceived by your protestations.

to the catechumen the pardon of God, because such paenitentia was without one of its essential elements, namely a change of heart toward God.

(b) Paenitentia had to cover every area of life

The second concern, which comes out of the centre section of the passage quoted above, was lest any catechumens should omit certain areas of life from their paenitentia. Teeuwen has shown,¹ from an examination of various expressions in de paenitentia chapter six, that Tertullian's concern here was for those catechumens who were unwilling to give up completely a life of sin before they were baptized, and not (as Oehler and Thelwall had believed) those who failed to persevere to baptism - although that also was in Tertullian's mind, as is examined below. This is not the place to itemise all the areas of life which Tertullian believed should be covered in the preparation for baptism, as that would lead to a full description of the life of the Christian, which is outside the scope of this study; briefly, however, it appears that certain catechumens believed Tertullian's requirements to be too exacting, because they suggested :

"differamus tantisper paenitentiae ueritatem: tunc opinor emendatos licebit, cum absoluimur."

Tertullian replied:

Nulla pacto, sed cum pendente uenia poena prospicitur, cum adhuc liberari non meremur, ut possimus mereri, cum deus comminatur, non eum ignoscit. Quis enim seruus, posteaquam libertate mutatus est, furta sua et fugas sibi imputat? quis miles, postquam castris suis emissus est, pro notis suis satagit? Peccator ante ueniam deflere se debet, quia tempus paenitentiae idem quod periculi et timoris. 2

Tertullian was concerned that if all areas of life were not brought under control before baptism, sin would reappear, and so he insisted on virtually the full saving relationship between the catechumen and God being established before baptism,

¹ op. cit., p 412-444.

² paen 6.6.26-8.34. The relationship between paenitentia prima and baptism is examined in Section VIII.6 below.

repentance

"On Repentance" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

But let us postpone, for a while, our complete conversion. When we are baptised, then, I fancy, will be time enough to be free from fault.

By no means! Rather we should rid ourselves of sin when pardon is in abeyance and punishment in prospect: when we do not yet merit deliverance, so that we may be able to merit it when God threatens, not when He pardons. For what slave once his condition is changed for that of freedom feels shame for his thefts and truancy? What soldier, after his discharge from the army, bothers about his brands? A sinner ought to weep for his faults before they are pardoned because the time of penitence is also a time of danger and of dread.

repentance before baptism

indeed well before baptism. It gave the catechist the opportunity of assessing whether the catechumen was ready to be presented for baptism,¹ and it gave the catechumen the opportunity of deciding whether he was ready to accept the implications of baptism, because any reversion to his former pattern of behaviour, after baptism, would destroy the improved relationship with God which paenitentia had achieved.

Hoc enim dico; paenitentiam, quae per dei gratiam ostensa et indicta nobis in gratiam nos domino reuocat, semel cognitam atque susceptam numquam posthac iteratione delicti resignari oportere. Iam quidem nullum ignorantiae praetextum patrocinator tibi, quod domino adgnito praeceptisque eius admissis, denique paenitentia delictorum functus, rursus te in delicta restituis. 2

Since the time of the catechumenate was the time to lay the foundation for a life-long relationship with God, it was important to dispel any notion that certain areas of conduct, even if they did not involve the outside world, could be omitted from paenitentia prima and be dealt with after baptism. The only paenitentia which would make baptism effective, was paenitentiae veritas, in which all sin was completely abandoned.

(c) Paenitentia must not be relaxed

Tertullian's third concern - although obviously the three shade into each other and cannot be treated in isolation - was lest the catechumen should relax paenitentia as he progressed through the catechumenate, particularly in the final stages which led up to baptism: "Nemo ergo sibi aduleatur quia inter auditorum tirocinia deputatur, quasi eo etiam nunc sibi delinquere liceat."³ Perilous indeed

¹ The catechumenate, as a period of probation to test the sincerity of the candidate's petition and to prove his ability to lead the sinless life demanded of a Christian, has been examined by Franz Joseph Dölger, 'Das Garantiewerk der Bekehrung als Bedingung und Sicherung bei der Annahme zur Taufe', in Antike und Christentum, 3 (1932) 260-77 and by Eduard Schwartz, 'Busstufen und Katechumenatsklassen', in Gesammelte Schriften, Fünfter Band, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1963, pp 274-362.

² paen 5.1.1-2.7.

³ paen 6.14.53-54.

repentance

A point I now insist upon is this, that the repentance which has been revealed to us by the grace of God, which is required of us and which brings us back to favour/grace with the Lord, must never, once we have known and embraced it, be violated thereafter by a return to sin. In this case, no plea of ignorance excuses you for you have known the Lord, you have accepted His law and then, after engaging in repentance for your sin, you give yourself over to sin again.

repentance before baptism

true repentance

Let no one flatter himself, therefore, that because he is classed among the auditors in the catechumenate, he is on this account still permitted to sin.

"The Securing-Work of Conversion as a Condition/Stipulation and Securing/Ensuring in Acceptability in Baptism" - article in Antiquity and Christianity.

"Steps in Penance and the Classes of the Catechumenate" - in "Collected Writings, Vol Five."

was the spiritual state of the man who had started paenitentia but who failed to maintain it, and even those inter auditorum tirocinia could not relax. The formidable step of commencing paenitentia prima did not bring about a saving relationship with God; it had to be persevered in, right through to baptism. The catechumen had the prospect of the forgiveness of sins, of a relationship with Jesus Christ, of the gift of the Spirit and entrance to the Church, but Tertullian gave the catechumen no assurance that his response to the divine initiative at any interim stage of the catechumenate was sufficient to merit the forgiveness of sins. The burden lay with the catechumen to persevere with his paenitentia right up to the time of baptism. The promise of the forgiveness of sin in baptism did not entitle him to relax his paenitentia prima in any way, rashly anticipating the pardon which he hoped to receive. Forgiveness could be achieved by baptism, but only if the candidate had already ceased to sin; he was not to be baptised in order that he might cease to sin. Whether this activity on the part of the catechumen was regarded by Tertullian as making satisfactio (or compensatio) to God will be taken up at the end of section VIII.5 below, and the relationship of paenitentia prima to baptism will be examined in the section after that.

repentance

among the auditors/hearers in the catechumenate

repentance before baptism

satisfaction - compensation

308

VIII.4 SALVATION WAS ONLY IN THE CHURCH

Tertullian drew several conclusions from the Pauline analogy of the union of Christ and his Church with that of Adam and Eve, the most important being that there could be only one Church: apostolus in ecclesiam et Christum interpretatur 'erunt duo in unum carnem' secundum spiritales nuptias ecclesiae et Christi - unus enim Christus et una eius ecclesia - . . . De uno matrimonio censemur utrobique, et carnaliter in Adam et spiritaliter in Christo.¹ Although that particular text comes from his Montanist period, Tertullian at all times claimed for the Church the exclusive right to the sacraments which led to salvation. He interpreted Matthew 28.19 as a directive given to the Church only and used it to exclude heretical (or any other) baptism; the Church's monopoly of salvation comes out in the comparison of her to a storm-tossed ship² and in the phrase, common in the early Fathers, extra ecclesiam nulla salus. Tertullian dealt with this subject more fully in a Greek treatise, no longer extant, but if a heretic had received baptism in his own sect, and then applied to join the orthodox Church, Tertullian insisted that true baptism had to be administered to him. No other baptism was valid, and the pretended baptism of heretics, by their own sect, was null and void.

Vnum omnino baptismum est nobis tam ex domini euangelio quam et apostoli litteris quoniam unus deus et unum baptismum et una ecclesia in caelis. Sed Circa haereticos sane quae custodiendum sit, dignius qui retractet. Ad nos enim editum est, haeretici autem nullum consortium habent nostrae disciplinae, quos extraneos utique testatur ipsa ademptio communicationis. ³

It stood to reason that a man who was himself outside the Church could not convey the forgiveness of sin or the Spirit in baptism, and thus an ex-heretic or

¹ ex 5.3.16-19 and 4.22-23.

² e.g. navis ecclesiae - pud 13.20.79 and in arcae typo - idol 24.4.6.

³ bapt 15.1.4-2.10. (Circa has a capital C because (Sed) is in brackets in the text).

The apostle interprets of the Church and Christ the words, "the two shall be one flesh" in accordance with the spiritual marriage of the Church and Christ, for Christ is one and his Church is one ... We think of one marriage in both cases, but carnally in Adam and spiritually in Christ,

there is no salvation outside the Church

"There is to us one and but one baptism, as well according to the Lord's gospel as according to the apostle's letters, in as much as (he says) 'One God, and one baptism, and one Church in the heavens'. But it must be admitted that the question, 'What rules are to be observed with regard to heretics?' is worthy of being discussed. For it is to us (catholics) that that assertion refers. Heretics, however, have no fellowship in our discipline, whom the mere fact of their excommunication testifies to be outsiders."

The ship of the Church

as a type of the Ark

in regard to - but

schismatic would have to be baptised anew when he came into the Church. Since baptism, following on profession of faith, was a critical event, in Tertullian's judgment, in establishing a right relationship with God, the Church effectively controlled the means of salvation. The actions of the Church, performed in God's name, were God's actions.

As far as is known, Tertullian never devoted the sustained and precise attention to thought about the Church that would have issued in a treatise "de ecclesia", but it is very evident that his conception of the Church shifted with his progress from orthodoxy to Montanism.¹ This will be looked at in detail in Excursus Four, but here it can be briefly summarised by saying that in his pre-Montanist days, he taught that the Church was a visible, magisterial and hierarchical organisation, founded by Christ through the Apostles. As a Montanist, Tertullian conceived of the true Church, the Church of the Spirit, as an amorphous group within the external Church of the bishops. However, in both of his conceptions of the Church, Tertullian upheld the claim of all the orthodox writers of Christian antiquity, that the Church had not only the power to control admission to baptism but that the Church had a monopoly of admission to valid baptism. There was no valid baptism outside the Church, and (except for martyrdom) no salvation without baptism. So not only did the Church hold that baptism was essential for salvation, but the Church supervised the progress of the enquirer through the catechumenate until the Church deemed that he or she was ready for baptism. When the Church decided that the catechumen was adequately instructed and had shown evidence of change of life, the time had come for the final preparations for baptism. These (and their effect on the relationship to God) are now examined.

¹ Examined in Excursus Four.

"On the Church"

VIII.5 THE FINAL STAGES OF PREPARATION FOR BAPTISM

When the catechumen had finished his period of probation and had satisfied the Church that he was iam corde lotus,¹ he could in cases of necessity or of danger of death or in times of persecution, receive baptism without further delay:

sufficit scilicet et in necessitatibus ut utaris sicubi aut loci aut temporis aut personae condicio compellit: tunc enim constantia succurrentis excipitur cum urguetur circumstantia periclitantis, quoniam reus erit perditioni hominis si supersederit praestare quod libere potuit. 2

In such a situation, even a Christian layman (but never a woman) could baptise, but he ought not to do so except in case of urgent necessity; the necessity arose because without baptism, either of water or of blood, there was no assurance of salvation. Normally, the minister of baptism would be the bishop or, with his permission, a presbyter or deacon,³ and the usual time for baptizing was at Easter:

Diem baptismo sollemniorem pascha praestat cum et passio domini in qua tingimur adimpleta est. Nec incongruenter ad figuram interpretabitur quod cum ultimum pascha dominus esset acturus missis discipulis ad praeparandum - Conuenietis, inquit, hominem aquam baiulantem - paschae celebrandae locum de signo aquae ostendit. 4

In Tertullian's day the Pascha was a forty hour fast from sunset or midnight on

¹ paen 6.17.63.

² bapt 17.3.15-19.

³ Dandi quidem summum habet ius summus sacerdos, si qui est, episcopus; dehinc presbyteri et diaconi, non tamen sine episcopi auctoritate, propter ecclesiae honorem quo saluo salua pax est. Alioquin etiam laicis ius est - bapt 17.1.3-2.6. Later, in ex 7, he argued that since a layman could administer baptism in cases of emergency where no clergyman was available, and since a priest was not allowed to contract a second marriage, being ipso facto deprived of his priestly functions if he did, a layman also should avoid taking a second wife, in order that he might be free to administer the sacrament should necessity arise.

⁴ bapt 19.1.1-7.

already clean of heart (i.e. washed)

it is enough that you should use (this right) in emergencies, if ever conditions of place or time or person demand it. The boldness of a rescuer is acceptable when the situation of the endangered one is urgent, since he will be guilty of a man's destruction if he forbears to give the help he is free and able to give.

The Passover provides the day of most solemnity for baptism, for then was accomplished our Lord's passion, and into it we are baptised. With fairly good reason we could interpret it as a type, that when our Lord was about to keep his last Passover he sent his disciples to make ready, with the remark, "You shall meet a man carrying water." By the sign of water he indicated the place for the Passover to be celebrated.

The supreme right of giving it belongs to the high priest, which is the bishop: after him to the presbyters and deacons, yet not without commission from the bishop, on account of the Church's dignity: for when it is safe, peace is safe. Except for that even laymen have the right.

by that very deed

Maundy Thursday to midday or sunset on Saturday;¹ baptism at Carthage took place on the Saturday evening. (The Roman custom, according to Hippolytus, was to baptize at cockcrow on Easter day.²) Pentecost was the next most suitable time for those who through indisposition or any other reason could not be baptised at Easter, but by this Tertullian did not mean only the fiftieth day after Easter. The later custom was to baptize on the eve of the day of Pentecost, but Tertullian regarded this whole period (spatium) of fifty days between Easter and the day of Pentecost as suitable because it all commemorated the post-resurrection appearances of Christ.³ The practice of restricting the normal times for baptism to Easter and to Pentecost no doubt not only gave solemnity to the rite, but also enabled the bishop to act as the chief minister at baptism. However, Tertullian was careful to point out that Ceterum omnis dies domini est, omnis hora, omne tempus habile baptimo: si de sollemnitate interest, de gratia nihil refert.⁴

Whenever the appointed time for baptism approached, those ingressuri baptismum⁵ had to increase their personal opera paenitentiae in anticipation that the devil, sensing that his prey would shortly escape him, would attempt a last assault to hold him; so in the days leading up to baptism, the catechumen had to redouble his vigilance, and to protect himself from the devil by frequent

¹ Schümmer, Johannes, Die Altchristliche Fastenpraxis mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Schriften Tertullians, (Münster: Aschendorff, 1933), p 51.

² Apostolic Tradition XXI.I

³ Exinde pentecoste ordiandis lauacris laetissimum spatium est quo et domini resurrectio inter discipulos frequentata est et gratia spiritus sancti dedicata et spes aduentus domini subostensa - bapt 19.2.8-11.

⁴ bapt 19.3.16-18.

⁵ bapt 20.1.1. At Rome they were called electi; in Africa generally they were called competentes, but Tertullian designated them simply as ingressuri baptismum: Christine Mohrmann, Die altchristliche Sondersprache in den Sermones des Hl. Augustin, (Nijmegen: Dekker und van de Vegt, 1932), p 90 and Dekkers, op. cit., pp 167-69.

period of time

For all that, every day is a Lord's day: any hour, any season, is suitable for baptism. If there is a difference of solemnity, it makes no difference to the grace.

about to enter on baptism

works of repentance

Ancient Christian Practice at Lent with special reference to the Writings of Tertullian (Book)

After that, Pentecost is a most auspicious period for arranging baptisms, for during it our Lord's resurrection was several times made known among the disciples, and the grace of the Holy Spirit first given, and the hope of our Lord's Coming made evident

picked/slected/chosen

competent persons

about to enter on baptism

Ancient Christian Distinctive Speech in the Sermons of St. Augustine (Book)

prayers, fasts and vigils:

orationibus crebris, ieiuniis et geniculationibus et peruigiliis orare opertet et cum confessione omnium retro delictorum, ut exponant etiam baptismum Iohannis. ¹

The final stages of preparation for baptism were critical for establishing a correct relationship with God for the years that lay ahead - the devil's attempts to undo the work of baptism would be violent and persistent; the answer provided by God and offered by Tertullian was the solid foundation laid in the paenitentia prima of the catechumentate. Only if he was thoroughly grounded in the faith could he resist every weapon of temptation which the devil would use to try to overpower and captivate once more his former slave:

si qua possit aut oculos concupiscentia carnali ferire aut animum inlecebris saecularibus inretire aut fidem terrenae potestatis formidine euertere aut a uia certa peruersis traditionibus detorquere. ²

This second phase of the catechumenate was probably of short duration - perhaps it coincided with the weeks of Lent, leading up to baptism at Eastertide - and it may have been supervised, perhaps even examined, by the bishop himself.³ Whether these fasts, vigils and prostrations had, as their goal, the attraction of God's mercy, i.e. whether they made any actual contribution to the forgiveness of sins, or whether they merely provided outward evidence to the bishop of the inward and spiritual state which was required of the catechumen before admission to baptism, is difficult to decide on the scant evidence provided by Tertullian. simul enim de pristinis satisfacimus conflictatione carnis et spiritus, et subsequituris temptationibus munimenta praestruimus.⁴ Saint suggested it might mean that the pre-baptismal paenitentia contributed to the

¹ bapt 20.1.1-4.

² paen 7.9.30-33.

³ bapt 18.1.5.

⁴ bapt 20.1.7-9.

to pray, with frequent prayers, fastings, bendings of the knee, and all-night vigils, along with the confession of all their former sins, so as to make a copy of the baptism of John

repentance before baptism

in the hope that by some means or other he may be able to strike his eyes with concupiscence of the flesh or else entangle his soul with wordly delights or else to destroy his faith through fear of the civil authorities or else to bring him to deviate from the right way by perverted doctrines.

At the same time we make amends for things past by affliction of flesh and spirit, and build up defences against the temptations that are to follow.

repentance

actual forgiveness of sin;¹ it is a question of whether satisfacimus yet meant more than "express contrition"; in later years, it came to mean "satisfaction to the Divine Justice" but this legal view of the relation of the sinner to God does not seem to be in Tertullian's mind. Certainly Poschmann² and Teeuwen³ thought not - they saw these opera paenitentiae simply as a progression in the paenitentia which began with the turning away from sin and which would be sealed by receiving the sacrament of baptism. This topic is, however, better explored when the relationship between paenitentia prima, baptism and the merits of Christ is looked at detail in the next section.

¹ Saint, op. cit., p 153.

² Bernard Poschmann, Der Ablass im Licht der Bussgeschichte, (Bonn: P. Hanstein, 1948) p 1 ff.

³ Teeuwen op. cit., p 415.

we make amends

works of repentance

repentance

repentance before baptism

Indulgence in the Light of the History of Penance (Book)

VIII.6 THE RELATIONSHIP OF PAENITENTIA PRIMA TO BAPTISM AND OF BOTH TO THE MERITS OF CHRIST, IN DETERMINING THE RELATIONSHIP OF MAN TO GOD

The whole process of conversion, including both the subjective element of turning away from sin in personal penitence and the objective element supplied by the external rite of baptism, is sometimes collectively described in Tertullian's terminology as the prima planctus salutis or as paenitentia prima. This section uses the words paenitentia prima in the more restricted sense of the sinner's subjective reaction against his sin and guilt, a reaction which is here described simply as paenitentia.

Tertullian believed, with great sincerity, and at one and the same time, that

(a) paenitentia was essential for salvation

Omnibus ergo delictis seu carne seu spiritu, seu facto seu uoluntate commissis qui poenam per iudicium destinavit, idem et ueniam per paenitentiam spondit dicens ad populum: 'Paenitere et saluum faciam te'. 1

(b) baptism was for essential for salvation

Cum uero praescribitur nemini sine baptismo competere salutem ex illa maxime pronuntiatione domini qui ait: 'Nisi natus ex aqua quis erit non habebit uitam'. 2

(c) faith was essential for salvation

de Deo natum omnem qui crediderit Iesum esse Christum. Propter quod et hortatur, 'ut credamus nomini Filii eius Iesu Christi,' ut scilicet 'communio sit nobis cum Patre et Filio eius Iesu Christo'. 3

(d) the death of Christ was essential for salvation

nec mors nostra dissolui posset nisi domini passione nec uita restitui sine resurrectione ipsius. 4

¹ paen 4.1.1-4.

² bapt 12.1.1-4.

³ Prax 28.5.20-23.

⁴ bapt 11.4.21-23.

the first plank of salvation - repentance before baptism

(based on, not quoted from, par 12.9.36)

repentance

For all sins, therefore, whether they be committed by the flesh or by the spirit, whether in deed or in desire, He who has appointed that chastisement follow upon judgment, has also promised that pardon will follow upon repentance for He says to the people: Repent and I will save you. Again He says: I live, saith the Lord and I prefer repentance rather than death.

Now there is a standing rule that without baptism no man can obtain salvation. It derives in particular from that (well-known) pronouncement of our Lord, who says: "Except a man be born of water he cannot have life."

"Every one who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God;" for this reason he also exhorts us "to believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ", so that, he says, "we may have fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ."

for neither could our death be annulled except by our Lord's passion nor our life be restored apart from his resurrection.

Clearly, therefore, any statement which purports to emphasise one aspect at the expense of the others must be put into the context of the whole, and a complete picture will have to set out the God-ward and the man-ward aspects of salvation, the part played by paenitentia in relation to the part played by baptism, and so on. Some of the most significant of Tertullian's texts are those in which he himself expressed the way one aspect of the relationship shaded into another.

A point which is often overlooked, when the relationship of paenitentia to baptism in Tertullian is discussed, is Tertullian's concern for the ultimate salvation of the candidate for baptism. The stress which he placed on the preparation necessary for the worthy reception of the sacrament may seem to hedge it about with conditions far and above what Scripture taught. To an extent that was true, but Tertullian was not looking to the spiritual standing of the neophyte on the day following baptism, or even the week or the month following baptism - he was (because of his severe view of post-baptismal sin) looking for a life-long relationship with God, which would not be marred by a relapse into sin. Therefore, for baptism to be effective and to remain effective for the forgiveness of all sin, the candidate should already have formed in himself the disposition necessary for a sin-free life. With that 'definition' of salvation, i.e. Tertullian's long-term concern for the individual, not just the immediate effect of baptism, the four statements made above and marked (a), (b), (c) and (d) can now be examined in more detail.

(a) Paenitentia was essential for salvation but . . .

The emphasis of the opening chapters of the treatise de paenitentia was naturally on the importance of the part played by paenitentia, as the text quoted above illustrates. Nevertheless, even in the treatise de paenitentia, Tertullian pointed out the need for baptism: "Itaque audientes optare intinctionem, non praesumere oportet. Qui enim optat, honorat; qui praesumit, superbit."¹ The

¹ paen 6.20.75-21.77.

repentance

"On Repentance" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

Accordingly, the catechumens ought to desire baptism yet they ought not to receive it presumptuously. He who desires it, honours it: he who receives it presumptuously despises it.

emphasis was on the need for the worthy reception of baptism, after, but only after, due paenitentia, "quidquid in corde hominis ignorantia contaminasset, id paenitentia auerrens et eradens et foras abiciens mundam pectoris domum superuenturo spiritui sancto paret quo se ille cum caelestibus bonis libens inferat."¹ The problem of reconciling the efficacy of baptism with the efficacy of paenitentia does not seem to have troubled Tertullian; he stated without embarrassment that both were necessary, and he called baptism the reward of genuine paenitentia:

Lauacrum illud obsignatio est fidei, quae fides a paenitentiae fide incipitur et commendatur. Non ideo abluimur ut delinquere desinamus sed quia desiimus, quoniam iam corde loti sumus: haec enim prima audientis intinctio est. Metus integer exinde quod dominum senserit, fides sana conscientia semel paenitentiam amplexata! 2

Because Tertullian wished to emphasise that cleansing was effected first by a man's own personal penitence and only then by the rite of baptism, he said, in effect, in the treatise de paenitentia at any rate, that baptism effected the forgiveness of sins only because the disposition which was necessary for its reception (metus integer) had already effected their remission³ - yet even when stressing the responsibility of man to achieve a valid paenitentia Tertullian was not unmindful that the end-product was the work of God.

Quod iterum deus tantopere commendat, quod etiam humano more sub deieratione testatur, summa utique grauitate et adgredi et custodire debemus, ut in adseueratione diuinae gratiae permanentes in fructu quoque eius et emolumento proinde perseuerare possimus.4

¹ paen 2.6.27-30.

² paen 6.16.60-17.65. So also bapt 6.1.5-7 abolitione delictorum quam fides impetrat obsignata in patre et filio et spiritu sancto. The significance of the word 'obsignata' is examined in the next section, viz. Roman Law for this area. The place of 'faith' in relation to paenitentia and baptism is examined in paragraph (c) of this section.

³ There is a useful commentary on this whole complex matter by Dölger in "Das Garantiewerk", p 262.

⁴ paen 4.8.33-37.

repentance

whatever defilement of the human heart resulting from ignorance, repentance might sweep it up and scrape it away and throw it out of the house, making ready the heart as a clean dwelling place for the coming visitation of the Holy Spirit, in order that with His heavenly blessings, He might gladly there take up His abode.

That cleansing water is a seal of faith, and this faith has its beginning and finds its reward in a genuine repentance. We are not baptised so that we may cease committing sin but because we have ceased, since we are already clean of heart. This, surely, is the first baptism of the catechumen. His fear is perfect because he has been in contact with the Lord; his faith is sound because his conscience has embraced repentance once and for all.

"On Repentance" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

his fear is perfect

repentance

Therefore, what God commends so highly what He even, in human fashion, guarantees under oath, this we should certainly embrace and guard in all contentness, so that, established in the pledge of divine grace, we may thus be established, also, in its joys and its rewards.

He does so by that cancelling of sins which is granted in response to faith signed and sealed in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

sealed

repentance

The Securing-Work

(b) Baptism was essential for salvation, but ...

Just as there are texts which in isolation imply that paenitentia was the key element in a saving relationship with God, so there are texts - such as the one quoted at the opening of this section - which imply that baptism was the key element in salvation. Again, seen in the overall context of Tertullian's teaching, there is no incongruity and even in de baptismo itself, where obviously the stress was on baptism,¹ Tertullian had to deal (in chapter 13) with certain adversaries who denied the necessity of baptism, insisting that faith alone was sufficient to please God. Tertullian showed how faith was a necessary disposition for baptism, not a substitute for it. It may be significant that while there are places where Tertullian (taken out of context) appears to state that paenitentia could be efficacious without the actual reception of baptism, he nowhere says (unless the text is completely isolated) that baptism could be efficacious without personal repentance first.

This emphasis re-appeared in chapter 18 at the same treatise, where Tertullian reminded those who were going to administer baptism of the words of the Lord, Nolite dare sanctum canibus et porcis proicere margaritan uestram;² there must be no presumptuous or premature reception of the sacrament. The burden of Tertullian's teaching, both in de baptismo and in de paenitentia, is clear:

Neque ego renuo diuinum beneficium, id est abolitionem delictorum, inituris aquam omnimodo saluum esse; sed ut eo peruenire contingat elaborandum est.³

¹ The immediate object of the treatise was to refute the heresy of the Cainites, according to whom (being of gnostic tendency) matter was evil and the baptismal water should be rejected, faith alone serving for salvation. This is what brought Tertullian to construct his entire work around the theme of water.

² bapt 18.1.4-6.

³ paen 6.9.35-37.

repentance

"On Baptism" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

"Give not that which is holy to the dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine."

"On Baptism" and "On Repentance" (two of Tertullian's treatises)

I do not deny that the divine benefaction, I mean the forgiveness of sins, is absolutely assured to those who will enter the water; they must make an effort, however, to succeed in getting there.

Catechumens were expected to move toward baptism, but baptism without adequate preparation, would disappoint:

sic nec paenitentiam impleuit, quia instrumento paenitentiae, id est metu, caruit. Praesumptio inuerecundiae portio est: inflat petitoem, despicit datorem; itaque decipit nonnumquam. Ante enim quam debeatur repromittit, quo semper is qui est praestaturus offenditur. ¹

The good and practical reason for Tertullian's emphasis here was that if a sinner had not repented of sins before he was baptised, Tertullian believed that he would never repent of them at all; this was clear from the example of slaves and soldiers, who forgot their past offenses once they had secured their freedom.² The divine pattern for conversion was therefore paenitentia (essential) sealed by baptism (essential), and in that order; repentance prepared the way for the forgiveness of sin in baptism "Mais peut-etre on veut faire dater sa conversion du jour de son baptême? Illusion: c'est avant le pardon, et sous le grondement de la justice divine, qu'il faut pleurer ses peches. Le baptême ne saurait suppleer à ce qui manque du côté de la pénitence." ³

There is, however, one area where Tertullian repeatedly placed the emphasis on baptism alone, and that was for the removal of the vitium originis. In paenitentia, the emphasis was on contrition for, and turning from, the actual sins of life; the remedy for original sin, as well as for the effects of personal sin committed before baptism, was immersion in the waters of baptism. Tertullian was clear, however, that the effect of baptism was not ex opere operato; the forgiveness of sins was granted in response to faith, and the place of that is examined next.

(c) Faith was essential for salvation but . . .

"anima enim non lauacione, sed responsione sancitur". ⁴ As was noted in

¹ paen 6.23.84-24.89.

² paen 6.7.30-34.

³ d'Alès, "Théologie", p 337.

⁴ res 48.11.51-52. No sentence in Tertullian so emphasises the importance of the avowal of faith in the baptismal ceremony as this one.

Thus his penitence was defective because it was without the instrument of penitence, which is fear. Presumption is the part of rash irreverence; it puffs up the petitioner and condemns the donor; thus it is sometimes disappointed, since it promises that something which is not yet its due and so always offends the one who is expected to grant it.

repentance

But perhaps one wants to make one's conversion date from the day of one's baptism? Delusion: it is before pardon, and under the rumbling of divine justice, that it is necessary to weep one's sins. Baptism could not supplement what is lacking on the side of penitence.

fault of origin

by virtue of a work done

For the soul is sanctified, not by the washing but by the profession of faith

section VIII.2, fides, in the sense of the acceptance of the basic doctrines of the Rule of Faith, was an essential ingredient of the catechumenate - non es Christianus, non credendo quod creditum Christianos facit;¹ personal trust was expressed by fiducia. Baptism was obsignatio fidei, a phrase which (as noted in paragraph (a) above) related to the efficacy of paenitentia to the efficacy of baptism. It is not easy to determine exactly how Tertullian related personal faith to these other elements of the conversion process, but it seems to be this - the recipient of baptism must have faith; wherever there was faith, baptism was the divine medium through which the forgiveness of sins was communicated. Faith was necessary to baptism, but baptism was necessary to faith. In baptism, faith was clothed with the divine realities which were its objective counterparts. All that need be noted here, correlating the various elements, is that Tertullian himself expressly linked fides with both baptism and the grace of God, showing that faith was no more than an element in the whole complex of the right relationship with God - "Pour lui foi et baptême s'organisent en une seule économie de salut."² As Tertullian himself put it:

Proinde cum ad fidem peruenit reformatam per secundam natiuitatem ex aqua et superna uirtute,³

and in one of his three statements of the regula fidei . . . "inde potat fidem; eam (i.e fidem) aqua signat, . . ."⁴

(d) The death of Christ was essential for salvation

While Tertullian emphasised the efforts which the catechumen had to make to prepare himself for baptism, it is evident, both from his writings to

¹ carn 2.4.20-21

² R.F. Refoulé, Tertullien, Traité du Baptême, (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1952) p 48.

³ an 41.4.20-22.

⁴ praes 36.5.18-19.

faith

for you are not a Christian, seeing that you do not believe that which, when believed, makes men Christians.

faith/trustfulness - the seal of faith

repentance

For him, faith and baptism are arranged in a single enterprise of salvation

Therefore, when the soul embraces the faith, it is regenerated by this new birth in water and virtue celestial:

the Rule of Faith - "and from that source she causes her faith to drink, and that faith she seals with water ..."

"Tertullian, Treatise on Baptism" (Book)

catechumens and from his reminders to Christians of the basis on which they had become Christians, that he regarded the merits of Christ as the basis of the forgiveness of sins. It was presumably not by chance that right at the beginning of de baptismo he emphasised the way in which baptism derived its effectiveness from Christ Himself - Sed nos pisciculi secundum ἰησοῦν nostrum Iesum Christum in aqua nascimur; ¹ the play on the Greek word (Christ as Saviour) showed the baptised, the pisciculi, where they had found their salvation. When occasion demanded, he could emphasise the incarnation of Christ, or His sinless life in fulfilment of all the demands of the law, or His triumphant resurrection, or His ascension, or His continuing priestly work and His second coming - but when he wrote about the salvation of man, it was to the Cross that his emphasis went -

Quod sciam, non sumus nostri, sed pretio empti. Et quali pretio! Sanguine dei! ²

Semel Christus pro nobis obiit, semel occisus est, ne occideremur. Si uicem repetit num et ille salutem de mea nece expectat? ³

Illius es, conscriptus in libris uitae. Illic purpurae tuae, sanguis domini, et clauus latus in cruce ipsius; ⁴

Vt autem redimas hominem tu nummis, quem sanguine suo redemit Christus, quam indignum Deo et dispositionis eius! ... Quis est nunc, qui aduersus illum reluctatur, immo depretiat mercedem eius tam magno comparatam, pretiosissimo scilicet sanguine agni immaculati? ... Hunc ergo liberum pretio aestimabis et pretio possidebis, nisi eodem, quanto, ut diximus Domino constitit, sanguine suo scilicet? ... Sanguine empti, sanguine numerati nullum nummum pro capite debemus, quia caput nostrum Christus est ... Quid autem Deo debeo, sicut denarium Caesari, nisi sanguinem, quem pro me filius fudit ipsius? ... ⁵

¹ bapt 1.3.11-12.

² II ux 3.1.10-11.

³ scorp. 1.8.24-26.

⁴ cor 13.1.9-2.10.

⁵ fug 12.2.11-13; fug 12.3.24-27 and 34-36; fug 12.8.88-90; fug 12.10.105-107.

"On Baptism" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

But we, little fishes, after the example of Jesus Christ, our great Fish, begin our life in water,

little fishes

So far as I know, "we are not our own, but bought with a price"; and what kind of price? The blood of God.

Once for all Christ died for us, once for all. He was slain that we might not be slain. If He demands the like from me in return, does He also look for salvation from my death by violence?

For you are His, (Christ's), inscribed in the Book of Life. There is your purple - the Blood of the Lord there your broad purple stripes - on His cross.

that you try to redeem with mere money a man who has been ransomed by the Blood of Christ! What kind of man is he who struggles against Christ, in fact, misprizes the goods that were bought at so high a price, namely, the precious blood of the Immaculate Lamb? Can you price this freeman, and buy him for any sum less (as we have said) than what he cost Christ - His own Blood? We are bought with blood, we are paid for in blood, we owe no money for our head, because Christ is our Head. But, what do I owe to God as a denarius is owed to Caesar, except the blood of His Son, shed for me?

Tertullian saw the Cross "everywhere";¹ the mystery of the Cross was so astonishing, and so offensive to human reason, that God had outlined it beforehand in many symbols, to facilitate its understanding. Tertullian saw the Cross in the crossed hands of Joseph blessing his sons,² in Moses praying while Joshua fought with Amalek and in Isaac carrying the wood of sacrifice;³ he saw it in the mark which he thought was the letter 'Tau' of Ezekiel,⁴ in the inner framework used by image makers to strengthen their handiwork,⁵ in the human body,⁶ in the frames of military banners,⁷ and even in the wings of birds in flight.⁸ The types of Christ in the Old Testament were worked out in a way which assigned a unique value to the Cross for the putting away of sin; for example, Tertullian expounded the brazen serpent as a symbol of the power of the Lord's Cross, whereby the old serpent, the devil, was vanquished.⁹

Tertullian was the first to record that at the conclusion of the baptismal service, the signing or sealing with the Cross was made.¹⁰ He went further, and referred to making the sign of the Cross throughout daily life, for example at

¹ An understandable exaggeration by T.P. O'Malley, *op. cit.* at p 88, as he reviewed the symbolism of the Cross in Tertullian. Every single reference by Tertullian to the Cross has been meticulously catalogued by G.Q. Reijnders in The Terminology of the Holy Cross in early Christian literature as based upon Old Testament typology. (Nijmegen: Dekker & Van de Vegt, 1965).

² bapt 8.2.7-11.

³ III Marc 18.2.11-14; cf Jud 10.6 and 13.20-21.

⁴ III Marc 22.5.27-6.3.

⁵ I nat 12.5.7-9.24.

⁶ idol 12.2.15; orat ^{1.4.1-7} I nat 12.7.13-14.

⁷ apol 16.7.32-33.

⁸ orat 29.4.34-35.

⁹ idol 5.3.3-4.13, also III Marc 18.7.21-27, paralleled in Jud 10.10.81-82.

¹⁰ III Marc 22.7.19; praes 40.4.7; res 8.3.10; spec 24.4.14.

going in or coming out of the house, while dressing, while putting on shoes, while taking a bath, before and after meals, when lighting the lamps, when going to bed or sitting down - indeed in every ordinary action of life.¹ Sometimes his belief in the power of the Cross stretches modern credulity - the sign of the Cross promptly made, when one had been stung by a serpent, might avert the stricken man's death.²

There is more to this than merely an abundance of reminders of the death of Christ. Tertullian himself said that he regarded the Cross at the focal point in all the work of Christ:

- (i) Totum Christiani nominis et pondus et fructus, mors Christi,³
- (ii) quia nec mors nostra dissolui posset nisi domini passione... (adding, in this instance)... nec uita restitui sine resurrectione ipsius.⁴
- (iii) quod figitur, in hoc enim uenerat: ⁵
- (iv) Ad hoc enim uenerat, ut ipse a delicto purus et omnia sanctus pro peccatoribus obiret.⁶
- (v) ut natiuitatem nostram natiuitate sua reformaret atque ita etiam mortem nostram morte sua dissolueret resurgendo in carne, in qua natus est, ut et mori posset. ⁷
- (vi) At uero Christus mori missus nasci quoque necessario habuit, ut mori posset. ⁸

¹ cor 3.4.27-31; and II ux 5.2.14-15 for making the sign of the cross at home.

² scorp. 1.3.17-19.

³ III Marc 8.5.23-24.

⁴ bapt 11.4.21-23.

⁵ fat 3.9.30.

⁶ pud 22.4.24-25.

⁷ III Marc 9.5.22-25.

⁸ carn 6.6.37-38.

Christ's death, the whole weight and value of the Christian name

for neither could our death be annulled except by our Lord's passion,
... nor our life restored apart from His resurrection.

(I pass by in silence the fact) that He is crucified, for this was the
end for which He had come.

Indeed, it was for this purpose that He came - to die for sinners though
He Himself was free from sin and wholly just

so that he might reform our nativity by his own nativity, and thus also
loose the bands of our death by his own death, by rising again in that
flesh in which he was born with intent to be able to die

Christ, on the other hand, being sent to die, had of necessity also to
be born, so that He might die

The emphasis has been remarked on many times by commentators:

He lays greater stress, indeed, on Christ's death than does Irenaeus, speaking of it as the whole weight and fruit of the Christian name . . . the supreme foundation of the gospel. Not only did Christ die for us, but He was sent for precisely this purpose. ¹

Tertullian lays greater emphasis than Irenaeus on the importance of the death of Christ. Even if he had made no further contribution to the development of doctrine, yet his special emphasis on the importance of the death of Christ is remarkable as he strikes a note characteristic of Latin theology.²

Tertullian has no definitely formulated doctrine of the death of Christ beyond that of Irenaeus: nevertheless his peculiar insistence upon it (the death) is noteworthy. Here, as in many other cases, he strikes a note characteristic of Latin Theology. ³

While Tertullian had no fully thought out theory of work of Christ, it does seem that whenever he spoke about the sufficiency of Christ - for example when he insisted that Christ was competent to effect salvation without the assistance of angels - his stress fell on the death of Christ:

Nullus unquam angelus ideo descendit, ut crucifigeretur, ut mortem experiretur, ut a morte suscitaretur. Si numquam eiusmodi causa angelorum corporandorum, habes, cur non nascendo acceperint carnem. Non uenerant mori, ideo nec nasci. At uero Christus mori missus nasci quoque necessario habuit, ut mori posset; ⁴

Many of these references have been to works not addressed to catechumens and not necessarily relevant to their situation, but an indication that Tertullian gave an important place to the suffering and death of Christ, as he taught catechumens, is found in the emphasis laid on it in the regula fidei, in which the catechumens were instructed and examined:

- (i) in de uirginibus uelendis, Tertullian went straight from Christ "born of the Virgin Mary" to Christ "crucified under Pontius Pilate";⁵

¹ Kelly, op. cit., p 177.

² Morgan op. cit., p 157; cf also ibid. p 114.

³ Franks, op. cit., pp 76-77.

⁴ carn 6.5.33-6.38.

⁵ natum ex uirgine Maria, crucifixum sub Pontio Pilato - uirg 1.3.19-20.

No angel ever came down with the intention of being crucified, of obtaining experience of death, of being raised again from death. If there never was this kind of reason for angels becoming embodied, you have the very reason why they took to them flesh without being born. They had not come to die, and consequently had no need to be born. Christ, on the other hand, being sent to die, had of necessity also to be born, so that he might die.

Rule of Faith

"On the Veiling of Virgins" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

born of the virgin Mary, crucified under Pontius Pilate

- (ii) In the version in de praescriptione haereticorum, Tertullian laid some stress on the life of Christ but included the crucifixion;¹
- (iii) When he wrote to Praxeas about the regula fidei, Tertullian did not mention the life of Christ at all, but went from "called by the name of Jesus Christ", to "suffered, died and buried."²

Several times Tertullian quoted the text "one mediator between God and men" (1 Timothy 2.5), and he left his catechumens in no doubt that Christ's purpose in assuming a human form was to save mankind, who could not be saved except in Him.

(e) Conclusions from this section

The efficacy of the personal and subjective contribution of the catechumen, (in paenitentia and in proceeding to baptism), and the efficacy of the divine and objective contribution of God, (in granting faith and imparting the merits of Christ to the sinner) are not precisely related to each other in Tertullian. They can however be briefly stated as follows-

- (a) Repentance was in man's own power - yet repentance alone would not bring about the forgiveness of sin; that was Tertullian's argument, both in de baptismo 10 and in de paenitentia 2, in respect of the baptism of John:

Quodsi paenitentia humanum est, et baptismus ipsius eiusdem condicionis fuerit necesse est: aut daret et spiritum sanctum et remissionem peccatorum si caelestis fuisset. Sed neque peccata dimittit neque spiritum indulget nisi solus deus. 3

and, in the de paenitentia passage,⁴ Tertullian distinguished Christian baptism from the baptism of John which was exclusively a baptism of repentance, effecting neither the forgiveness of sins nor the grace of the Spirit. Paenitentia

¹ praes 13.4.8-10.

² cognominatum Iesum Christum. Hunc passum, hunc mortuum ... Prax 2.1.10-11.

³ bapt 10.3.17-21.

⁴ paen 2.4.19-5. 25

"On the Prescription of Heretics" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

Rule of Faith

repentance

"On Baptism" and "On Repentance" (two of Tertullian's treatises)

But if repentance is a human act, then the baptism of repentance must have been of the same sort: else, if it had been heavenly, it would also have given the Holy Spirit, and the remission of sins. But sins are not forgiven, or the Spirit granted, except by God alone.

"On Repentance" (One of Tertullian's treatises)

... and named Jesus Christ; that He suffered and died

prima was, however, as noted in section (a) above, an essential ingredient. Tertullian gave no indication at all that the will to repent could come from God; man had his part to play. A long catechumenate, followed by an examination as to whether the baptismal candidate had 'fulfilled every good work' during that period, must inevitably have led some catechumens to think that, in some respect at least, the sacrament was a reward of virtue rather than a seal of faith; this was, however, an unsatisfactory understanding of the forgiveness of God, which is examined next.

(b) Forgiveness was in the power of God. The argument of Poschmann is very persuasive,¹ that Tertullian regarded the forgiveness of sins, following paenitentia prima and baptism, as due solely to the merits of the passion of Christ and not by reason of personal works of penance performed by the sinner himself. Poschmann's argument (summarised) was that in spite of the fact that God required the catechumens to deplore their offences and to offer to make reparation for them before He forgave them, God's forgiveness remained wholly gratuitous. Baptism was thus to be contrasted with paenitentia secunda, in which the sinner was obliged to perform works of penance proportioned to his offence in order to make amends to God.² In the later chapters of the de paenitentia, and throughout the treatise de pudicitia, Tertullian was concerned chiefly with the paenitentia secunda of exomologesis, the penitence of those who had sinned after baptism. This involved, in addition to the subjective reaction of the sinner against his

¹ op. cit., p 1 ff.

² Karl Rahner, Zur Theologie der Busse bei Tertullian, in Abhandlungen über Theologie und Kirche - Festschrift für Karl Adam, (Düsseldorf: Patmos-verlag, 1952) set out in some detail the difference in efficacy, as between paenitentia prima and paenitentia secunda, of the paenitentia of the sinner - pp 166 ff. Adhémar d'Alès set out the difference between the confession of sin required from the sinner in like circumstances - pp 46-48. (The matter is taken up briefly in the immediately following section of the thesis.) d'Alès De Baptismo et Confirmatione (Paris: 1927), English translation by Joseph H. Howard, Baptism and Confirmation London: Sands & Co., 1929)

repentance before baptism

repentance after baptism

"On Repentance" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

"On Modesty" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

confession = penitential discipline after baptism (only)

"The Theology of Penance in Tertullian," in treatise about "Theology and the Church", a Book in Honour of Karl Adam

Baptism and Confirmation (Book)

guilt, a number of external features such as the confession of sin before the Church, the performance of public penitential acts under the direction of ecclesiastical authority, some exclusion from communion with the Church, and the forgiveness of the sinner by the bishop. None of these features were present in paenitentia prima, because forgiveness of sin in baptism was the gift of God and did not require to be secured by the merit of man. This indicates that Tertullian was not unaware of the divine side of the work of salvation, and it counterbalances the apparent over-emphasis of the virtue of paenitentia in parts of Tertullian's works. Actual forgiveness could not be assumed without reference to the state of mind of the candidate for baptism, because both repentance and faith were required of him, but forgiveness of sin depended ultimately on the gift of God through the merits of Christ.

repentance before baptism

repentance

VIII.7 ROMAN LAW FOR THIS AREA

Three new legal words have been introduced in this chapter, namely compensatio (to which must be linked the concept of satisfactio, because in Roman jurisprudence satisfactio was the removal of an obligation by compensatio), obsignata and praescriptio. The last is examined in more detail in Excursus One, but is mentioned briefly here because of the "standing rule" that no one could obtain salvation without baptism.

Compensatio occurred in the passage, noted in section VIII.3, in which Tertullian stated that God agreed to sell (addicere) His merchandise (venia delictorum) in exchange for paenitentia. "Hoc enim pretio dominus ueniam addicere instituit, hac paenitentiae compensatione redimendam proponit inpunitatem."¹ Buckland² listed the meaning of compensatio in Roman Law, and cited the literature bearing on its meaning. It is evident from these references that Tertullian used a word which was current in Roman legal usage, and it has frequently been assumed³ that in using such a word, Tertullian was expressing the relationship of the catechumen to God in legal language; in Saint's words, God would accept impletio paenitentiae "as compensatory payment, a quid pro quo, in place of the punishment which the sinner has deserved."⁴ However, just because Tertullian used a word which happened to be current in Roman Law, it does not follow that he intended to convey a legal concept, particularly when etymologically the word meant simply a "weighting" or a "balancing". The non-technical sense appears to be much more in line with Tertullian's understanding of the relationship of the catechumen to God than a juridical use of the word would require, as a short examination of its ingredients in Roman law will show.

¹ paen 6.4.20-22.

² op. cit., pp 703-707

³ e.g. by Morgan, op. cit., p 70, Saint, op. cit., p 158.

⁴ loc. cit.

extinction of a debt by setting another debt against it

satisfaction

sealed

prescription (technical term of Roman law)

to sell/make over (judicially = to award/judge)

the pardon of sins - repentance

And the price which the Lord has set on the purchase of pardon is this.
He offers impunity to be bought in exchange for penitence.

completed (full) repentance

something given or taken as equivalent to something else

328

Compensatio in Roman law¹ was the reciprocal extinction of debts between two persons, each of whom was indebted to the other. Compensatio est debiti et crediti inter se contributio.² If the debts to be compensated were unequal, the lesser obligation was extinguished and the greater was diminished, but the essential factor, for compensatio to operate, was the existence of two debts, one on each side. This appears to fit well into Tertullian's concept of satisfactio for post-baptismal sin, to be examined below, but it is difficult to see how it could possibly be applied to the catechumen, who was not yet in a position to obtain 'meritum' and so to put God in his debt. Furthermore, for compensatio to operate, the two debts had to be of the same nature - an obligation to deliver goods could not be set off against an obligation to pay money. Yet again, compensatio in its legal sense could not operate ipso jure, but only when a debtor pleaded it in reply to a demand made by creditor for the performance of the debtor's obligation. Tertullian's use of compensatio for catechumens - hac paenitentiae compensatione redimendam proponit impunitatem - just does not seem to fit into the Roman legal concept of the word; on the other hand, the popular and non-technical sense of compensatio, meaning an offer of impunity "in exchange" for paenitentia without any reciprocal obligations or "set off", seems to fit very well.

When it comes to post-baptismal sin, the legal sense of compensatio as the reciprocal extinction of the indebtedness of two persons who were each under obligation to the other for debts which were of the same nature, and which were equally exigible for payment, does seem to underlie Tertullian's concept of satisfactio. Since it is the contention of this thesis that neither compensatio nor satisfactio in their legal senses were applied by Tertullian to the relationship of

¹ Gaius 4.41-68. ^{Justinian's} Institutes 4.6.30, 39. Digest 16.2. Code 4.31.

² Digest 16.2.1.

extinction of a debt by setting another debt against it

balancing of accounts consists of an equal distribution of debt and loan

satisfaction

merit

by the law itself

He offers impunity to be bought in exchange for repentance

repentance

729

catechumens to God, it would be inappropriate to spend much time on these words. A brief description of Tertullian's understanding of satisfactio¹ and meritum² is however necessary, even if only to explain and to justify their omission from the remainder of this study.

Many writers have implied,³ and Saint has said expressly, that Tertullian used the Roman legal concept of satisfactio about catechumens as well as those who fell into post-baptismal sin:

"Tertullian is the first Christian writer to speak of penance explicitly as satisfying God for sin. . . It can hardly be denied that the generic notion of satisfaction as a compensation made to God for the debt incurred by sin is a constituent part of his penitential theology. Tertullian was aware of the juridical meaning of the word satisfacere in cases of material indebtedness. . . . The juridical sense of the term satisfacere is easily transferred to express the idea of satisfaction for sin... The whole penitential process beginning with an aversion from sin and including, besides personal works of penance, the intervention of the Church in the prima or secunda paenitentia, is a means of paying the moral indebtedness which the sinner has contracted by offending God... a necessary and effective means of making amends to God by a compensatio pro debito peccati.⁴

As a statement of satisfactio in relation to paenitentia secunda that seems unobjectionable, although detailed comment on paenitentia secunda is outside the scope of this study. However, Saint has expressly stated in that passage that satisfactio in its juridical sense was applicable to paenitentia prima as well, and that does not seem justified. Tertullian did use the word satisfactio in relation

¹ The concept of satisfactio in theology as a whole has been well set out by Pierre Galtier, De Paenitentia, (Rome: Pont. Universitatis Gregorianae, 1950) pp 421-435. An older but still useful article on satisfactio in the patristic period is A. Deneffe "Das Wort Satisfactio", Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie, 43 (1919), 153-178.

² Wirth, op. cit., set out in detail how meritum was related to satisfactio in Tertullian's thought - section IVa - and how man earned merit before God - sections II, III and V.

³ Typical is Roberts, op. cit., p 180 ("He uses the term satisfacere, it is true, but never in the sense of vicarious satisfaction. With him it means invariably the amends which men make for their own sins by confession, repentance, and good works") which does not distinguish between pre-baptismal sin, where merit had no application in Tertullian's thought, and post-baptismal sin, where it did.

⁴ op. cit., p 155, note 77.

satisfaction

merit

to give satisfaction/to make amends/to make reparation

repentance before baptism - repentance after baptism

compensation/set-off for what is owing for sin

repentance after baptism

repentance before baptism

"On Repentance" (Book)

"The Word Satisfaction", periodical article in Journal for Catholic Theology

merit

to catechumens,¹ but it is the contention of this section that for them he used it in non-juridical sense, and this is now examined.

Once a man had become a Christian - and only then - there were areas of his life where he had the option of pleasing God by following the "secret" or "higher" will of God (voluntas) or alternatively of pleasing himself by following the "manifest" or "lower" will of God (indulgentia). The latter was good, but the former was better. If a man opted for the better (non-obligatory) life-style, he acquired meritum, which put God in his debt; all non-obligatory performances could be meritorious. Because God was then in debt to man, man deserved a reward; but when man sinned, he put himself in debt to God and deserved punishment. Here were the all ingredients for compensatio in its judicial sense - one debt to be set off against the other, and, if the debts were unequal, the lesser obligation was extinguished and the greater was diminished. In corresponding theological terms, merit first of all cancelled out the debt which God owed to man for his supererogatory works, and the balance was carried forward as reward. Meritum created a Plus; satisfactio obliterated a Minus. Schultz² and Franks³ have demonstrated the extent to which Tertullian's system presupposes that man can put God into His debt. If man had previously incurred debt to God by acts of sin, his newly achieved good works or meritorious sufferings liquidated the Minus. If he had a clean slate at the time, his new merit stood as a Plus. If he already had a credit balance, the balance was swelled.

¹ paen 5.9.34. quoted on p/ ³³³ below.

² Hermann Schultz, "Der sittliche Begriff des Verdienstes und seine Anwendung auf das Verständniss des Werkes Christi," Theologische Studien und Kritiken, (1894), 1-50, 245-314, 554-614; Schultz acknowledged that he had relied heavily on help given to him by a legal colleague, Professor Merkel.

³ op. cit., p 77-81.

free-will/choice/inclination/voluntarily/willingly

indulgence/forbearance

merit

compensation/recompense/equivalent

satisfaction/reparation/amends

"The moral concept of Merit and its Application to the Understanding of the Work of Christ", periodical article in "Theological Studies and Reviews"

331

The critical point for this section is that the means by which man could acquire meritum - fasting, virginity, self-chastening, patience, almsgiving etc. - were all areas where only paenitentia secunda applied. It is true that in the course of paenitentia prima, certain actions were prescribed. Ingressuros baptismum orationibus crebris, ieiuniis et geniculationibus et peruigiliis orare oportet et cum confessione omnium retro delictorum, ut exponant etiam baptismum Iohannis.¹ but (a) these were not required until the paenitentia was almost complete and the catechumen was already judged worthy to be baptised, and (b) they were the same for all. Exomologesis was different for one sinner and another, in accordance with the gravity of the sin. Furthermore, paenitentia prima was always assured of success, while (at least this was Tertullian's view while he was a Montanist) paenitentia secunda was not. In short, there was no suggestion that the works of paenitentia prima had as their goal the acquisition of merit - they were simply the external signs of the inward and spiritual changes in a man's life which qualified him for the worthy reception of baptism. Therefore the legalistic concepts of compensatio and of satisfactio could have no application for catechumens.

That is, of course, a considerable over-simplification of an exceedingly complex subject.² In Roman law, solvere and not satisfacere was the proper technical expression for the true and exact discharge of a liability. In a less precise sense, satisfactio could meet a legal claim in some way other than the strict performance of it ("solvere" being the proper performance) or it could meet the claim in another way agreeable to the creditor; there has been much debate about the sense in which Tertullian used satisfactio for post-baptismal sin, but that is all outside the scope of this chapter. Perhaps the clearest demonstration that Tertullian did not intend satisfactio in a juridical sense for

¹ bapt 20.1.1-3.

merit

repentance after baptism

repentance before baptism

Those who are at the point of entering upon baptism ought to pray, with frequent prayers, fastings, bendings of the knee, and all-night vigils, along with the confession of all their former sins, so as to make a copy of the baptism of John.

repentance

(literally) confession = penitential discipline (after baptism only)

compensation/recompense/equivalent

satisfaction/reparation/amends

to cancel/to annul/to discharge

to satisfy/to make amends

catechumens, and an appropriate point at which to close this discussion, is Tertullian's own statement that a catechumen "qui per delictorum paenitentiam instituerat domino satisfacere, diabolo per aliam paenitentiae paenitentiam satisfaciet."¹

The second word, (strictly speaking not used by Tertullian until baptism but introduced in section VIII.6 in dealing with the relationship of paenitentia prima to baptism) is obsignatio. In legal Latin, obsignare meant to seal or to certify.² Leeming devoted two whole chapters (v and vi) of his book 'Principles of Sacramental Theology' to discussing the place of the seal in Christian initiation, and said that "Tertullian, thinking in legal fashion, speaks of the seal of a contract on a document; in several passages the sealing is a ratification of Baptism, or of right faith."⁴ Tertullian's particular phrases - Lauacrum illud obsignato est fidei⁵ and post fidem obsignatam⁶ - neatly summarise what he taught - that baptism set its approval on faith which had already brought men to

¹ paen 5.9.32-34.

² eius rei condicionisque tabellas obsignaverunt (i.e. as witnesses) viri boni complures: res in dubium venire non potest. (Cicero, Pro Quinctio 21.67)

³ Bernard Leeming, Principles of Sacramental Theology. (2nd ed.; London: Longmans, 1960). G.W.H. Lampe, The Seal of the Spirit (2nd ed.; London: S.P.C.K., 1967) also devoted his fifth and sixth chapters to 'The Sealing of the Faithful in the Early Church', dealing with Tertullian from p 157 to p 162: Lampe's (unusual) view of the sealing in Tertullian is commented on, p 345, footnote 2, below.

⁴ op. cit., p 165.

⁵ Lauacrum illud obsignatio est fidei, quae fides a paenitentiae fide incipitur et commendatur. Non ideo abluimur ut delinquere desinamus sed quia desiimus, quoniam iam corde loti sumus - paen 6.16.60-17.63. The only other use of obsignatio as a noun in Tertullian's works is obsignatio baptismi - bapt 13.2.8-9. However, in verbal form it appears fourteen times.

⁶ Male nobis de necessitatibus humanae exhibitionis supplaudimus, si post fidem obsignatam (i.e. after baptism) dicimus: non habeo quo uiuam. - idol 12.1.31-01.

The man who began to make satisfaction to the Lord by repenting his sin will make satisfaction to the devil by repenting his repentance.

repentance before baptism

seal

That cleansing water is a seal of faith

after sealing our faith

That cleansing water is a seal of faith, and this faith has its beginning and finds its reward in a genuine repentance. We are not baptised so that we may cease committing sin, but because we have ceased, since in heart we are already washed (= already clean)

the seal/sealing act of baptism

It is wrong to flatter ourselves about the necessity of maintaining human life by saying, after sealing our faith, "I have nothing to live on/no means to live".

repentance; the difficulty is to know^{to} what extent he took the word from Roman law. Leeming, whose two chapters were particularly concerned with the sealing of the candidate by the Holy Spirit, and whether the Spirit was given at baptism or at 'confirmation' or at both, traced the imagery of the seal to brands burned upon animals, military tattooing, signet rings, inscriptions on coins, circumcision, the paschal lamb in Egypt and the sealing of a bag for security.¹ To prolong this chapter would not be justified, but it is clear that whether or not Tertullian took the sealing of faith in baptism directly from Roman law, the current legal usage does not contradict what he mean to say by obsignatio fidei.

The third legal word, (which will be examined at greater length in Excursus one) is praescriptio, which occurred three times (together with the verb praescribitur) in Tertullian's understanding of the importance of baptism for salvation.

Cum uero praescribitur nemini sine baptismo competere salutem... quomodo ex ista praescriptione apostolis salus competat... aut praeiudicatum esse de ceterorum periculo qui careant aqua Christi ut praescriptio salua sit aut rescindi praescriptionem si etiam et non tinctis salus statuta est. 2

Since there was no record of any of the apostles except Paul having been baptised, and in view of Tertullian's insistence on the necessity of baptism for salvation, some persons had questioned whether the apostles were saved. Tertullian replied that whether or not the apostles had been baptised, it was presumptuous to question their salvation, because they had been in the Lord's company, and He remitted the sins of those who believed in Him; furthermore, if these had not been saved, how could others have been, whose salvation was

¹ Two non-legal uses of the word by Tertullian were: deo ipsos hoc nomine obsignat - idol 10.6.22 - the Christian schoolmaster, in calling the gods gods, acknowledged or ratified their existence, and referring to the height of Joseph's head-dress in Egypt: cuius suggestus modialis figura frumentationis eius memoriam obsignat - II nat 8.16.17-18 - i.e. being shaped like a bushel-measure it visibly recorded his management of the corn-supply. Other uses of the word are taken up when baptism is considered as a contract in chapter IX.9 below.

² bapt 12.1.1-2,5-6,8-11.

sealing of faith

prescription

the prescript is laid down

Now there is a standing rule that "without baptism no man can obtain salvation" ... How, in view of that standing rule, can the apostles have obtained salvation. ... Either we have the case pre-judged (they say) concerning those others' peril who are without Christ's baptism, so that the standing rule may be safe or else, if salvation is appointed even for these unbaptised, the general rule is repealed.

He (the schoolmaster) sets his seal (of approval) on the gods themselves under that very name (i.e. in teaching heathen literature)

the bushel-like shape of this turban marks the memory of his corn-provisioning

774

assured? Praescriptio was of course a technical term of Roman law, but here it seems to be no more than a 'standing rule' and its legal usage does not seem to bear directly on the relationship of the catechumen to God, so it is not examined in any further detail here. (There is further comment on praescriptio in Excursus One.)

Beck argued at length that Tertullian, as a jurist, was the first to designate the regula fidei by the juridical terms lex fidei and decretum/edictum dei and also the first to model it on the regula iuris of the civil law.¹ Since however, some understanding of doctrine was required of all candidates for baptism in the contemporary church, and since the essential features of the regula fidei were not of Tertullian's framing,² it does not seem important for the relationship of the catechumen to God that Tertullian gave the regula a new title or even a new form and the matter is not pursued here. For the sake of completeness, it should also be noted that Fütcher claimed:

Er verwendet die Glaubensregel genauso, wie der römische Jurist seine regula iuris handhabt: Wie dieser aus dem geltenden Recht, nicht aus dessen formelhafter Zusammenfassung seine Entscheidung nimmt, so Tertullian aus dem überlieferten christlichen Glauben und der Schrift, die beide in der regula fidei zusammengefasst sind. 3

but, for the same reason, the matter is not taken any further here.

¹ op. cit., pp 25-27 for lex fidei and pp 102-103 for decretum/edictum dei.

² Zahn, article "Glaubensregel" in Realenzyklopädie der Protestantischen Kirche.

³ op. cit., p 40.

prescription

Rule of Faith

law of faith

decree/edict of God

rule of law

He makes use of the Rule of Faith in exactly the same way as the Roman lawyer handles his rule of law: just as the latter bases his decision on the current law as it stands and not on its formal summary, so does Tertullian on the handed-down Christian faith and the Scriptures, that together are summed up in the Rule of Faith.

law of faith - decree/edict

"The Rule of Faith", article in the 'Encyclopaedia of the Protestant Church'.

VIII.8 CONCLUSIONS FROM CHAPTER EIGHT

The first point established in this chapter was the close connection (and the necessary connection) between the catechumen's actions, his attitudes and his beliefs, in his relationship with God. Tertullian taught his catechumens that paenitentia prima (in its widest sense) included the practical steps a man must take in order to secure a right relationship with God, an attitude of mind which would satisfy the scrutiny of God himself, and assent to certain doctrines about God, considered in Himself.

If we would deduce ... that Tertullian makes a distinction between doctrine and discipline (that is, between what the Christian should believe and what he should do) and that the first is so much more important than the second that the decision as to whether a person is heretical depends only on the point of doctrine, we should be mistaken. For though he does indeed make a distinction between doctrine and discipline, the two are so closely connected that they condition each other; the lower standard of discipline among the heretics is an indication of their doctrine, just as the stricter discipline of the orthodox Christians testifies to their hold on the truth; and a corruption of doctrine is followed by and attended with an unchristian discipline. ¹

In this respect the Roman law of Tertullian's day provided little parallel with the relationship of man to God. With the exception of murder and arson, where 'motive' or 'mens rea' had to be established, early Roman law dealt with men's actions only as they were objectively seen, not judging a man for the attitude of mind by which he was motivated. By Tertullian's time, the animus of the parties to a dispute, or the voluntas of a man acting contrary to the established social order, were of some relevance to the legal position, but when there was any doubt as to the existence of a given relationship, the jurists decided the matter by applying legal canons to the actual facts of the case, not by asking whether the parties had intended that particular relationship. As Jolowicz has clearly brought out, ² one of the features which distinguished post-classical law from the law of Tertullian's day was the introduction of a

¹ Flessman van-der Leer, op. cit., p 158.

² op. cit., pp 532-538.

repentance before baptism

a guilty mind/intention

purpose/intention

disposition/inclination

376

subjective element to it. (The reasons for that are much debated but are entirely outside the scope of this study.)

Not only would the catechumen's activities identify him, in the eyes of the world, as an associate of the Christian Church, but his attitude to paenitentia was to be different from the pagan understanding of it. The further he progressed through the catechumenate, the more he ought to be unlike the 'man of the world'; by the time he was ready for baptism, he should already have acquired that disposition and character which marked off Christians from non-Christians. So paenitentia prima was very much the work of the catechumen. He would be baptised because he had ceased to sin, because he was iam corde lotus. The completeness of his forgiveness in baptism depended on the effort he had made to cleanse himself.

What was the consequence for a man who was accepted for baptism, believing that his attitude was correct, but whose paenitentia had not in fact been accepted by God? It was his responsibility to come adequately prepared to baptism, if God was to forgive his sins. Worse still, what of the man anxiously awaiting baptism, who was beset by nagging doubts, worried whether he had sufficiently feared God and lived a life of purity to merit God's forgiveness for his sin? He had, according to Tertullian, not received the grace of God nor the Holy Spirit to keep him from sinning, so it must have been a worrying time. It is plain that the catechumen had no assurance of salvation and none of the considerable spiritual consequents of baptism, until he had actually been baptised. Tertullian gave no indication that a catechumen dying unbaptised, unless martyred, was in any better relationship to God than was a pagan. (In this he was hardly alone in the early Church, which was all but unanimous that divine judgment would fall on the unbaptised.) One passage in de baptismo chapter 18 might seem to contradict this view - fides integra segura est de salute!¹

¹ bapt 18.6.40.

repentance

repentance before baptism

already washed (i.e. clean) of heart

"On Baptism" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

faith unimpaired has no doubt about its salvation

However, the sentence appears in context to mean that only fides integra could be secura de salute in baptism; the question of fides without baptism did not arise. It would be better to defer baptism until fides was integra - in other words, only such faith was secura de salute in baptism.

The relationship between paenitentia prima, faith, baptism and the merits of the death of Christ was fully discussed in section six, and certain conclusions were reached at the end of that section. There is no need to repeat them here, but it should be mentioned, as has frequently been remarked by commentators, that there is no suggestion in Tertullian of a forensic statement of the atonement wrought by Christ. Typical is Roberts - "He uses the term satisfacere, it is true, but never in the sense of vicarious satisfaction. With him it means invariably the amends which men make for their own sins by confession, repentance, and good works."¹ (It is typical also that such statements do not distinguish between prebaptismal sin and post-baptismal sin).

As for the influence of Roman law on Tertullian, for the period reviewed in this chapter, it was suggested that a non-technical use of both compensatio and praescriptio fitted into the context of Tertullian's thought better than the strictly judicial use of these words. Whether Tertullian used obsignata in the legal sense is difficult to decide, but his application of it to baptism was not inconsistent with current legal usage. That appears, however, to be the extent to which it can confidently be asserted that Tertullian drew on Roman law as such to express the relationship of catechumens to God.

¹ op. cit., p 180. Morgan did, to be fair, indicate in his parallel passage that 'satisfaction' was applicable only in paenitentia secunda - "It is also true that he is the first to use the term 'satisfaction', but nothing is said of a satisfaction rendered by Christ to divine justice. The 'satisfaction' of which he speaks is that which is required of the penitent Christian who would make amends to an offended God by means of confession, repentance, and good works". (op. cit., p 158).

faith unimpaired

in no doubt about its salvation - faith

faith - unimpaired

repentance before baptism

to make satisfaction

compensation

prescription

seal

repentance ~~after~~ baptism

278

A saving relationship with God was normally to be obtained only (1) by completed paenitentia prima, scrutinised by the Church and by God, followed (2) by baptism. Only when the catechumen had emerged from the waters of baptism could he call God "our Father". The ceremonies surrounding this second and fundamental step, the baptismal ceremony, are therefore examined next.

repentance before baptism

379

CHAPTER NINE - THE RELATIONSHIP AT BAPTISM

IX.1 INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER NINE

Nowhere has Tertullian set out a comprehensive or systematic description of the baptismal service and the ceremonies surrounding it, as they were practised in his day, but he made frequent reference to baptism and to the accompanying ceremonies. Not only are these reference of considerable importance in themselves, but his treatise de baptismo is the only surviving ante-Nicene treatise on the significance of the rite.¹ Even although his references are allusive rather than descriptive, a fairly clear outline of the ritual can be reconstructed,² and it falls into three main parts - the baptism itself, the rite now called 'confirmation', and the first admission to the Eucharist. Considered in detail, the order of the Christian initiation ceremony as practised in Tertullian's day appears to have been:

- (a) The blessing of the water
- (b) The public renunciation of the devil
- (c) The triple immersion, with accompanying baptismal vow
- (d) Anointing with oil³
- (e) The signing with the Cross⁴

¹ The lost work of Hippolytus, reconstructed and now known as The Apostolic Tradition, provides an approximately contemporary and detailed account of the Church's baptismal rite and the forms which surrounded the act of the baptismal washing.

² In addition to the whole treatise de baptismo, there are three long passages, viz cor 3.2.12-3.22; praes 36.5.18-19; and res. 8.3.8-12. Other reference, all of which contribute to reconstructing the outline are - an 41.4.20-24; I Marc 28.2.28-3.12; mart 3.1.12-13; praes 20.3.9-11; Prax 26.9.57-60; pud 9.11.47-48 and 16.70-74; pud 16.5.16-20; res 26.10.35-11.46; res 48.11.49-52; and spec 4.1.1-3.13.

³ Examined in chapter X.2.

⁴ Examined in chapter X.2. The signing with the Cross is placed at this point in this analysis of the baptismal ceremonies because of the reference to it in res 8.3.8-11 "caro abluitur, ut anima emacuietur; caro unguitur, ut anima consecratur; caro signatur, ut (et) anima muniatur; caro manus inpositione adumbratur ut (et) anima spiritu inluminetur". There is no corresponding reference to it in de baptismo.

"On Baptism" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

the flesh is washed, that the soul may be made spotless; the flesh is anointed that the soul may be consecrated; the flesh is signed with the cross, that the soul too may be protected; the flesh is overshadowed by the imposition of the hand that the soul may be illumined by the Spirit.

170

- (f) The imposition of the hand¹
- (g) The giving of the ring²
- (h) The receiving of the Eucharist³
- (i) A taste of milk and honey.⁴

Whether or not the reception of the Eucharist was regarded by Tertullian as part of the baptismal ceremony itself⁵ is clear that he envisaged the catechumen normally proceeding from water baptism straight to 'confirmation' (as later ages described it) as part of one connected rite.

The relation between Confirmation and Baptism is one of essential unity rather than of mere liturgical association. For completion in Christian initiation a man had to be "confirmed" as well as "baptised".... When an ancient writer spoke of "Baptism", the thought of "Confirmation" was as much present to his mind as that of Baptism proper. It should be remembered, indeed, that the very word confirmatio means "completion." ⁶

Tertullian still considers this rite (confirmation) and baptism inseparably connected, and forming but one whole, although he distinguishes in it the two distinct momenta, the negative and the positive, the forgiveness of sin and purification which was effected by baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and the communication of the Holy Spirit following thereupon to the individual now restored to the original state of innocence, to which communication the imposition of hands refers. ⁷

Accordingly, the position of the catechumen who had been baptised but not "confirmed" was not dealt with by Tertullian, but his feelings on that will become clear as this chapter proceeds and a section in the following chapter is

¹ Examined in chapter X.3

² Examined in chapter X.1.

³ Examined in chapter X.6.

⁴ Examined in chapter X.6.

⁵ Also examined in chapter X.6.

⁶ E.C. Ratcliff, "The Relation of Confirmation to Baptism in the early Roman and Byzantine Liturgies", Theology, 49 (1946), 290/2. So also Lupton, op. cit., p xxii - "Baptism in the second century was a composite rite, and included what is now called Confirmation".

⁷ Neander, op. cit., p 437.

securing/establishing/confirming/completing

moments/instants

341

devoted to it. He did, however, clearly distinguish the spiritual effects of the separate parts of the composite rite and so the consequences of the separate parts, for the relationship to God, will be examined in this chapter up to the baptism itself; the consequences of the further aspects, up to and including the first admission to the Eucharist, will be examined in the final chapter.

Tertullian was the first to mention the consecration of water before baptism. For him, this blessing of the water was the initial act of the ceremony, but since it had in itself no effect on the relationship of the catechumen to God, it will be dealt with later in this introductory section only and not further referred to. This descent of the Spirit upon the waters, sanctifying them, must be carefully distinguished from the later descent of the Spirit to the individual candidate at the Imposition of the Hand.

After the water had been blessed, aquam adituri ibidem, sed et aliquanto prius in ecclesia sub antistitis manu, contestamur nos renuntiare diabolo et pompae et angelis eius. Dehinc ter mergitamus amplius aliquid respondentes quam dominus in euangelio determinavit.¹ The significance of the renunciation of the devil will be examined in section two, and the amplius respondentes in section three. Then, spread over the next five sections, five different consequences of the water baptism² will be considered. (No reference

¹ cor 3.2.13-17.

² In de anima chapters 39 to 41, four consequences of baptism are mentioned, and in adversus Marcionem book I, 28.2.28-3.9, four consequences are also mentioned - not the same four.

de anima

adversus Marcionem

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1. deliverance from power of devil | |
| 2. | remission of sins |
| 3. regeneration | regeneration |
| 4. | deliverance from death |
| 5. illumination | |
| 6. marriage of soul to Spirit | receiving the Holy Spirit. |

The first of these will be dealt with in section two, and the last in chapter X.3; numbers two to five comprise four of the 'five' referred to above. The 'fifth', for which there are numerous references throughout Tertullian's works, is restoration to the likeness of God, examined in section IX.8. Tertullian referred (continued on next page)

When we are about to enter the water, and, as a matter of fact, even a short while before, we declare in the presence of the congregation before the bishop that we renounce the Devil, his pomps, and his angels. After that, we are immersed in the water three times, making a somewhat fuller pledge than the Lord has prescribed in the Gospel.

fuller pledge

"On the Soul" and "Against Marcion" (two of Tertullian's treatises)

782

will be made to the union with Christ which was accomplished in baptism, because this study is confined to the relationship of man to the First Person of the Trinity.) The relevant aspects of Roman law will then be set out in section eight and certain conclusions drawn in section nine.

The first part of the baptismal ceremony was to invoke by prayer the blessing of the Spirit on the water to be used. Tertullian's teaching on that is found in de baptismo chapters 4 and 5. Building on the previous chapter, in which he had described how the Holy Spirit rested on the waters at the creation of the world, Tertullian showed that the element of water was either sanctified forever¹ or at least had acquired sanctifying power. It made no difference whether the person was baptised in the sea or in a pond, in a river or in a fountain, in a lake or in a trough, because the sanctifying power of any water would be activated when prayer was made; the Holy Spirit would supervene from Heaven and give to the water the power of making holy. Accordingly, Tertullian warned against futile speculation as to whether the baptismal water was the same as the water present in the beginning, because all water from that time possessed sanctifying power, provided prayer was made to God. There was therefore first a prayer, inuocato deo: superuenit enim statim spiritus de caelis et aquis superest sanctificas eas de semetipso et ita sanctificatae uim sanctificandi conbibunt.²

footnote 2 continued:

also to union with Christ in baptism - bapt 12.2.8; fug 10.2.16-18; mon 7.8.55-57; mon 17.5.22-23 and III Marc 12.4.25-27 - but the relationship of man to Christ is not within the scope of this study.

¹ prima illa, qui iam tunc etiam ipso habitu praenotabatur baptismi figurandi, spiritum qui ab initio super aquas uectabatur, super aquas instinctorem moraturum, Sanctum autem utique super sanctum ferebatur aut ab aut eo quod super ferebatur, id quod ferebat sanctitatem mutuabatur, quoniam subiecta quaeque materia eius quae desuper imminet qualitatem rapiat necesse est, maxime corporalis spiritalem et penetrare et insidere facilem per substantiae suae subtilitatem. Ita de sancto sanctificata natura aquarum et ipsa sanctificare concepit- bapt 4.1.2-11.

² bapt 4.4.23-25. The prayer was to God the Father, asking Him to send the Spirit, not a prayer addressed to the Holy Spirit Himself.

"On Baptism" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

... when God is invoked; for at once the Spirit comes down from heaven and stays upon the water, sanctifying them from within himself, and when thus sanctified they absorb the power of sanctifying.

the (primary principle of baptism) which long ago was noted by the very attitude (which the Spirit assumed) as a prophetic indication and a type of baptism, namely that the spirit of God, who since the beginning hovered over the waters, would continue to linger over the waters of the baptised. A holy thing in fact was carried upon a holy thing - or rather, that which carried acquired holiness from that which was carried upon it. Any matter placed beneath another is bound to take to itself the quality of that which is suspended over it; and especially must corporal matter take up spiritual quality, which because of the subtlety of the substance it belongs to finds it easy to penetrate and inhere. Thus the nature of the waters, having received holiness from the Holy One itself conceived the power of sanctifying.

343

Tertullian referred on several occasions throughout de baptismo to the intervention of an angel, both in respect of the preparatory ceremonies and in respect of the baptism itself. The specific role of this angel in the consecration of the baptismal water was first hinted at toward the end of chapter 4,¹ then taken up as a definite theme in chapter 5² and explained in detail in chapter 6. It is outwith the scope of this study to look in any detail at who this angel might be;³ it is sufficient to note here that he only prepared the water, so that when the candidate entered the water, the candidate was purified and made ready for the later advent on the Holy Spirit. Non quod in aqua spiritum sanctum consequamur, sed in aqua emendati sub angelo spiritui sancto praeparamur.⁴ This was indicated just as clearly at the end of chapter 4 - Igitur medicatis

¹ bapt 4.5.32-33 - igitur medicatis quodammodo aquis per angeli interuentum.

² Anticipating criticism that an angel should be entrusted with such a task, Tertullian wrote in some detail about the activity of the angel at the pool of Bethsaida, pointing to this physical healing in the waters as a figure of the healing of the soul which was to take place in Christian water-baptism, and so demonstrating that an angel could work on water for men's salvation. ne quis durius credat angelum dei sanctum aquis in salutem hominis temperandis adesse, cum angelus mali profanus commercium eiusdem elementi in perniciem hominis frequentet. Angelum aquis interuenire si nouum uidetur, exemplum futuri praecurrit: piscinam Bethsaidam angelus interueniens commouebat; obseruabant qui inualitudinem querebantur: nam si quis praeuenerat descendere illuc queri post lauacrum desinebat. Figura ista medicinae corporalis spiritalem medicinam praedicabat, ex forma qua semper carnalia in figuram spiritualium antecedunt. - bapt 5.5.30-40.

³ The identity of the angel of baptism has been discussed in considerable detail by E. Amann in 'L'ange du baptême dans Tertullien', Revue des Sciences Religieuses, 1 (1921), 208-221. From the Benedictine Dom Thomas Corbinier in the 18th century until Backer in the 20th, there have not lacked those who believe that the 'angel' was the bishop or his appointed delegate. "Nous pensons que cet ange designe le ministre du baptême, qui bénit l'eau destinée au sacrement, c'est-à-dire que par une invocation à Dieu (ἐπίκλησις) il y fait descendre l'Esprit divin, qui lui donnera la vertu sanctificatrice. C'est lui encore qui accomplit la cérémonie rituelle ci prononce la formule sacramentelle. Nous basons notre opinion sur la comparaison des textes:" (and there follows an analysis of bapt 6 and cor 3-14.) - Backer op. cit., p 163-164. Amann said that he was 'bien étonné' (p 210) by Backer's views, and proceeded to show that the angel was none other than a spirit of God (p 215) (but not the Holy Spirit (p 216).)

⁴ bapt 6.1.1-2.

"On Baptism" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

Not that the Holy Spirit is given to us (we obtain the Holy Spirit) in the water, but that in the water we are made clean by the action of the angel and (thus) made ready for the Holy Spirit.

Thus when the waters have in some sense acquired healing power ...

Thus when the waters have in some sense acquired healing power by an angel's intervention.

No one should think it too hard (to believe) for God's holy angel to be present to set waters in motion for man's salvation, when an unholy angel of the evil one often does business with that same element with a view to man's perdition. If it is thought strange that an angel should do things to waters, there has already occurred a precedent of that which was to be. An angel used to do things when he moved the Pool of Bethsaida. Those who complained of ill-health used to watch out for him, for anyone who got down there before the others, after washing had no further reason to complain. This example of bodily healing was prophetic of spiritual healing, by the general rule that carnal things always come first as examples of things spiritual.

"The Angel of Baptism in Tertullian", periodical article in "Review of Religious Sciences"

We think that this angel is a reference to the minister of baptism, who blesses the water to be used for the sacrament, that is to say that by an invocation to God () he calls down the Holy Spirit, which gives him the sanctifying power. He also carries out the ritual ceremony, and recites the sacramental formula. We base our opinion on the comparison of texts:

very surprised

384

quodammodo aquis per angeli interventum et spiritus in aquis corporaliter diluitur et caro in eisdem spiritaliter mundatur.¹

It is important to note that it was an angel, not the Holy Spirit Himself, who sanctified the baptismal water. It emphasises Tertullian's teaching that the blessing of the water was no more than a preparatory part of the baptismal ceremony; it also emphasises Tertullian's teaching (to be examined in chapter X) that even baptism did not confer the gift of the Holy Spirit - that came later with the Imposition of the Hand.² What was accomplished by the preparatory ceremony of blessing the water was that the water received healing power by the angel's intervention - in no way did Tertullian regard the washing in water as a mere washing in water. In the same way as a miracle had taken place at the Pool of Bethesda, when an angel prepared the water, so a miracle took place in the baptismal water just before the baptism; the angel of God prepared the water to cure the soul's infirmities, so that when the body was washed, there would be a spiritual cleansing of the soul in just the same way as ordinary water washed away the defilement of the body. The miraculous mixture of water and

¹ bapt. 4.5.32-34.

² It may seem pedantic to keep stressing the point, but G.H.W. Lampe maintained in his book "The Seal of The Spirit". (2nd ed.; London: 1967) at page 161 that "there is a real confusion in Tertullian's theology" at this point because (he claimed) Tertullian sometimes said the Holy Spirit was given in water-baptism, and at other times that He was given by the Imposition of the Hand. This is, with respect to Lampe, just not so. Nowhere did Tertullian assert or even imply that the Spirit was given at the baptism itself, yet Lampe again and again read this idea into Tertullian's language, and then accused him of inconsistency - e.g. at p 158 - 'He (Tertullian) can, however, also speak of the laver of Baptism as the 'seal' which is typified by the ring given to the prodigal son. The ring at the same time signifies the 'vestem priorem, indumentum Spiritus Sancti' which was lost at the Fall, but has been restored to man by the gift of the Spirit in Baptism. The clear implication of this passage is that the seal of the Spirit is given in the 'laver', that is, water-baptism". Yet Tertullian distinguished the symbolism of the ring from that of the robe; the former he identified with water-baptism, the latter with the subsequent clothing with the Holy Spirit, and other points could be made about the context of that passage. In fairness to Tertullian, it must be said that Lampe was reading his own theology into Tertullian's words and not out of them.

Thus (overleaf) ... when the waters have in some sense acquired healing power by an angel's intervention, the Spirit is in those waters corporally washed, while the flesh is in those same waters spiritually cleansed.

the earlier/clothing/attire, the clothing of the Holy Spirit

Jer

spirit acted on the human compound, man being composed of flesh and spirit. Accordingly, the spiritual consequences of the baptismal ceremonies began for the candidate only when he himself became involved in the baptismal ceremony. It appears that his first act may have been the renunciation of the devil, which is examined now.

IX.2 RENUNCIATION OF THE DEVIL

The formal renunciation of the devil, his works, his pomp¹ and his angels, was not part of the actual rite of baptism. It formed a separate step, and practice appears to have varied between the renunciation taking place in the baptismal pool itself (but before immersion) and the renunciation taking place even before the candidate entered the water. The former was expressly stated by Tertullian in the context that no Christian should attend public amusements because their origin, history, names, ceremonies and locations all showed them to be a form of idolatry which every believer renounced. "Cum aquam ingressi Christianam fidem in legis suae uerba profitemur, renuntiasse nos diabolo et pompae et angelis eius ore nostro contestamur."²

On the other hand, when Tertullian was being more specific about the renunciation, he wrote (in the words quoted in the preface to this chapter) "aquam adituri ibidem, sed et aliquanto prius in ecclesia sub antistitis manu, contestamur nos renuntiare diabolo et pompae et angelis eius. Dehinc ter mergitamur amplius aliquid respondententes quam dominus in euangelio determinauit"³. The detail does not appear to have been important to him, but the principle was, as will be seen later in this section. That the detail of when and how the candidate renounced the devil had in itself little significance is evident

¹ Pompa diaboli was a favourite expression of Tertullian's. Its meaning has been studied by Salomon Reinach, Cultes, mythes et religions, (Paris, E. Leroux, 1905, English translation, Cutts, Myths and Religions by Elizabeth Frost, London: D. Nutt, 1912) I, 347-362; Hugo Rahner, 'Pompa diaboli', Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie, 55 (1931), 239-273; Pierre de Labriolle, 'Pompa diaboli', Archivum latinitatis medii aevi, 2 (1926), 170-181; Waszink, 'Pompa diaboli', 13-41 and Jean Danielou, The Origins of Latin Christianity (translated by David Smith and John Austin Baker), (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1977) pp 412-418. The later view is that the word 'pompa', meaning 'procession' in its narrower sense, was used by Tertullian in the wider sense of every manifestation of idolatrous life in the pagan city.

² spec 4.1.2-5.

³ cor 3.2.13-3.17.

When we enter the water and profess the Christian faith in the terms prescribed by its law, we profess with our mouths that we have renounced the devil, his pomp and his angels.

When we are about to enter the water, and, as a matter of fact, even a short while before, we declare in the presence of the congregation before the bishop that we renounce the Devil, his pomps, and his angels. After that, we are immersed in the water three times, making a somewhat fuller pledge than the Lord has prescribed in the Gospel.

the pomp of the devil

Cults, Myths and Religions

Journal for Catholic Theology

Archives of Medieval Latin

287

from the general way in which Tertullian referred to it - "Hi sunt nempe angeli, quos indicaturi sumus, hi sunt angeli, quibus in lauacro renuntiamus"¹, and other passages are even more unspecific. In de spectaculis 24, where the context of 'sealing' appears to be the making of the cross on the forehead of the neophyte as a sign of new ownership, (which, according to the de resurrectione passage² came fairly late in the baptismal ceremony) Tertullian appears to equate the renouncing of the devil with the sealing of the Cross.

hoc erit pompa diaboli, aduersus quam in signaculo fidei eieramus. Quod autem eieramus, neque facto neque dicto neque uisu neque conspectu participare debemus. Ceterum si nos eieramus et rescindimus signaculum rescindendo testationem eius. 3

and in de paenitentia he implied that the renunciation was part of the whole conversation process :

Ceterum non leuiter in dominum peccat qui, cum aemulo eius diabolo paenitentia sua renuntiasset et hoc nomine illum domino subiecisset, rursus eundem regressu suo erigit et exultationem eius semetipsum facit, ut denuo malus recuperata praeda sua aduersus dominum gaudeat. 4

Indeed, it may have been done twice, first during the preparation of the catechumen, and secondly, just before the actual service "nobis ... qui bis idolis renuntiamus".⁵ That text led Dekkers to state:

T. kent twee afzweringen van de heidense goden:..."nobis qui bis idolis renuntiavimus" (De spect. 13), waarvan de eerste enige tijd vóór het Doopsel - "aliquanto prius", (de cor.3) - werd uitgesproken, naar alle waarschijnlijkheid op den dag, waarop de catechumenen tot "audientes" werden aangenomen. De tweede en voornaamste "eieratio" werd daarentegen uitgesproken, wanneer de "baptizandus" reeds in het doopwater stond: "... cum aquam ingressi christianam fidem in legis suae verba

¹ I cult 2.4.36-38.

² res 8.3.8-11, quoted and commented on in the introduction to this chapter.

³ spec 24.2.6-3.10.

⁴ paen 5.7.23-27.

⁵ spec 13.1.4.

these are the angels whom we are destined to judge, these are the angels whom we renounce in baptism.

"On Shows" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

"On Resurrection" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

why, here you have that "pomp of the devil" that we renounce when we receive the "seal" of faith. But what we renounce, we have no business to share, be it in deed or word, sight or anticipation. Moreover by such acts we renounce and unseal the "seal", making void our witness to it.

"On Repentance" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

But does he sin venially against the Lord who, in penance, renounces His adversary, the devil and thus subordinates him to the Lord, but who then, falling back into sin again, exalts him, once more and is a cause of his joy, so that the evil one, recovering his booty laughs, in the fact of the Lord.

to us, who twice renounce idols

translation in footnote overleaf

768

profitemur, renuntiassse nos diabolo et pompae et angelis eius ore nostro contestamur" (De spect. 4), waardoor een duidelijke antithese tussen de "eieratio" en de onmiddellijk volgende "fidei pacto" bekomen werd. 1

The significance of the renunciation for the relationship of man to God (as opposed to the insignificance of the detail) is evident from Tertullian's repeated reference to the renunciation as part of the sacramentum.² He never forgot (and tried to ensure that his readers never forgot either) the consequences of the baptismal pledge to renounce the devil and his retinue. What had the Christian, who had renounced the devil, his pomp and his angels, to do with the circus or the theatre, when both places were consecrated to them? How could the maker of idols and the temple-painter be said to have renounced the devil and his angels, if they made their living by them? The difficulty of the schoolmaster, and the general question of trade, were both referred back by Tertullian to the baptismal renunciation; since he believed that the whole of pagan life - the market, the baths, the taverns, the streets, the houses - was impregnated with satanic influence, the renunciation of satan was of critical importance for the right relationship of the baptismal candidate to God.

Of particular interest for this study is Tertullian's statement that although the renunciation was founded ex traditio^{ne} and not ex scriptura, it was

¹ op. cit., p 181. A rough translation is: "Tertullian knows two renunciations of the pagan gods. (nobis - 13) of which the first one was pronounced sometime before baptism (aliquanto - 3) in all probability on the day on which the catechumens were accepted as "audientes". The second and most important "eieratio" was pronounced when the "baptizandus" was already standing in the baptismal water. (Cum - 4) through which there is a clear antithesis between the "eieratio" and the immediately following "fidei pactio".

² e.g. omnes alienae, profanae, illicitae, semel iam in sacramenti testatione eieratae - haec enim erunt "pompae diaboli et angelorum eius" - cor 13.7.45-47. The sacramental oath in baptism was of the utmost importance to Tertullian in the relationship of man to God, but it is not clear just how he related it to the 'amplius aliquid respondentes quam dominus in evangelio determinavit' - cor 3.3.16-17. The whole matter will be examined together in the next section and at that point reference will be made to Tertullian's use of the word sacramentum.

translation in footnote below

sacramental oath

from tradition - from Scripture

to us, who twice renounce idols

but a short while before

hearers

renunciation on oaths - candidate for baptism

When we step into the water and profess the Christian faith in the terms prescribed by law, we bear public witness that we have renounced the devil and his pomp and his angels

covenant/contract/bargain of faith

All these are foreign to us, unholy, forbidden, once for all forsworn in our baptismal vow - for they surely are of "the pomps of the devil and his angels"

making a somewhat fuller pledge than the Lord has prescribed in the Gospel

sacramental oath

389

nevertheless his auctoritas¹ for certain standards of Christian living; the former, as a word from Roman law, will be examined in Section IX.9 below. The context in which Tertullian introduced the renunciation of the devil as a Christian tradition is well known, but it is mentioned briefly here in order to provide a foundation for the examination, in section IX.9, of the word traditio. A Christian soldier had recently been put to death after a trial which resulted from his refusal to wear a crown on the occasion of a military review in honour of an imperial anniversary. Certain Christians believed that he should have worn it, but Tertullian sympathised wholeheartedly with the soldier. When he was challenged to provide scriptural authority for his view, Tertullian replied that the refusal to wear a crown, although admittedly not dealt with in Scripture, was correct because it was a consuetudo, quae sine dubio de traditione manuit. He refused even to enter into argument for or against the question of support or lack of support by Scripture, because the matter was settled :

Hanc si nulla scriptura determinavit, certe consuetudo corroboravit, quae sine dubio de traditione manuit. Quomodo enim usurpari quid potest, si traditum prius non est? "Etiam in traditionis obtentu exigenda est", inquit "auctoritas scripta." Ergo quaeramus an et traditio nisi scripta non debeat recipi. Plane negabimus recipiendam, si nulla exempla praeiudicent aliarum observationum, quas sine ullius scripturae instrumento solius traditionis titulo et exinde consuetudinis patrocinio uindicamus. 2

The first of the exempla which Tertullian produced was the renunciation of the devil at baptism; the next three are also of interest to this chapter of the thesis

¹ "Ne quis argumentari nos putet, ad principalem auctoritatem conuertar ipsius signaculi nostri. Cum aquam ingressi ... renuntiassent nos diabolo et pompae et angelis eius" - spec 4.1.1-4. After this page had been typed and after the bibliography had been prepared, a micro-film (ordered some time previously) arrived of a Ph.D. thesis submitted by Stanley Helms Kelley to the Emory University (U.S.A.) in 1974, entitled Auctoritas in Tertullian: The Nature and Order of Authority in his Thought. Kelley's conclusion was that auctoritas referred in Tertullian to an innate or ontological quality within an individual or an institution which allowed it naturally to subordinate to itself those who lacked this quality, even though such a subordination was not legally compelled.

² cor 3.1.3-2.12.

authority

tradition

a custom, which without doubt arose from tradition

Even though no scriptural passage prescribes it, it is strenthened by custom which certainly arose from tradition. How can anything become normal practice if it has not first been handed down to us? But, you tell me: 'You must always have a written source if you are going to plead the force of tradition'. Let us look into the matter, then, whether or not a tradition without a written source should be accepted. The answer will certainly be 'No' if we cannot adduce examples of other observances which are without written source in Scripture, and rest solely on the basis of tradition and yet have come to have the force of custom.

examples

Lest anyone think I am avoiding the point in question, I shall now appeal to the prime and principal authority of our 'seal' itself. When we step into the water ... we bear public witness that we have renounced the devil and his pomp and his angels.

authority

(the three-fold immersion, the words of the baptismal creed and the tasting of milk and honey) and then Tertullian went on to other practices, outwith the scope of this study. Here were a number of traditional rites, not specifically commanded in the Bible, but which were valid because established by custom.

One reference to the baptismal renunciation has been held over until now because it raises the whole question of baptism as a negotium between man and God. It will be sufficient to quote the passage here, to complete the texts in which Tertullian referred to the renunciation of the devil, and then to take up the significance of it in section IX.9 below. In de anima chapter 35, Tertullian was concluding his lengthy refutation of metempsychosis, and wished to discredit the heretical teaching of Carpocrates. If (conceding for the sake of argument only) Carpocrates was right that the 'adversary' mentioned in Matthew 5.26 was the devil, then Carpocrates had already renounced the devil - pactus es enim renuntiasse ipsi et pompae et angelis eius;¹ Tertullian warned against any attempt to get back from the devil those things which had been renounced ne te ut fraudatorem, ut pacti transgressorem iudici deo obiciat.²

The renunciation of the devil was a final and irrevocable renouncing - renuntiasse (perfect infinitive); it was the first step in that series of ceremonies surrounding baptism which had such a profound and fundamental effect on the relationship of man to God. The next step was to take the baptismal vow, and that will be examined now.

¹ an 35.3.26-27.

² an 35.3.30-31.

business/trade

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullien's treatises)

The compact you have already made with him is to renounce him, his
poms, and his angels.

lest he might hale you before God your judge as a cheat and as a vio-
lator of your agreement

to have renounced

351

IX.3 THE BAPTISMAL VOW

Following the renunciation of the devil - Tertullian specifically stated that it was following and apart from that - "Dehinc ter mergitmur amplius aliquid respondentes quam dominus in euangelio determinauit".¹ Since the catechumen had to be well grounded in the faith before he was admitted to baptism, it does not appear to affect this study of his relationship to God whether, in baptism, he made a shorter or a longer profession of his faith, or whether he added to the divine names the mention of the Church, "quae trium corpus est."² The extensive modern debate as to what exactly was said and by whom,³ when "in aqua demissus et inter pauca uerba tinctus,"⁴ is therefore not discussed here at all. What is of significance for this study is the clear impression from Tertullian's various texts that he regarded the baptismal vow more as a promise or as the taking of an oath than a declaration of orthodox doctrine or a summarizing of the faith. This seems to be the aspect of the Christian's response to God in baptism which appealed to him most, and several times he used the word sacramentum for the baptismal vow.

¹ cor 3.3.15-17.

² The significance of these words from bapt 6.2.13-14 was discussed by Evans, "Baptism", pp 68-69.

³ The debate is two-fold. First, many older scholars identified the rule of faith with the baptismal creed and some still do, including Oscar Cullmann, (Die ersten Christlichen Glaubensbekenntnisse, Zurich: Zollikon, 1943, English translation by J.K.S. Reid, The Earliest Christian Confessions (London: Lutterworth Press, 1949) pp 18-47; *ibid*, The Early Church, (translated by A.J.B. Higgins and S. Goodman, London: S.C.M. Press, 1956) p 94, and W. Telfer, The Forgiveness of Sins, (London: SCM Press, 1959) p 52. Most modern writers on the subject say this identification is impossible, for example, the penetrating study of R.P.J.M. Restreop-Jaramillo, *op. cit.*, and J.N.D. Kelly, Early Christian Creeds (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1958) p 51-63. Second, it is debated whether the questions and answers, and particularly the answers, followed quite the same course as they did elsewhere, when the answer was a simple "Credo". In view of Tertullian's expressions "in sacramenti verba (not verbis) respondere" and "in legis verba profiteri", it seems likely that the minister recited the formula while the baptizand replied 'credo'.

⁴ bapt 2.1.7-8.

After that, we are immersed in the water three times, making a somewhat fuller pledge than the Lord has prescribed in the Gospel

which is a body of three

a man is sent down into the water, is washed to the accompaniment of very few words,

sacramental oath

The Earliest Christian Confessions

to reply in the word of the sacramental oath - to acknowledge/profess in the word of the law

I believe

352

Sacramentum is a word which Tertullian employed no less than 134 times and in his hands it can mean at least six different things: religion generally, divine activity, pre-figuring, mystery, sacrament, and solemn oath. It is this last meaning that he applied to the profession of faith made at baptism. On occasions he used it more narrowly for the renunciation of the devil - de ipso sacramento nostro interpretaremur nobis aduersas esse fidei eiusmodi artes. Quomodo enim renuntiauimus diabolo et angelis eius, si eos facimus?¹

illicitae, semel iam in sacramenti testatione eieratae, - haec enim erunt "pomphae diaboli et angelorum eius."²

but on other occasions he applied it to the whole baptismal declaration of allegiance and faith:

Vocati sumus ad militiam Dei uiui iam tunc, cum in sacramenti uerba respondimus. ³

Credimusne humanum sacramentum diuino superduci licere,... Ceterum subuertit totam substantiam sacramenti causatio eiusmodi, ⁴

Non conuenit sacramento diuino et humano, ⁵

Huic sacramento militans ab hostibus prouocor. Par sum illis, nisi illis manus dederō. Hoc defendendo depugno in acie, uulneror, concidor, occidor. Quis hunc militi suo exitum uoluit, nisi qui tali sacramento eum consignauit? ⁶

and, even more widely to the baptismal ceremony itself:

non ullum ordinem uideo consistere, iam nec ipsum fidei eius sacramentum. Cui enim rei baptisma quoque apud eum exigitur? ⁷

¹ idol 6.1.24-2.26.

² cor 13.7.45-47.

³ mart 3.1.12-13.

⁴ cor 11.1.4-5 and cor 11.7.50-51.

⁵ idol 19.2.14-15.

⁶ scorp 4.5.14-18.

⁷ I Marc 28.2.27-29.

sacramental oath

from our sacrament itself we would draw our interpretation that arts/crafts of that kind are opposed to the faith. For how have we renounced the devil and his angels, if we make them?

forbidden, once for all forsworn in our baptismal vow. For they surely are the pomps of the devil and his angels.

We have been called to the military service of the living God since the moment when we responded to the words of the sacrament/sacramental oath.

Are we to believe it lawful to take an oath of allegiance to a mere human being over and above the oath of fidelity to God? ... Moreover, that kind of argument destroys the very essence of our sacramental oath,

There is no compatibility between the oath to serve God and the oath to serve man.

Serving as a soldier under this oath, I am challenged by the enemy. If I surrender to them, I am as they are. In maintaining this oath, I fight furiously in battle, am wounded, hewn in pieces, slain. Who wished this fatal issue to his soldier, but he who sealed him by such an oath?

Neither any activity of his do I find consistent - not even the sacrament of his faith. For to what purpose, in his sight, is even baptism required?

359

Vna nobis et illis fides, unus Deus, idem Christus, eadem spes, eadem, lauacri sacramenta, 1

In a slightly different sense of the word, baptism was a sacramentum - for example:

De sacramento aquae nostrae qua ablutis delictis pristinae caecitatis in uitam aeternam liberamur, 2

Quae figura manifestior in baptismi sacramento? 3

Igitur omnes aquae de pristina originis praerogatiua sacramentum sanctificationis consecuntur inuocato deo: 4

addita est ampliatio sacramento obsignatio baptismi. 5

From all this, it is clear that sacramentum was for Tertullian an important word, describing inter alia that most significant of all events in the relationship of man to God, namely his baptism. The background of the word sacramentum and its use in Roman law will be examined in section IX.9 below.

Meantime, it should be noted (without discussion) that when the baptismal vow was taken, the candidates for baptism were immersed⁶ not only once, but three times; during the calling of the three names of Persons of the Trinity, the candidates were baptized to the individual Persons. Five of the spiritual consequences of baptism will now be examined, over the next five sections.

¹ virg 2.2.14-15.

² bapt 1.1.2-3.

³ bapt 9.1.6.

⁴ bapt 4.4.21-22.

⁵ bapt 13.2.8-9.

⁶ The mode of baptism is entirely outside the scope of this study. Dekkers, *op. cit.*, p 186-188 studied the texts and concluded that in Tertullian it was normally by total immersion, but that in special cases per infusionem was administered and that even partial immersion would suffice - the externals were less important for Tertullian than the spiritual significance of baptism.

They and we have one faith, one God, the same Christ, the same hope, the same baptismal sacraments.

sacramental oath

This discussion of the sacred significance of that water of ours in which the sins of our original blindness are washed away and we are set at liberty unto life eternal.

This is a type made abundantly clear in the sacred act of baptism.

Therefore, in consequence of that ancient original privilege, all waters, when God is invoked, acquire the sacred significance of conveying sanctity.

the sacrament has been expanded and the seal of baptism added.

among other things

by pouring on of water

758

IX.4 REMISSION OF SINS

The spiritual consequences of baptism were 'manifold and complicated' as Evans put it.¹ However, the first and most obvious, and the one most frequently mentioned by Tertullian, was remissio delictorum. The washing in consecrated water, following an appropriate preparation through the catechuminate, guaranteed the forgiveness of sins. Tertullian challenged Marcion, early in his argument, as to why he required baptism. If Marcion's superior God did not withhold from man the spiritual benefits which the Christian obtained through baptism, why did he practice baptism?

Cui enim rei baptisma quoque apud eum exigitur? Si remissio delictorum est, quomodo uidebitur delicta remittere qui non uidebitur retinere, quia, si retineret, iudicaret? 2

Up until baptism, every soul was subject to original sin and was impure, certainly by nature and, if in a position to practice sin, then also by practice. Because the soul was subject to original sin, it was in fact sinful and this infected the body. However, baptism took away not only the curtain of corruption caused by original sin, but the sin itself.³ Baptism was the bath in which all the pollution of sin was washed away - the effect was immediate - all sins committed before baptism would be forgiven. Numerous references could be gathered⁴ but the point need not be laboured.

¹ Evans, "Baptism" p XXIX.

² I Marc 28.2.28-02.

³ The texts for this are examined in the next section.

⁴ For example, De sacramento aquae nostrae qua ablutis delictis pristinae caecitatis - bapt 1.1.2-3; quoniam uice sordium delictis inquinamur ... spiritus in aquis corporaliter diluitur et caro in eisdem spiritaliter emundatur - bapt 4.5.26 and 33-34; baptismi carnalis actus quod in aqua mergimur spiritalis effectus quod delictis liberamur - bapt 7.2.10-11; quid festinat innocens aetas ad remissionem peccatorum? - bapt 18.5.31-32; sordes quidem baptismate abluuntur, maculae uero martyrio candidantur - scorp 12.10.6-7; neque ego renuo diuinum beneficium, id est abolitionem delictorum, inituris aquam omnimodo saluum esse. paen 6.9.35-36.

the remission of sins

For to what purpose, in his sight, is even baptism required? If there is remission of sins, how shall one be supposed to remit sins who is supposed not to retain them? He could only retain them by judging them.

The sacred significance of that water of ours in which the sins of our original blindness are washed away. ... As we are defiled by sins as though with filth, we are washed clean in water ... the spirit is in those waters corporally washed, while the flesh is in those same waters spiritually cleansed. ... Just as in baptism there is an act that touches the flesh, that we are immersed in water, but a spiritual effect, that we are set free from sins. ... Why should innocent infancy come with haste to the remission of sins? ... The uncleanness, indeed, is washed away by baptism, but the stains are changed into dazzling whiteness by martyrdom. ... I do not deny that the divine benefaction, I mean the forgiveness of sins, is absolutely assured to those who will enter the water.

JRS

Tertullian insisted that Christian baptism could not, in contrast to Jewish washings, be repeated:

Semel ergo lauacrum inimus, semel delicta abluuntur quia ea iterari non oportet. Ceterum Israel (Judaeus) cotidie lauat quia cotidie inquinatur. Quod ne in nobis quoque factitaretur propterea de uno lauacro definitum est. Felix aqua quae semel abluit, quae ludibrio peccatoribus non est, quae non adsiduitate sordium infecta rursus quos diluit inquinat: 1

Accordingly, because of his severe view of post-baptismal sin Tertullian encouraged the practice of postponing the remission of sin in baptism until the candidate had matured to the point where he could reasonably expect to live the life demanded of the Christian.²

The other point to be noted in this section is the manner in which Tertullian tied the element of the forgiveness of sin in baptism into the other aspects of the conversion experience - he did not set one over against another. Indeed, not only were the aspects inter-related but the washing with water, which conveyed the forgiveness of sins was not dissociated from the gift of the Holy Spirit, so that "emergenti de lauacro post uetera delicta columba sancti spiritus aduolat pacem dei adferens emissa de caelis"³ ...and "Non quod in aqua spiritum sanctum consequimur, sed in aqua emendati sub angelo spiritui sancto praeparatur abolitione delictorum quam fides impetrat ob signata in patre et filio et spiritu sancto."⁴

¹ bapt 15.3.17-22.

² Examined in chapter III.5 above.

³ bapt 8.4.25-26.

⁴ bapt 6.1.1-2 and 5-7.

So then, we enter into the bath once only, once only are our sins washed away, because these ought not to be committed a second time. Jewish Israel, on the other hand, washes every day, because every day it is defiled. That this might not become the practice among us is the reason why the rule was laid down about a single washing. Happy is that water which cleanses once for all, which is not a toy for sinners to amuse themselves with, and is not tainted with repeated applications of filth, so as to defile once more those whom it cleanses.

it emerges from the font, after its old sins, flies the dove of the Holy Spirit, bringing us the peace of God, sent out from the heavens,

Not the Holy Spirit is given to us in the water, but that in the water we are made clean by the action of the angel, and made ready for the Holy Spirit. He does so by that cancelling of sins which is granted in response to faith signed and sealed in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

252

IX.5 REGENERATION

Of the four spiritual consequences of baptism mentioned in de anima chapters 39 to 61, the second was that the soul in Christo recenseatur,¹ that it was reformata per secundam natiuitatem² and that "nisi quis nascetur ex aqua et spiritu, non inibit regum dei."³ Tertullian's other listing⁴ of the spiritual benefits conferred through baptism also mentioned new birth and a new life which began now and which lasted into eternity; Tertullian there challenged Marcion - Si regeneratio est hominis, quomodo regenerat qui non generauit? Iteratio enim non competit ei, a quo quid nec semel factum est.⁵ The concept of regeneration in baptism was important to Tertullian, because he saw in it a symbolic representation of dying to rise again (although not in such a sense as to exclude a corporal resurrection in the future):

Docet quidem apostolus Colosenibus scribens mortuos fuisse nos aliquando, alienatos et inimicos sensus donimi, cum in operibus pessimis agebamus, dehinc consepultos Christo in baptismo et conresuscitados in eo per fidem efficaciae dei, qui illum suscitauit a mortuis: Et uos cum mortui essetis in delictis et praeputatione carnis uestrae, uiuificauit cum eo, donatis uobis omnibus delictis, et rursus: Si cum Christo mortui essetis ab elementis mundi, quomodo quidam quasi uiuentes in mundo sententiam fertis? Sed cum ita nos mortuos faciat spiritaliter, ut tamen et corporaliter quandoque morituros agnoscat, utique et resuscitados proinde spiritaliter deputans aequae non negat etiam corporaliter resurrecturos. 6

¹ Ita omnis anima eo usque in Adam censetur, donec in Christo recenseatur, tamdiu immunda, quamdiu recenseatur - an 40.1.1-3.

² Proinde cum ad fidem peruenit reformata per secundam natiuitatem ex aqua et superna uirtute, detracto corruptionis pristinae aulao totam lucem suam conspicit an. 41.4.20-23. This description is paralleled by earlier discussions of the same theme in bapt and paen.

³ A quotation from the words of Christ to correct any imbalance at the privilege of having been born of Christian parents: Alioquin meminerat dominicae definitionis: nisi quis nascetur ex aqua et spiritu, non inibit in regnum dei, id est, non erit sanctus - an 39.4.25-28.

⁴ This was set out, with the list in de anima 39 to 41, in the introduction to this chapter, IX.1 above.

⁵ I Marc 28.2.4-3.7.

⁶ res 23.1.1-3.12.

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

has been reborn in Christ

regenerated through this new birth

(the words of Christ): "Unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he will not enter into the Kingdom of God":

If there is man's second birth, how can one give a second birth who has never given a first birth? The repetition of an act is outside the competence of one who has done no act to begin with.

The Apostle teaches, it is true, when writing to the Colossians, that we were once dead, "alienated from and hostile to the thoughts" of the Lord, when we were occupied "in evil works," but that afterwards we were "buried with" Christ "in baptism" and raised up together in Him through faith in the working of God who raised Him from the dead:"
"And you, when you were dead in sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made to live together with Him, forgiving you all your sins," and again: If you did with Christ from the elements of the world how is that as though living in the world, some of you pass judgment? But although he represents us as thus dead spiritually, while at the same time he recognises that we shall one day die also bodily, assuredly also in like manner, when he regards us having been raised in a spiritual sense, he equally refrains from denying that we shall also rise in a bodily sense.

Every soul is considered as having been born in Adam until it has been reborn in Christ. Moreover, it is unclean until it has been thus regenerated.

Therefore, when the soul embraces the faith, it is regenerated by this new birth in water and virtue celestial; the veil of its former corruption is removed and it at last perceives the full glory of the light.

In general, of course, he (Paul) was mindful of the words of Christ: 'Unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he will not enter into the Kingdom of God'; in other words, he cannot be holy.

257

In view of Tertullian's description of baptism as regeneratio, and his designation of it as secunda natiuitas, it is a little surprising to find, in Evans' succinct description of the baptismal ceremonies, the statement that:

"In all this there is no reference to any regeneration or new birth into everlasting life. The original sacramental act is limited in its effect to the remission of sins, and that only as preparatory to what Tertullian regards as the more spiritually effective acts of unction (the grace of which is not precisely defined) and benediction (which ensures the descent of the Holy Spirit).¹

Tertullian did have one reservation about the concept of regeneration in baptism, but it was not the one to which Evans referred. He opposed the teaching of a heretic by name of Menander,² who had promised immortality, no less, and preservation from death, by the baptism which he administered; his disciples would have immediate freedom from death, and need not wait for the resurrection of the body at the last day.

sed haeretici magi Menandri Samaritani furor conspuatur dicentis mortem ad suos non pertinere, uerum nec peruenire: in hoc scilicet se a superna et arcana potestate legatum, ut immortales et incorruptibiles et statim resurrectionis compotes fiant, qui baptism eius induerint. ³

Tertullian was concerned that martyrdom should not be undermined as the most glorious way to God.⁴ If the baptism of Menander could give immortality, it would make martyrdom superfluous; since martyrdom was God's highest call to the Christian, Menander's baptism was plainly contrary to God's will.⁵

¹ Evans, "Incarnation", p 167.

² Menander taught toward the end of the first century A.D., so when not only his first disciples but in due course he himself came to die, the general credibility of his teaching must have been undermined. Nevertheless, Tertullian spoke of him (presumably meaning his disciples) in the present tense throughout an 50.2.8-5.41.

³ an 50.2.8-13.

⁴ From an 50.4.27-30 it seems that Menander and his followers considered martyrdom superfluous, because immortality was already secured by Menander's baptism, so there was no advantage in baptismo sanguinis.

⁵ apud quod nec pro deo ipso mori lex est, an 50.4.27. Tertullian answered by quoting Isaiah 2:2-3 - omnes iam nationes ascendant in montem domini et in aedem dei Iacob - an 50.4.27-29. In his commentary on de anima, (continued on next page)

regeneration

second birth

It demolishes the mad doctrine of Menander, the Samaritan heretic who thinks not only that de-th is no concern of his disciples but that it will never touch them. He pretends to have received from the Supreme Power on high the privilege that all whom he baptises become immortal, incorruptible, and immediately ready for the resurrection.

in the baptism of blood

Why, this would even dispense us from the ordinary law of dying in the service of God ... all nations have "to ascend the mount of the Lord and to the house of the God of Jacob"

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

758

Regeneration to newness of spiritual life was no escape from natural death, whether by martyrdom or by normal cause.

That reservation apart, Tertullian frequently spoke of baptism as rebirth and as the beginning of eternal life:-

a secunda natiuitate, id est a lauacro ¹

De sacramento aquae nostrae qua ablutis delictis pristinae caecitatis in uitam aeternam liberamur non erit otiosum degestum istud, ²

in aqua nascimur, ³

homo in aqua demissus et inter pauca uerba tinctus ... consecutio aeternitatis. ⁴

aqua reformari, ⁵

ne mirum sit in baptismo si aquae animare nouerunt. ⁶

qui uitia corporis remediabant nunc spiritum medentur, qui temporalem operabantur salutem nunc aeternam reformant, ⁷

cum de illo sanctissimo lauacro noui natalis ascenditis, ⁸

footnote 5 continued :

Waszink saw this as a reference by Tertullian to Jacob's dream about the ladder leading to heaven (Gen 28,12/5), the ladder being an exemplum of martyrdom and those ascending it being "Christians who do not fear to die for their faith. To them Tertullian opposes Menander, whose followers obtain immortality in an easier way, not baptismo sanguinis (cf. 55,5) but already by their first baptism" (Waszink op. cit., p 525.) With great respect to Waszink, the reference is surely to Isaiah 2:3.

¹ ex 1.4.17-18.

² bapt 1.1.2-4.

³ bapt 1.3.12.

⁴ bapt 2.1.7-10.

⁵ bapt 3.1.2-3 "Reformari literally means 'are reformed', but in much more than manners and morals - rather by a new formation at the hands of God, parallel to that first formation from the dust of the ground: and so, in effect, 'are born anew' (John 3.3,7)" Evans, "Baptism", p 54.

⁶ bapt 3.4.24-25.

⁷ bapt 5.6.42-44.

⁸ bapt 20.5.28-29.

From the time of one's second birth, that is to say, one's baptism.

This discussion of the sacred significance of that water of ours in which the sins of our original blindness are washed away and we are set at liberty unto life eternal, will not be without purpose if ...

We begin our life in the water

a man is sent down into the water, is washed to the accompaniment of very few words ... his attainment to eternity (is regarded as beyond belief)

Reformation to be brought about by water

in baptism it need be no wonder if waters already know how to make alive.

They (the waters of Bethsaida/baptism) used to remedy bodily defects, but now heal the spirit: they used to administer temporal health, but now restore the health which is eternal.

When you come up from that most sacred washing of the new birth.

model/pattern/illustration

in the baptism of blood

they are reformed

Ita nobis magis competit etiam spiritalem defendere resurrectionem ab ingressu fidei, qui plenitudinem eius agnoscimus in exitu saeculi. ¹

There is one other phrase, which seems entirely to have escaped the attention of commentators on regeneration in Tertullian's writings. When he was enumerating the customs associated with baptism and authenticated ex traditione not ex scriptura, he said, after describing the triple immersion, Inde suscepti lactis et mellis concordiam praegustamus. ² The word "suscepti" seems to be derived from a custom along the pagan Greeks and Romans, at any rate in earlier days, to set a new-born child on the earth, from which the father raised it up, thus acknowledging it as his own, conferring upon it legitimate status, and declaring his intention of rearing it and not exposing it. In connection with this rite, over which a special deity, Levana, was supposed to preside, the term tollere or suscipere liberos (filios) was used. In course of time suscipere came to mean simply "to beget" or "to bear", without any reference to the primitive ceremony of the "raising", which, even if it survived as late as the third century, had probably lost its original significance. Suscepti, therefore, as Tertullian used it here means "born (again)"; like the infant at the "raising", the newly baptised were acknowledged as the children of God.

It has been suggested that 'suscepti' here might be a reference to the duties of sponsors at baptism to take charge of the newly baptised, but if the word had the background just described, it would seem more natural to refer suscepti to the new life conferred at baptism. Since any legal significance of suscepti had long since passed into desuetude by Tertullian's time, it would not be appropriate to look for any reference here to Roman law and the point will not be pursued.

¹ res 25.6.23-25.

² cor 3.3.17-18.

Thus it becomes/befits us better (than them) to maintain that there is a spiritual character to resurrection, even at our entrance into our faith, seeing that we recognise its completeness at the end of the world.

by tradition

by Scripture

Then, after we are taken up/step forth from the font, we taste (are given a taste of) a mixture of milk and honey

we are taken up (like new-born children)

to raise or to take up children

360

IX.6 DELIVERANCE FROM DEATH AND THE POWER OF THE DEVIL

The first of the spiritual consequences of baptism, mentioned by Tertullian in de anima chapters 39 - 41, was deliverance from the power of the devil. The second, in the corresponding list in adversus Marcionem book 1, was deliverance from death. These two are treated together in this section - as indeed Tertullian treated them together when he explained that Christ destroyed the works of the devil in man, when by baptism he set man free and by the same act he delivered man from death: "In hoc enim manifestatus est filius Dei, ut soluet opera diaboli. Nam et soluit liberans hominem per lauacrum donato ei chirographo mortis."¹

Both concepts were taken up throughout Tertullian's works - as the guilt of sin was removed in baptism, so was the penalty of sin removed, and death was abolished: deleta morte per ablutionem delictorum: exempto scilicet reatu eximitur et poena.² nonne mirandum est lauacro dilui mortem?³ The consequence of sin was not only death, taken in the usual sense of the word, but also the separation of man from God. Tertullian saw considerable typological value, for understanding the significance of baptism, in the crossing by Israel of the Red Sea; by his act of baptism, the catechumen left his tormenter, the devil, drowned in waters, as Pharoah with his host was drowned in the Red Sea. "Liberantur de saeculo nationes, per aquam scilicet, et diabolum dominatorem pristinum in aqua obpressum derelinquunt."⁴ The passage of the Red Sea, as a figure of the sacrament, put the emphasis on the dreadful plight in which Israel found itself and from which it could be saved by divine intervention alone.

¹ pud 19.19.88-20.90, based on 1 John 3.6-8 and Colossians 2.14.

² bapt 5.6.45-46.

³ bapt 2.2.14.

⁴ bapt 9.1.7-8.

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

"Against Marcion" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

For unto this end was manifested the Son of God, to undo the works of the devil: for He has "undone" them withal, by setting man free through baptism, the "handwriting of death" having been "made a gift of" to him.

destroying death by the washing away of sins. Evidently as the guilt is removed the penalty also is taken away.

it not a marvel that by bathing death is washed away

I mean that the gentiles are set free from this present world by means of water, and leave behind, drowned in the water, their ancient tyrant the devil.

The concept of the sinner as a captive slave of satan was as familiar to Tertullian as to other ancient Christian writers.¹ The captivity which had made man the booty (praeda) of satan was the result of original sin, "diabolo tamen captante naturam, quam et ipse iam infecit delicti semine inlato,"² and from this captivity he was freed by baptism, as the text from de baptismo chapter 9 just quoted, shows. How Tertullian related the renunciation of satan at the beginning of the baptismal ceremony (when the candidate forsook the devil and all his pomps,³) to the liberation in the water baptism itself, he did not explain, but it is clear from the following passage adversus Marcionem that Tertullian regarded baptism as the point where the victory was appropriated to the catechumen. Challenging Marcion on the issue of baptism, Tertullian's second point (the first being how Marcion's God could remit sins) was to ask: Si absolutio mortis est, quomodo absoluet a morte qui non diuinxit ad mortem? Damnasset enim, si primordio deuinxisset.⁴

Physical death was universal and Tertullian (as noted in the previous section) refuted the doctrine of Menander, who offered escape from it. Even Enoch and Elijah, though they were translated, must yet see death, which was only postponed for them.⁵ But on the other hand death was not really "natural" to man. Even ^{when} the decay of old age removed men in "natural course", death was

¹ cf J. Rivière, op. cit., p 199-216. The texts relating to the notion of baptism as redemption have been collected by d'Ales, "De baptismo", p 99.

² V Marc 17.10.21-22.

³ Examined in Section IX. above.

⁴ I Marc 28.2.2-4 - although it must be noted that deliverance from the powers of death and the devil was not always mentioned in the context of baptism. Et Dominus quidem illum redemit ab angelis munditenentibus a potestatibus, a spiritalibus nequitiae, a tenebris huius aevi, a iudicio aeterno, a morte perpetua - fug 12.3.28-31; portas adamantinas mortis et aeneas seras inferorum infregit - res 44.7.27-28.

⁵ an 50.5.33-35.

booty

while yet the devil still has designs upon nature, which he has already corrupted by injecting the seed of sin

"On Baptism" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

"Against Marcion" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

If there is loosing of the bonds of death, how could one let them loose from death who had never kept them in bondage to death? He could only have had them in bondage by having condemned them from the beginning.

"On Baptism" (Book)

Christ indeed ransomed man from the angels who rule over the world, from the powers and spirits of wickedness, from the darkness of this world, from eternal judgment, from eternal death.

... has broken down the adamantine gates of death and the brazen bolts of hell.

362

really a violation of nature, because man was not created to die; it was sin, which entered the world due to man's free volition, which had brought in the complicating circumstances of death.¹ The spiritual consequences of death were annulled by baptism and man was set free for eternal life.

Since this matter is not going to yield any references to Roman law, it need not be prolonged, but one further text should be mentioned to complete this factual part of the study. When Tertullian was refuting the slanders which the heathen recounted of the Christians, that in their acts of worship they killed a child, dipped bread in the blood and then consumed the blood-soaked mouthfuls, he satirised a consecration ritual which began as described above and which concluded with the promise of eternal life.

Veni, si quis es, demerge ferrum in infantem, uel si alterius officium est, tu modo, specta morientem animam antequam uixit; certe excipe rudem sanguinem, in quo panem tuum saties, uescere libenter..."Haec cum expunxeris uiues in aeuum".²

In the Apologeticum, Tertullian replaced the last sentence with the more choice form of words "... excipe rudem sanguinem, eo panem tuum satia, uescere libenter.... Talia initiatus et consignatus uiuis in aeuum".³ The final words in each case - "you will live in eternity" - emphasise the importance for both Christian and heathen of the hope of deliverance from the consequences of death, and the necessity of ritual (in the case of Christians, baptism) to achieve eternal life.

¹ an 52.2.6-17.

² I nat 7.31.8-12 and 33.17.

³ apol 8.2.8-9 and 4.13.

Come, whoever you are, sink your knife into the child, or if this is the duty of another, observe only the living being that dies before it has hardly lived.. Collect the red blood, dip your bread in it and eat with pleasure ... If you have accomplished this, then you will live in eternity.

Catch/receive his fresh blood (infant blood), saturate your bread in it, partake freely ... Consecrated and sealed by such rites, you will live in eternity.

769

IX.7 ENLIGHTENMENT

Two of Tertullian's treatises to catechumens open with a reference to conversion as enlightenment - the removal of blindness and the coming to light: "Paenitentiam hoc genus homines quod et ipsi retro fuimus, caeci sine domini lumine;¹ De sacramento aquae nostrae qua ablutis delictis pristinae caecitatis in uitam aeternam liberamur.² He believed that original sin had 'obscured' the primary good nature of the soul, its tota lux; the 'curtain' of this 'obscuration' could be torn away only by baptism, - detracto corruptionis pristinae aulaeo totam lucem suam conspicit.³

This was an important emphasis for Tertullian the catechist to make, because he believed that sins committed after enlightenment and baptism would be judged more severely by God than sins committed in blindness and ignorance; the catechumenate was the place where one had to learn not to sin. If life before baptism was darkness, blindness, error and ignorance (one of Tertullian's evangelistic emphasis being that all sins of that earlier life would be forgiven in baptism) the coming of light brought not only a new relationship with God but also a new obligation to understand and to follow God's will. Since, however, the concept of enlightenment in baptism neither originated with Tertullian⁴ nor bears any trace of influence from Roman law, it will not be pursued here. It was mentioned simply because it featured in de anima chapter 41 as the fourth of the spiritual consequences of baptism.⁵

¹ paen 1.1.2-3.

² bapt 1.1.2-3.

³ an 41..4.22-23.

⁴ Their history from the New Testament to Tertullian was traced in detail by Franz Joseph Dölger in an article, "Die Sünde in Blindheit und Unwissenheit", in Antike und Christentum, 2 (1930) 222-229.

⁵ See the list set out in the introduction to this chapter at p 342, footnote 2.

Men who are as we ourselves once were, blind and unenlightened by the Lord, see nothing in repentance ...

This discussion of the sacred significance of that water of ours in which the sins of our original blindness are washed away and we are set at liberty unto life eternal ...

total light

the veil of its former corruption is removed and it at last perceives the full glory of the light.

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

"Sins in Blindness and Ignorance", article in "Antiquity and Christianity."

7/12

IX.8 RESTORATION TO THE LIKENESS OF GOD

The fourth consequence of baptism, as set out by Tertullian in his debate with Marcion, and also in the relevant passage in de anima, was the receiving of the Holy Spirit. That will be examined in Chapter X.3 below, but before concluding the present chapter it is appropriate to notice one other spiritual benefit of baptism mentioned by Tertullian. He took up the Graeco-Irenaeus¹ distinction² between imago and similitudo; with the removal of sin in the baptismal water, man, who had lost his likeness of God through sin, was restored again to the divine similitudo, as well as having the status of the divine imago, i.e. the unalienable capabilities of man, such as reason and free will:³

Ita restituitur homo deo ad similitudinem eius, qui retro ad imaginem dei fuerat - imago in effigie, similitudo in aeternitate censetur -: recipit enim illum dei spiritum quem tunc de adflatu eius acceperat sed post amiserat per delictum. ¹

Tertullian referred several times to the creation of man as both the imago et similitudo of God⁵, and he exhorted Christians to display the likeness of God in

¹ Although it is generally assumed that Tertullian was indebted to Irenaeus for this idea, it is possible that the distinction, like many other things which Irenaeus had written, had become the standard Christian exposition of the text of Genesis 1.26 and that Tertullian used it simply as such.

² Lupton (op. cit., pp 15-16) contended that Tertullian was in error in attempting to distinguish between "image" and "likeness", holding that the words were synonymous, the second being added to emphasise the first. Lupton's contention would seem appropriate for almost every passage in Tertullian except the one on which he is commenting; usually Tertullian did put imago and similitudo together as one and spoke (for example) of the "integritas, imaginis et similitudinis" - II Marc 10.3.22 - but the de baptismo text seems clearly to distinguish them.

³ Man as the 'image' of God was discussed by Karpp, op. cit., p 53-56 and by I. Hübscher, De Imagine Dei in homine viatore, (Louvain: 1932) p 5.

⁴ bapt 5.7.46-50.

⁵ For example, "Quis denique dignus incolere dei opera quam ipsius imago et similitudo? Eam quoque bonitas et quidem operantior operata est, non imperiali uerbo, sed familiari manu, etiam uerbo blandiente praemisso: faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram." - II Marc 4.3.6-4.10; "Quae erunt dei, quae similia sint denario Caesaris? Imago scilicet et similitudo eius. Hominem igitur reddi iubet creatori, in cuius imagine et similitudine et nomine et materia expressus est" - IV Marc 38.3.22-25; "Si homo et res et opus et imago et similitudo - et caro per terram et anima per afflatum - creatoris est" - V Marc 6.11.20-21.

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

image - likeness

In this way is man being restored to God, to the likeness of him who had aforetime been in God's image - the image had its actuality in the man God formed, the likeness becomes actual in eternity - for there is given back to him that spirit of God which of old he had received of God's breathing, but afterwards had lost through sin,

integrity of the image and the likeness

"On Baptism" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

About the Image of God in fallen man (literally, "wayfaring man")

Who indeed was worthy to have his home among the works of God? Only God's own image and likeness. That (image and likeness) too did goodness, an even more effective goodness, create, not by imperious word but by kindly hand, though first was uttered that persuasive word, Let us make man unto our image and likeness.

Which shall be the things that are God's? Those that are like Caesar's penny, God's own image and likeness. So his command means that man must be given back to his Creator, in whose image and likeness and name and metal he was stamped into shape.

If man is both the property and the work and the image and the likeness of the Creator, and is flesh by virtue of the Creator's earth, and soul by virtue of his breathing,

385

their lives,¹ but the passage from de baptismo, just quoted, was Tertullian's only reference to baptism as the means of man's restoration to God's likeness.

Whether and to what extent Tertullian 'took up' the idea and to what extent he innovated on it is outside the scope of this study. Struiker maintained that in respect of the imago Dei in man, Tertullian was dependent on Irenaeus and added nothing to his thought;² on the other hand, Otto argued (his precis) that Tertullian:

1. nur zum Teil von Irenaeus abhängig ist, und
2. durch die Verwendung stoischen Gedankengutes sieht wohl ein förderndes für die Theologiegeschichte sogar entscheidendes Moment in die Debatte getragen hat. 3

These writers are mentioned because their argument hinges on the interpretation of the passage from de baptismo chapter 5 just quoted; the loss of Tertullian's earlier and more detailed treatise on the theology of baptism may account for his brief reference to the imago/similitudo in his extant work.⁴ Otto's second point, about Stoic influence on Tertullian here, is that Tertullian (apart from the de baptismo passage) placed the emphasis on man's obligation to develop the similitudo, by means of his liberum arbitrium where Irenaeus had emphasised the restoration of the similitudo by the Incarnation and by the reception of baptism.⁵ That, however, leads into the life of the Christian after baptism and cannot be explored here.

Also to be noted, without stopping to examine it in any detail, is the

¹ Voluntas adei est sanctificatio nostra. Vult enim imaginem suam nos etiam similitudinem fieri - ex 1.3.12-14.

² Arnold Struiker, Die Gottebenbildlichkeit des Menschen in der christlichen Literatur der ersten zwei Jahrhunderte, (Munster: 1913) p 129.

³ Stephen Otto, "Der Mensch als Bild Gottes bei Tertullian", Münchener Theologische Zeitschrift, 1 (1959), 276.

⁴ As he said about heretical baptism - de isto plenius iam nobis in Graeco digestum est. bapt 15.2.16.

⁵ Bray set out in detail the relationship between Tertullian's, Irenaeus' and Paul's use of imago/similitudo at pp 67-73 of op. cit. "Holiness".

"On Baptism" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

image of God

- (1) was only partly dependent on Irenaeus, and
- (2) by the use of Stoic thought has very probably brought into the debate a promoting/advancing impulse, indeed for the history of theology a decisive one

image/likeness

free will

Now the will of God is our sanctification. For he desires that we who are His image should also become His likeness.

The Divine Figurativeness of Men in Christian Literature in the First Two Centuries (Book)

"Man as the Image of God in Tertullian", periodical article in the "Munich Theological Journal"

this point has already been treated more fully by us (me) in Greek

J86

contention of Koch¹ that Adam did not possess perfection, nor the Holy Spirit nor immortality, but only the potential of these, which potential was thwarted by the Fall. Koch analysed all the passages where Tertullian mentioned imago and similitudo, and claimed to find in Tertullian support for his view that the attributes just mentioned were not possessed by any one until Christ made them attainable to 'restored' man. Koch believed that baptism did not 'return to man a lost possession' but allowed man 'to complete an interrupted development'.² Since there is no legal language employed in this concept, either way, it would unduly prolong this section to pursue the point; it is sufficient to note that Tertullian did use the language of the restoration of the similitudo to express yet another consequence of baptism for the relationship of man to God. With that, it is appropriate to return to those areas of this chapter where Roman legal language was employed and to investigate the significance of it.

¹ Hugo Koch, Tertullianisches III, No. 7 - "Zur Lehre vom Urstand und der Erlösung bei Tertullian", Theologische Studien und Kritiken, 104 (1932), 127-159.

² op. cit., p 127 (translated).

image - likeness

"About Tertullian - Tertullian's teaching about the original state of man and Redemption", article in "Theological Studies and Reviews"

367

IX.9 ROMAN LAW FOR THIS AREA

The renunciation of satan and his retinue introduced the word traditio to this thesis for the first time. Since a great part of the Roman law was founded on mores majorum - that is, customs long observed and sanctioned by the consent of the people - and since Tertullian is the earliest extant writer to have used the word traditio for a custom or rite existing in the church, it is important to see what part traditio had in his mind for establishing the relationship of the baptismal candidate to God.

The word traditio occurs thirty-two times in Tertullian's works, but two preliminary observations will eliminate most of these uses from the subject-matter of this section. First, as Flesseman-van Leer brought out with admirable clarity,¹ Tertullian distinguished² between 'traditio' meaning the traditional fides-veritas (including the disciplina) of the Church as taught in his day and (so he presumed) as it had always been taught from the time of the apostles, and 'traditio' meaning long-continued custom or observance in the Church. This latter, often in the plural traditiones and also referred to by Tertullian as observatio or consuetudo³ is still too wide a concept for this section of the study, and a second restriction must be applied. The traditio relevant to baptism was dealt with in only one treatise - de corona. Elsewhere, Tertullian explored at length customs such as refusing the liturgical kiss at the close of the prayer

¹ op. cit., p 145 ff. Her conclusions were accepted and followed by R.F. Refoulé, Tertullien, Traité de la prescription contre les hérétiques, (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1957) p 46; Braun, "Deus Christianorum," pp 426-427; and Fontaine "De Corona," pp 62 ff.

² Unfortunately J. Tixeront did not, and unjustly accused Tertullian of inconsistent and contradictory views, because, led astray by the word, he did not see that Tertullian was using traditio for two different concepts. Tixeront, op. cit., I, 343.

³ The difference of emphasis between the words was noted by F. de Pauw 'La Justification des Traditions non Ecrites chez Tertullien', Éphémérides Theologicae Lovanienses 19 (1942), 8-10.

handing-on from former times/tradition

customs of the ancestors

faith and truth - discipline

sayings handed down from former times/traditions

observances/watchings - customs/traditions

"On the Soldier's Crown" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

"Tertullian - Treatise on the Prescription against the Heretics" (Book),
"The God of the Christians" (Book), "On the Soldier's Crown" (Book)

"Justification of non-written Traditions in Tertullian", periodical
article in "Theological Calendar/Almanac of the Louvain School"

368

and not receiving the Eucharist on days when one was committed to fasting - but that all relates to life among Christians, outside the scope of this chapter. Later on, under greater Montanist influence, Tertullian would even argue that there were exceptions to the authority of traditio - by lapse of time or by local considerations or by reference to the people involved;¹ that debate too is outside the scope of this section and the only enquiry made here into traditio is traditio as Tertullian used it when he wrote de corona, which refer to the baptismal practice.

In chapters 3 and 4 of that work,² Tertullian pointed to the many ecclesiastical practices, such as those associated with baptism and the Eucharist, which were accepted without question although custom and custom alone prescribed them. This was perfectly proper, he argued, because even in the law courts of his day, custom was received instead of law, where there was no written enactment.

Si legem nusquam reperio, sequitur, ut traditio consuetudini morem hunc dederit... Consuetudo autem etiam in ciuilibus rebus pro lege suscipitur, cum deficit lex, nec differt, scriptura an ratione consistat, quando et legem ratio commendat. ³

On the face of it, it seems that Tertullian drew directly from the civil law to establish his theological point, because there is no doubt that consuetudo was one of the sources of the ius civile. It was considered by the Roman jurists as expressing the tacit consent of the people, and if custom could be established, it was as binding on the judge as any other form of law.

¹ As a Montanist, he had to discredit his opponents regarding the veiling of those women who had taken a private vow of perpetual virginity. In de virginibus velandis he took an entirely different on traditio from the one adopted in de corona.

² The word traditio occurs four times in cor chapter 3 and six times in cor chapter 4 - over one-half of its total usage in the sense which is common today, namely, that which has long been current in the Church.

³ cor 4.4.20-22 and 5.27-29.

handing-on from former times/tradition

"On the Soldier's Crown" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

If I find nowhere such a law, it follows that it is tradition that has raised this fashion into a custom ... Moreover, also in the domain of civil law, custom is accepted in place of law when a law is wanting and it makes no difference whether it is merely based on reason or on some written word, since reason is, in fact, the basis of law.

custom/tradition

civil law

"On the Veiling of Virgins" and "On the Soldier's Crown" (two of Tertullian's treatises)

769

The enquiry must, however, be carried one stage further, because Tertullian stated, not only in the passage just quoted but throughout de corona, that the ultimate justification of traditio was ratio. That many-faceted word was used no less than 340 times by Tertullian, and it is quite outside the scope of this chapter even to begin to comment on ratio, except to note Tertullian's insistence on the need to find ratio behind any religious practice which was not directly supported by Scripture - later he added to that the authority of the Paraclete.

Harum et aliarum eiusmodi disciplinarum si legem expostules scripturam, nullam leges. Traditio tibi praetendetur auctrix et consuetudo confirmatrix et fides obseruatrix. Rationem traditioni et consuetudini et fidei patrocinaturam aut ipse perspecies, aut ab aliquo qui perspexerit disces. Interim non nullam esse credes cui debeatur obsequium. ¹

Why then did traditio - consuetudo have the force of written law in the Church? Because, said Tertullian, (de corona chapters 5 and 6) it was based on ratio - the reasonable character of the observances. It was then not difficult for Tertullian to connect general reason to divine reason, because ratio was one of the first attributes of God; the transition from "what was reasonable" to "what was worthy of God" was easily made, even necessarily made, by him.

Après avoir énoncé le principe général: "A défaut de loi, coutume vaut loi, il le justifie comme suit: "Peu importe que ce soit une coutume basée sur une autorité écrite ou sur la raison, puisque c'est au fond la raison qui dicte la loi." Dans la formule consuetudo ratione consistit, qui revient jusqu'à trois fois, ratio signifie la raison en général. Plus loin, Tertullien précise sa pensée. Après avoir affirmé une nouvelle fois que "tout ce qui est à base de raison revêt force de loi," il revendique pour chaque fidèle le droit de se faire des observances de ce genre, "à condition toutefois qu'elles soient dignes de Dieu, conformes à la discipline et profitables au salut." Il n'aura échappé à personne qu'il introduit de cette façon dans la formule ratione consistit des éléments qui, à strictement parler, la dépassent: en réalité, il passe de la ratio-raison en général à la ratio raison divine. Deux textes de l'Écriture, le premier, invitant le fidèle à juger lui-même de ce qu'il faut faire, l'autre, une parole assez vague de l'apôtre: "si vous ignorez quelque chose, Dieu vous le révélera" lui facilitent ce passage. ²

¹ cor 4.1.1-7.

² Pauw - op. cit., p 32-33.

"On the Soldier's Crown" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

tradition - reason

Now, if you demand a precise Scriptural precept for these and other practices of Church discipline, you will find none. Tradition, you will be told, has created it, custom has strengthened it, and faith has encouraged its observance. And you will yourself understand (or someone who has experienced it will tell you) that reason generally lies behind such traditions, customs and faith. In the meantime, take it for granted that there is some reasonable basis for observing the custom.

tradition - custom

After having pronounced the general principle: "Wanting law, custom can be taken as law", he justifies it as follows: "It matters little whether it is a custom based on written authority or on reason, since at root it is reason that dictates law". In the formula 'consuetudo ratione consistit', which appears three times, 'ratio' stands for reason in general. Further on Tertullian clarifies his thinking. After once again having affirmed that "everything based in reason carries the force of law", he claims for each believer the right to create observances of this kind, "on condition however that they are worthy of God, consistent with the discipline and advantageous to salvation". It will have escaped nobody that in this way he is introducing into the formula 'ratione consistit' certain elements which, strictly speaking, lie outside it; in fact, he goes from the 'ratio-reason in general' to the 'divine ratio-reason'. Two texts from Scripture, the first, urging the believer to himself consider what must be done, the other, a rather vague pronouncement by the apostle: "if you are ignorant of something, God will reveal it to you", help him in this transition.

There was no similar appeal in Roman law to ratio, certainly not to divine ratio; the very fact of the long usage was in itself the ground of law. Cicero had defined consuetudo as:

"either a principle that is derived only in a slight degree from nature and has been fed and strengthened by usage - religion, for example - or any of the laws which ... we see proceed from nature but which have been strengthened by custom, or any principle which lapse of time and public approval have made the habit of usage of the community." ¹

It appears therefore that while Tertullian used a word in current use in Roman law, he understood it and in particular its justification in a way of his own.

The next word connected with Roman Law, introduced in this chapter, was sacramentum. Tertullian applied this word in a variety of situations, including the renunciation of the devil and the profession of faith made at baptism, and more widely to the baptism itself. The use of sacramentum by Tertullian has been so extensively studied, over the last ninety years, ² that it would be inappropriate here even to try to review its complicated history. Etymologically the word derived from sacrum (sacred or holy) and mentum, a suffix indicating "the means by which" something was placed in the divine sphere as "sacer", that is, something outwith the range of human law. From meaning "that by which something is made holy or sacrosanct", it came in classical Latin

¹ De inventione 2.51.162. So similarly in the Digest 1.3.32.

² A. Réville, "Du sens du mot sacramentum dans Tertullien", Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Hautes-Études, Sciences religieuses, (1889), 195-229; B. Stakemeier, "La dottrina di Tertulliano sui sacramenti in genere", Rivista storico-critica delle scienze teologiche, 4 (1908), 446-466; Emile de Backer, Sacramentum. Le mot et l'idée représentée par lui dans les oeuvres de Tertullien, (Louvain, Bureau de Recueil, 1911); P. Batiffol, Compte rendu sur "Sacramentum. Le mot et l'idée représentée par lui dans les oeuvres de Tertullien", par E. de Backer", Bulletin d'ancienne littérature et d'archéologie chrétiennes, 3 (1913), 160-177. J. de Ghellinck, J. Poukens, E. de Backer, G. Lebacqz, Pour l'histoire du mot sacramentum, (Louvain-Paris: 1924) pp 58-152; Adolf Kölping, Sacramentum Tertullianum, I: Untersuchungen über die Anfänge des christlichen Gebrauchs der Vokabel Sacramentum, (Regensburg-Münster: 1948); T. Burgos-Nadal, "Concepto de 'sacramentum' en Tertulliano", Helmantica, 10 (1959), 227-256; Braun, "Deus Christianorum" pp 435-443; Dimitri Michaélides, Sacramentum chez Tertullien (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1970).

reason

custom/tradition

Sacramental oath

sacred/holy - the means by which

consecrated/sacred

"About the sense of the word 'Sacramental oath' in Tertullian", periodical article in the "Library of the School of Advanced Studies, Religious Sciences"; "The Doctrine of Tertullian on the Sacraments Generally", (periodical article); "Sacramental Oath - the word and the idea represented by it in the works of Tertullian", (Book); "Review of (above)" in the "Bulletin of Ancient Literature and Archeology"; "On the History of the word 'Sacramental Oath'" (Book); "Sacramental Oath in Tertullian, - Research about the Beginning of the Christian usage of the word 'Sacramental Oath'" (Book); "The Concept of 'Sacramental Oath' in Tertullian", periodical article; "The God of the Christians" (Book); 'Sacramental Oath in Tertullian' (Book)

to mean the money deposited at the aerarium by the parties to a law-suit as a guarantee of good faith,¹ or the oath of allegiance taken by a soldier on enlistment. In either case - the deposit or the oath - what was consecrated lay under the special protection of the gods and was regarded as inviolable, res aut persona consecrata. The sacramentum was distinguished from the general ius iurandum in that it concluded with a sacratio, or a formal consignment of the person to the wrath of the god - usually Jupiter - in case of violation. One who violated the sacramentum became sacer, and anyone might kill him with impunity. The military oath appears to have been essentially a pledge of personal allegiance to the commanding general, as an instance is recorded of renewing the sacramentum on a change of commander.² From that military use, it came more broadly to be used for any solemn engagement or obligation assumed.

Tertullian clearly had the military oath in mind, when he used sacramentum for the baptismal ceremony, as for example "Vocati sumus ad militiam Dei uiui iam tunc, cum in sacramenti uerba respondimus".³ That he regarded the taking of the sacramentum as fundamental, whether by a Christian or by a pagan, is seen from the passage in de corona where he discussed whether

¹ Gaius, Institutes 4.14. The person who, in the result, lost the case forfeited the sacramentum, at first to the priests, later to the State; originally, it seems, the items in dispute were actually deposited with the pontifex, so that security for payment was then unnecessary. The amount, when a deposit replaced the actual goods, i.e. the sacramentum, was 500 asses, unless the thing in dispute was of less value than 1000 asses or the action was to determine whether a man was free or a slave, in both of which cases it was 50 asses only. It is probable that the force of the sacramentum procedure was based on the fact that, originally it was a matter not merely of money against money, but of oath against oath (i.e. sacramentum, in the ordinary sense of the word). The person tendering the oath pledged, for the truth of his oath, either his own person (i.e. he consecrated himself to the gods), or some portion of his property, which later was fixed at the figures mentioned above.

² Dionysius X, 18, on the appointment of Cincinnatus as dictator.

³ mart 3.1.2-3.

the part of the temple of Saturn at Rome, in which public treasure was kept = "treasury"

a thing or a person hallowed/sacred

Sacramental oath

oath (often written as one word)

consecration/dedication

accursed/a criminal against religion

We have been called to the military service of the living God since the moment when we responded to the words of the sacramental oath.

"On the Soldier's Crown" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

high-priest

as = a unit of money = a penny

a Christian could join the army and whether a soldier should on conversion leave the army:

Tertullian distingue curieusement le cas du soldat qui est entré dans l'armée après le baptême et celui du soldat entré païen dans l'armée, et qui se convertit ensuite au christianisme; et il apparaît moins rigoureux dans le premier cas, peut-être parce qu'il pense que le baptême, ayant priorité chronologique sur le sacramentum militaire, conserve aussi une puissance psychologique qui le met en état de supériorité permanente sur l'engagement à l'empereur: "credimusne humanum sacramentum diuino superduci licere, et in alium dominum respondere post Christum?" dit-il lui-même avec une certaine clarté (XI.I; cf. XI,7). Théoriquement en effet, l'empreinte baptismale est ineffaçable, à l'inverse du "serment" prêté à un homme, fût-ce l'empereur lui-même. Est-ce pour cette raison que Tertullien représente la vie professionnelle du baptisé devenu soldat comme bourrelée d'impressions fâcheuses et de remords aigus? ¹

Since, in context, the "sacramentum humanum" can only mean the military oath of allegiance, then in the first instance the "sacramentum divinum" must have the definite meaning of "divine oath of allegiance;" but while the military sacramentum was regarded as a legal obligation, and its violation was nefas (criminal wickedness), there seems to be no usage of sacramentum in relation to baptism in Tertullian to correspond to the sense of a deposit or security in a law-suit. In Tertullian's hands the word did indeed convey the most profound spiritual consequences, but it is difficult to see any way in which he applied its usage in Roman civil law to the relationship of man to God. Rordorf, ² in suggesting three possible explanations for Tertullian's use of the word - a copy of the military ceremony of recruitment, the mystery religions (Mithras in particular) and the influence of the late-jewish Essenes - made no reference to its legal significance. In other words, it appears that Tertullian found and used 'sacramentum' as an established "terminus technicus" of ecclesiastical language.

¹ Jean Bayet, "En relisant le 'de corona'", Rivista di Archeologia Christiana, 43 (1967), 27.

² W. Rordorf, "Tertullian's Beurteilung des Soldatenstandes", Vigiliae Christianae, 23 (1969), 133-135.

Tertullian distinguished curiously the case of the soldier who entered into the Army after baptism and that of the soldier entering as a pagan into the Army and who was then converted to Christianity. He appears less rigorous in the former case, perhaps because he thinks that baptism, having chronological priority over the military oath of allegiance, saves also a psychological power which places him in a state of permanent superiority over his engagement to the Emperor. "Do we believe it is lawful to take an oath of allegiance to a mere human being, over and above the oath of fidelity to God? Can we obey another master, having chosen Christ?" he says himself with a certain clarity. Theoretically, in effect, the baptism impression is ineffaceable, as opposed to the 'oath' taken by a man, although the man was no less than an Emperor. Is it for this reason that Tertullian represents the professional life of the baptised person who became a soldier as a dilemma of angry impressions and of troubling remorse?

military oath of allegiance

Sacramental oath

Something contrary to divine law/sin/crime

boundary/a setting of limits + (literally) a teacher of technical subjects/technologist

"On Re-reading "On a Soldier's Crown" (one of Tertullian's treatises), periodical article in "Review of Christian Archeology"

"Tertullian's Critical Examination of the Position of Soldiers", periodical article in "Christian Vigils"

373

A number of other words should be mentioned briefly, for the sake of completeness, before the section is brought to a close with a study of baptism as a contract. When dealing with the candidates' renunciation of the devil, Tertullian used two further words which are found in Roman jurisprudence - auctoritas and signaculum. Of the former, Tertullian said that lest anyone should think that he was quibbling, when he was denouncing Christian attendance at the shows, he would go straight to his principal authority - his auctoritas - namely the renunciation at baptism of the devil and his pomp and his angels. While the argument is interesting, it does not bear directly on the relationship of the candidate to God and so is not pursued here.¹ Signaculum, which Tertullian appears to have borrowed from the mysteries, is taken up later in this section.

Another word from legal Latin used by Tertullian was repromittitur - hominum quam simplicitas diuinorum operum quae in actu uidetur et magnificentia quae in effectu repromittitur.² The word was used for a present pledge or guarantee for the future fulfilment of a promise, so the 'simplicitas quae in actu uidetur' was an earnest of the 'magnificentia' to come; again, this does not bear directly on the subject of this study and is not pursued.

What must, however, be taken up is the contention that Tertullian regarded baptism as a contract between man and God, based on a legal contract.

For example:

So obvious is this idea of baptismal contract in the writings of Tertullian that if anyone undertook to read them for himself at all widely, he would come upon its traces in almost every work. The present writer, having become convinced from such an investigation that this was Tertullian's sense, was pleased to find that the same conclusion had been reached in 1930 by A. Beck in his study: Römisches Recht bei Tertullian und Cyprian. He writes: "Gott verpflichtet sich im Akt der Entgegennahme (durch den Bischof resp. Priester) des Taufbekenntnis, Fahnschwurs der Kreiger Christi, freiwillig-vertraglich zur Erteilung des Seelenheils, das der Mensch mit der Ursünde schon verwirkt hat."³

¹ A little more detail about auctoritas was given on p 350 above.

² bapt 2.1.4-5.

³ Joseph Crehan, Early Christian Baptism and the Creed, (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1948) p 97.

authority/power/voucher

mark/sign/seal/signet

it is promised in return

(nothing hardens the minds) of men as much as the simplicity of God's works as they are observed in the act, when compared with the grandeur which is promised in their effects.

the simplicity (of God's works) which are observable/visible in the act

magnificence/grandeur

"Roman Law by Tertullian and Cyprian" - God is duty-bound, of free-will and contractually, to give absolution for the soul's well-being, because of the act of acceptance (through the bishop or priest) of the baptismal confession, ultimate oath of the Christian warrior, all this being wrought by man's original sin.

374

C'est surtout quand on considère le baptême comme acte public, que nous apparaît la conception que Tertullien en avait, celle d'un contrat passé entre Dieu et l'homme ... De la l'expression de Tertullien: ablutio delictorum, quam fides impetrat obsignata in Patre et Filio et Spiritu Sancto. En retour du double sacrifice que l'homme offre à Dieu, il reçoit une double rémunération: la confirmation de la foi et l'ablution des péchés. L'homme promet à Dieu de conserver intacte la foi reçue; Dieu lui promet, en retour, la vie éternelle. Mais pour être plus solide, le pacte conclu entre Dieu et l'homme demande, comme les autres contrats, la présence de trois témoins: ce sont les trois personnes divines ... 1

Enfin, le contrat doit être scellé; c'est pourquoi, l'homme reçoit de Dieu l'anneau de la grâce au moyen duquel il signe le pacte de la foi, en promettant de la garder toujours intacte. Dieu s'engage, en lui conférant cette grâce, à le conduire au salut. La conception que Tertullien se fait du baptême est donc celle d'un contrat unilatéral, passé entre Dieu et l'homme, et dont l'objet est la foi. 2

Das Taufbekenntnis ist also der Fahneneid, den der Täufling Christus, seinem neuen Herrn, zu leisten hat. Das Taufbekenntnis ist wie ein Vertrag, den der Galubige mit Christus eingeht und der durch das Wasserbad und die Oelsalbung "besiegelt" wird. 3

The legal language of Tertullian suggests that he considered Baptism as a kind of contract, to which the candidate put his seal by his declaration of faith and his promises, and God, in the person of the Church, likewise sealed the contract by signing. 4

Dit innig verband tussen de doopakten en de doopbelofte, die tevens geloofsbelijdenis was, verklaart den sterken nadruk, waarmede T. meermalen het contract-karakter van het Doopsel beklemtoont: De pud 9, 16 - pactio fidei; De anima 35, 3 - "fidei conventio"; De bapt. 6 - "testatio fidei et sponsio salutis" (vgl. Ad nat. 1,7 - "disciplinae nostrae sponsio") De cor. 13 - "sacramenti testatio". 5

pactus es: baptism is frequently represented as a negotium between God and man e.g. bapt 8; pud 12. [6]

¹ Backer, op. cit., p 140.

² ibid., p 142.

³ Rordorf, op. cit., p 132-133,

⁴ Leeming, op. cit., p 197.

⁵ Dekkers, op. cit., p 195. A rough English translation is "This close connection between the act of baptism and the baptismal promise which was also a confession of faith explains the strong emphasis with which Tertullian often stresses the contractlike character of baptism (de pud - testatio)."

⁶ Waszink "De Anima", p 414.

It is above all when considering baptism as a public act, that Tertullian's concept of it becomes clear to us, that a contract agreed between God and man. ... From this results Tertullian's expression "by the washing away/cancelling of sins which is granted in response to faith signed and sealed in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." In return for the double sacrifice which man offers to God, he receives a double reward - confirmation of the faith, and the washing away of sins. Man promises God to keep the faith which he has received intact; God promises him eternal life in return. But in order to be more secure, the pact concluded between God and man requires like other contracts, the presence of three witnesses; these are the three divine persons, ...

Finally, the contract must be sealed; that is why the man receives from God the ring of grace with which he signs the pact of faith, promising to keep it always intact. God binds himself, in conferring this grace upon him, to lead him to salvation. Tertullian's concept of baptism is therefore that of a unilateral contract made between God and man, the subject of which is faith.

The acknowledgment of baptism is thus the oath of allegiance which the candidate for baptism has to give to Christ, his new master. The acknowledgment of baptism is like a contract which the believer has entered into with Christ and which is "sealed" by the bathe in water and the anointing with oil

(translation below)

compact (you have made) - contract

the pact/agreement of faith ... compact in accordance with your faith ... that profession of faith and promise of salvation ... the promise which our sacred system offers ... in the solemn declaration/vow of the sacrament/(baptism)

"On the Soul" (Book by Waszink on Tertullian's treatise)

375

Two points arise on such statements. The first is the extent to which Tertullian did regard baptism as some form of contract, and the second is the extent to which it was Roman law which influenced him or was the medium for his expression of the relationship. The two questions are not the same. Pliny, for example, had used the word sacramentum to describe Christian baptism¹ and Ignatius, commenting on Romans 4:3, had applied the imagery of baptism as emancipation from slavery; did Tertullian take his concepts from current Christian thinking or from current legal terminology or from both?

The relevant words are:-

- (a) Adoptio
- (b) Obsignatio
- (c) Pactum/negotium
- (d) Sacramentum
- (e) Signaculum
- (f) Stipulatio
- (g) Symbolum

Before these are examined individually, two general points should be made. First, among those who, as quoted above, write about Tertullian and the 'baptismal contract', some appear to have overlooked the fact that in Roman law there was no one general theory of contract. Roman jurists spoke about a number of legal relationships individually, which modern writers group together as 'contracts', but a pactum, for example, to which reference will be made later, was not a form of agreement which a Roman lawyer would have recognised as a 'contract'. The only modern study which appears to have been specifically

¹ Ep. 10.96; taken up and expounded by A.D. Nock in the Classical Review, () 1924, pp 58-59, but unfortunately when making the note in the Cambridge University library some years ago, I omitted to record the full title of the article.

Sacramental oath

adoption

adoption (of a child)

sealing

contract/agreement - a business matter/trade

Sacramental oath

seal/mark/sign/signet

formal promise/bargain

sign/mark

agreement

devoted to this area of Roman law was by Heldrich,¹ who pointed out the extent to which the Romans had many separate laws of contract rather than one notion of contract in general. In Tertullian's time there were no less than ten recognised contracts - sale, letting on hire, partnership, mandatum, etc. When an agreement did not take the shape of any of the ten forms of contract recognised in the civil law, it was strictly speaking, not a contract at all, but if one party to it had executed it, the praetor would force the other party to execute it also.

However, even if one accepts the word 'contract' in its widest sense, a second general point arises. Any Roman legal 'contract', however informal, was an agreement between two or more persons which the law would enforce regarding the particular matter in which they were concerned.² Any 'contract' was thus more than an 'accord of wills,' effected by an offer on the one hand, and an acceptance of the offer on the other hand; it was the legal bond (vinculum juris) which created the obligation and which made it a 'contract'. This understanding of what Tertullian must have had in mind, if he had been expressing any relationship in terms of a contract in the legal sense, is important. It is one thing to speak of the "legal language of baptism as a contract"; it is an altogether different matter if Tertullian took words which he understood, and which he expected his readers to understand, in an illustrative or general sense - i.e. a usage such as might be in the mind of a hearer or a reader who was not himself a lawyer.

With these two general comments, a closer look can now be taken at the various words which have been suggested as expressing baptism as 'a contract'.

(a) ADOPTIO

At first sight, it might seem strange to suggest that the process of adoption, for which the Roman law provided a set form, was a 'contract', because

¹ Karl Heldrich, Das Verschulden beim Vertragsabschluss im klassischen römischen Recht und in der späteren Rechtsentwicklung, Leipzig, 1924.

² Code 7.27.10.

a trust, an agreement gratuitously to transact for another

chief magistrate

bond/tie of the law

Adoption of a child

Guilt/Fault in Breach of Contract in classical Roman Law and in the
later Legal Development

the concepts are, at least to the modern mind, inconsistent with each other. The whole matter of Tertullian's use of adoption, to express the relationship of man to God, will be examined in detail in Excursus Three, but in brief there was a legal fiction by which the adopted son was sold three times by his father into bondage and twice manumitted by the adopter, and then finally claimed by the one adopting him.¹ This enables Tertullian to regard the newly baptised Christian, who had just emerged from the triple immersion² of baptism (cf. the triple selling and reclaiming of an adoption in Roman law) as both son of God and also slave of God, and later he could remind his Christian readers: Tu vero nullius seruus, in quantum solius Christi.³ and: Si ueram putes saeculi libertatem, ut et corona eam consignes, redisti in seruitutem hominis, quam putas libertatem, amisisti libertatem Christi, quam putas seritutem.⁴ The further implications of this will be taken up in Excursus Three.

(b) OBSIGNATIO

This word was mentioned briefly in chapter VIII.7 above, where it was noted (first) that Tertullian's use of it for baptism as the obsignatio fidei was not inconsistent with current legal usage, but (second) that Tertullian did not use it exclusively for baptism, nor exclusively in the sense of a legal contract. Illustrations of that, apart from the ones given in chapter VIII.7, are: "Alius

¹ "Tres mancipationes et duae intercedentes manumissiones proinde fiunt ac fieri solent, eum ita eum pater de potestate dimittit ut sui juris efficiatur. Deinde aut patri remancipatur, et ab eo is qui adoptat vindicat apud praetorem filium suum esse, et illo contra non vindicante, a praetore vindicanti filius addicitur; aut non remancipatur patri, sed ab eo vindicat is qui adoptat apud quem in tertia mancipatione est." Gaius, Institutes 1.134.

² ter mergitatur amplius aliquid respondentem quam dominus in euangelio determinauit - cor 3.3.16-17.

³ idol 18.5.11-12.

⁴ cor 13.6.35-38.

You are no man's slave, in so far as/because you are the slave of Christ alone

If you really believe the freedom of the world to be real, so much so that you even seal it with a crown, then you have returned to the slavery of man, imagining it to be freedom; you have lost the freedom of Christ, which you imagine to be slavery (rather than freedom).

sealing

sealing of faith

three mancipations and two intervening manumissions take place in like manner as they take place when the father dismisses him from his potes-tas that he may become sui juris. Then he is either remancipated to his father, and from the father the adoptor claims him before the Praetor as being his son, and the father putting in no counter-claim, the son is assigned by the Praetor to the claimant, or he is mancipated in court to the adopting father, who claims him as son from that person with whom he is left after the third mancipation.

We are immersed in the water three times, making a somewhat fuller pledge than the Lord has appointed in the Gospel.

378

scribit alius subscribit, alius obsignat", ¹ "se spadonatus obsignant", ² "a lauacro carnem suam obsignant", ³ "qui passionem Christi ... fuerit obsignatus".⁴ In short, obsignatio as a term of Roman law does not appear to have been a decisive influence on Tertullian's way of regarding baptism but rather (as noted for other words) a useful illustration, in language readily understood, of what he was already trying to express.

(c) PACTUM/NEGOTIUM

If adoptio does not appear, at first sight, to provide a truly legal foundation for the notion of baptism as a contract, then pactum provides even less. In contrast to a contractus in the proper sense, i.e. an agreement that was recognised and enforceable by the ius civile, all other agreements were known as pacta. A pactum was therefore an informal agreement that did not, from its nature, fall within the terms of Roman law, and Tertullian seems not only to have recognised this but to have made use of it:

Tum si in diabolum transfertur aduersarii mentio ex obseruatione comitante, cum illo quoque moneris eam inire concordiam quae deputetur ex fidei conuentione; pactus es enim renuntiasse ipsi et pompae et angelis eius. Conuenit inter uos de isto. Haec erit amicitia obseruatione sponsionis, ne quid eius postea resumas ex his quae eierasti. ⁵

A 'contract' between God and the one baptised could not conform to the legal idea of contract, but it could be described as a pactum nudum -i.e. a non-legal but morally enforceable agreement - and this is precisely how Tertullian did describe it:

Fuerit salus retro (i.e. in the days of Abraham) per fidem nudam ante domini

¹ V Marc 1.3.13.

² II cult 9.7.34.

³ I ux 6.2.7-8.

⁴ Jud 11.1.4-5.

⁵ an 35.3.24-29.

One person writes the document, another signs it, a third attests/seals the signature ... - seal/dedicate themselves to be eunuchs ... - vow/ set the seal (of virginity) on their flesh from (the very moment of) their baptism ... - he who shall have been sealed (on his forehead) with the passion of Christ.

sealing

contract/agreement - a business matter/trade

adoption of a child

contract/agreement

legally binding contract or agreement

civil law

contracts/agreements

Then, again, should you be disposed to apply the term "adversary" to the devil, you are advised by the (Lord's) injunction, "while you are in the way with him," to make even with him such a compact as may be deemed compatible with the requirements of your true faith. Now the compact you have already made with him is to renounce him, and his pomp, and his angels. There is agreement between you on that point. Your friendship with the Devil will arise from your adherence to your renunciation. Never will you try to get back from him any of the things which you have renounced,

an agreement not enforceable at law

Let us suppose that formerly, before the Lord's (passion and resurrection) there was salvation by means of bare faith ...

379

passionem et resurrectionem; at ubi fides aucta est credentibus in natiuitatem passionem resurrectionemque eius, addita est ampliatio sacramento obsignatio baptismi, uestimentum quodammodo fidei quae retro erat nuda, nec potest iam sine sua lege. ¹

Tertullian's quasi-legal terminology here for the relationship of the baptismal candidate to God was so far removed from the strict terms of real Roman law that a historian of Roman law maintained it was such (Christian) influences which gradually, between A.D. 200 and A.D. 450, undermined the legal maxim "Nudum pactum obligationem non parit" ² to the point where post-classical law came to accept a simple agreement without formalities alongside legally executed contracts. The Christian's voluntary pactum fidei at baptism was more binding on him than the most carefully executed legal document.

(d) SACRAMENTUM

This was set out fully in the earlier part of this section, with the conclusion that of the several possible reasons why Tertullian might have chosen this word to express the relationship of man to God in the act of baptism, Roman law was not likely to be the dominant one.

(e) SIGNACULUM

Speaking of the prodigal, Tertullian said that the robe typified the clothing of the Christian with the Holy Spirit, and that the ring typified 'the seal of the laver - signaculum lauacri'. In de spectaculis he wrote about auctoritatem conuertar ipsius signaculi nostri. However, the terms 'seal' and 'sealed' were as likely to have come to Tertullian from the mystery religions, ³ or from the military, as from the legal use of the words. The enrolment of a soldier was

¹ bapt 13.2.5-10.

² M. Roberti, "L'influenza christiana nello suolgimento storico dei patti nudi", in Christianesimo e Diritto Romano (Milan: 1935) pp 85-116.

³ This aspect is not explored at all here: there are very full references to it in Edwin Hatch, The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages Upon the Christian Church, (London: Williams and Norgate, 1901), pp 294-300 for baptism and p 295 especially for 'sealing' in Tertullian's concept of baptism.

... the passion and resurrection (of the Lord); but now that faith has been enlarged, and has become a faith which believes in His Nativity and passion and resurrection, the sacrament has been expanded/added to, namely that the seal of baptism has been added, a clothing, in some sense, for the faith which was previously unattired; and faith can no longer save/cannot exist now apart from/without its own/proper law.

A bare agreement does not create any legal obligation

pact of faith

Sacramental ath

seal/mark/sign/signet

the seal of baptism

"On Shows" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

I will turn to the authority of our 'seal' itself (i.e. baptism)

The Influence of Christianity in the
of the bare agreements at law

780

shown outwardly by the 'signaculum', that is by an exterior sign, such as a tattoo on his arm.¹ The divine oath, said Tertullian was marked by the seal of baptism, 'signaculum fidei', i.e. baptism was a kind of exterior evidence of faith. Tertullian's use of signaculum here was therefore just as likely to have come from a military background as from its juridical context, where it denoted the seal affixed to a legal document to guarantee the authenticity and inviolable nature of it. The difficulty of being dogmatic, and maintaining that Tertullian was here describing baptism in terms of a legal contract, lies not only in the different 'models' which Tertullian might have used, but also in the fact that his use of signaculum throughout his works was so varied.² In short, it appears to be yet another place where Tertullian illustrated his work by^a multimeaning expression, and it is surely special pleading to single out the juridical sense of the word in order to claim a legal significance for its use in the baptismal context. (Tertullian's use of signaculum will be taken up again in chapter X.3 in connection with the frontem signaculo which came later in the baptismal ceremony.)

STIPULATIO

While stipulatio was the basic and fundamental word of Roman contract law,³ so much so that an entire monograph has recently been devoted to the study of the word,⁴ Tertullian used it only once and it requires an extraordinary

¹ Franz Joseph Dölger, "Sacramentum militae (de praescriptione 40)" in Antike und Christentum, 2 (1930) pp 268-280 and idem, Sphragis, pp 32-37; also Kolping, op. cit., p 86-87.

² He used it fifteen times in eleven different treatises with a variety of different meanings.

³ Buckland, op. cit., p 434-443.

⁴ Salvatore Riccobono, Stipulatio et Instrumentum, (English translation by J. Kerr Wylie, Stipulation and the Theory of Contract) (Amsterdam: A.A. Balkema, 1957).

mark/sign

seal/mark of faith

singing of the forehead with the mark of a cross

formal promise/bargain

The Sacramental Oath of Soldiers (based on Tertullian's treatise "On the Prescription of Heretics, chapter 40)" - article in "Antiquity and Christianity" - also "The Seal" (transliteration of the Greek word for 'seal')

Stipulation and the Theory of Contract

381

ex^egesis of the passage to make it apply to baptism. The word occurred in de fuga, after Tertullian had dealt with the question of actual flight during persecution, and when ^{he} turned to discuss the bribery of the persecutor as an alternative to flight. Rejecting such payments, as being equivalent to flight, Tertullian argued that bribery to escape persecution devalued man's redemption; with a wealth of Scriptural illustrations, he set out the cost of man's redemption - "Sol cessit diem emptionis nostrae. Apud inferos remancipatio nostra est et stipulatio nostra in caelis". ¹ It is difficult to see how Crehan could conclude that this sentence from de fuga:

concentrates in these few legal words the whole of Tertullian's obscure theology of baptism. The darkening of the sun at the Crucifixion was a sign that the debt we owe to Christ became due. Christ went down to Hell and set us free, and we go down into the water as into his tomb, the three immersions typifying the three days we spent there. In Hell Christ emancipated us from the power of our father the devil, adopting us as children of God, and the contract of our baptism was witnessed by the Three Divine Persons in Heaven. ²

While much of what Crehan says is true, the word stipulatio does ^{not} seem to be used here to express baptism as a contract; even accepting that the phrase cedere diem (emptionis) is also a phrase from Roman law, it does not seem to relate to baptism. Even if it did, for a legal stipulatio, the procedure was for one party (the stipulator) to ask: "Spondesne?" and for the other (the promissor) to answer: "Spondeo". It was essential, for stipulatio, for the promiser to answer in certain set terms the formal question put to him by the promisee, that question containing a statement of the subject matter of the promise. If Titius, wishing to promise to give Maevius his slave Stichus, merely said to Maevius, 'I promise to give you Stichus', there was no contract. For a stipulatio to be effective, Maevius had to ask Titius, 'Spondesne mihi hominem Stichum dari?' and Titius had to answer 'Spondeo'. Gaius (the jurist) allowed also: "dabisne? dabo";

¹ fug 12.2.21-22.

² Crehan, op. cit., p 99.

"On Flight in Persecution" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

The sun was darkened on (literally 'ceded to us') the day of our redemption; hell retransferred the right it had to us and we were enrolled for heaven/our covenant is in heaven

formal/promise/bargain

to cede the day (of our redemption)

one who demands a formal promise or covenant, a bargainer

"Do you promise?" - promiser

I promise

"Do you promise to give to me your slave Stichus?"

"I promise - " "Will you give? - I will give."

382

"promittisne? promitto"; "fidepromittisne? fidepromitto"; "fideiubesne? fideiubeo"; "faciesne? faciam", but no other formula would do; there is no trace whatsoever of these words in Tertullian's baptismal terminology.

Furthermore, the essence of stipulatio was the presence of both parties during the exchange: unless the argument is to be developed that the minister of baptism stood in the behalf of God, the single most important feature of stipulatio was missing if it is seen as a contractual relationship between God and man.

SYMBOLUM

Tertullian used the word symbolum twice,¹ of which one use has been seen by d'Alès and by Carpenter as a reference to contract in the ritual of baptism - "C'est l'idée de contrat, ou de sceau garantissant un contrat".² In de paenitentia chapter 6, Tertullian was debating under what conditions God would cancel the covenant of death, that is sin, whether He was compelled by necessity, or whether He demanded the repentance of the sinner: Quodsi necessitate (Deus) nobis symbolum mortis indulget, ergo inuitus facit.³ Tertullian concluded that the second hypothesis alone was worthy of God, and from that Carpenter⁴ made out a case for symbolum being understood as the "act or token or pledge which seals the pact"; in other words to introduce the language of legal contracts into the relationship of man to God in baptism. It is, however, far from certain that Tertullian was applying the word 'symbolum' to the baptismal ceremony and it would be hazardous to build too much on the

¹ paen 6.12.47, quoted below and V Marc 1.2.6.

² Adhémar d'Alès, "Tertullien, Symbolum", Recherches de Science Religieuse, 26 (1936), 468. The reference to Carpenter is below.

³ paen 6.12.47-48.

⁴ H.J. Carpenter, "Creeds and Baptismal Rites in the first four centuries", Journal of Theological Studies, n.s. 44 (1943), 1-11.

"Do you assure/promise? - I assure/promise".

"Do you go surety? - I go surety."

"Do you give bail? - I give bail."

"Will you carry out? - I will carry out."

formal promise/bargain

sign/mark/token/signal/symbol

It is the idea of contract, of the seal guaranteeing a contract.

"On Repentance" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

Now if it is of necessity that He (God) grants us the "symbol of death", then He does it unwillingly.

"Tertullian - 'Sign/Symbol'" - periodical article in "Researches of Religious Science".

388

speculation that he might have had baptism in mind.

If one turns back in light of this rather more detailed examination of the words from which baptism is alleged to be a contract, to read again the positive assertions made on pages 374-375 above, one is left with the question of whether the "idea of a baptismal contract in the writings of Tertullian" is quite as "obvious" as the authors believe. The words quoted in support of these statements can be discounted, one by one, as a foundation for such sweeping generalisations.

One final reference should be made, for the sake of completeness, to the text: Habebimus de benedictione eosdem arbitros fidei quos et sponsores salutis.¹ The confidence which the candidate for baptism could have in the promises of God for the forgiveness of sin was increased by the fact that the witnesses of his baptism also had a personal interest in seeing the 'pactum' fulfilled. This does not, however, appear to be a sufficiently direct reference to baptism itself as a contract to justify exploring the whole question of witnesses and their functions in Roman law. That would lead into the area of the security of the Christian in the years following baptism, in the faithful observation of the relationship established with God by baptism, and this thesis stops at the point where that relationship is first established. Before the final details of that relationship are explored, certain conclusions should be drawn from this chapter, and this is done next.

¹ bapt 6.2.8-9

We have, through the benediction (uttered), we have some (three) witnesses/mediators of our faith as we have as sureties of our salvation.

agreement/contract

384

IX.10 CONCLUSIONS FROM CHAPTER NINE

Ten separate aspects of the ceremonies surrounding baptism were identified, falling into three main groups - the baptism itself, the rite now called 'confirmation', and the admission to the Eucharist. Some of these had the most profound significance for the relationship of man to God - in particular the water baptism, and the Imposition of the Hand; others were of less significance. Taken together, baptism and the surrounding ceremonies effected the most radical alteration which a man would ever experience in his relationship with God, but it is important to remember that in Tertullian's theology this was a restoration, now an eternal restoration, to the state in which the first man was created by God: "Ita restituetur homo deo ad similitudinem eius qui retro ad imaginem dei fuerat"; ¹ "(anima) ad fidem peruenit reformata per secundam natiuitatem ex aqua et superna uirtute, detracto corruptionis pristinae aulao totam lucem suam conspici". ²

This chapter has concentrated on the water baptism. In consequence (in human terms) of the oral profession of faith and the immersion in water, which took place three times following the three declarations of faith, the candidate was assured of the remission of all sins, regeneration, removal of the 'obscuration' of original sin, deliverance from spiritual death and from the power of the devil, and restoration to the likeness of God.

Words and phrases from Roman law have been more in evidence in this chapter than in any previous part of the thesis. However, once again, questions were raised as to whether Tertullian used the words as legal words, whether he employed them in a more popular and illustrative sense, or whether he gave them a meaning all his own. For example, traditio was an important source of Roman law, but Tertullian (unlike the jurists) justified consuetudo/traditio by ratio. In

¹ bapt 5.7.46-48.

² an 41.4.20-23.

In this way, man is being restored to God, to the likeness of Him who had aforetime been in God's image.

When (the soul) embraces the faith, it is regenerated by this second birth in water and power from above; the veil of its former corruption is removed and it at last perceives the light in all its brightness.

handing on (from earlier generations)

custom/tradition - reason

385

the same way, sacramentum had a recognised place in Roman law, but the word appears to have come to Tertullian through other sources and to have been used by him without reference to its strictly legal significance.

Finally, for this chapter, Tertullian's expression of baptism as a 'contract' was looked at in some detail. Of the seven words used by Tertullian from which this argument has been advanced, obsignatio, sacramentum and signaculum may well have come to Tertullian from sources other than Roman law, pacta were not recognised as contracts in Roman law, and it is doubtful whether stipulatio and symbolum were ever applied by Tertullian to baptism. Furthermore, it was seen that the legal notion of contract cannot easily be transferred to religious usage, partly because the Romans had no general "law of contract" as such and partly because an essential ingredient of any contract in Roman law was the enforcability of the contractus by the ius civile. The conclusion is therefore reached that here, as elsewhere, Tertullian found it useful to illustrate his thought by words, which happened to be words of Roman law but which had other meanings as well, and there is little evidence that any words or thought-patterns from Roman law were in themselves instrumental in shaping his thought about baptism to any material extent.

Sacramental oath

sealing - Sacramental oath

mark/sign/Seal/signet

agreement/contract

formal promise - symbol/sign/mark/token

concluded bargain - civil law

386

CHAPTER TEN - THE RELATIONSHIP AT CONFIRMATION

X.1. INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER TEN

Tertullian envisaged the catechumen normally proceeding straight from water baptism to 'confirmation'¹ as part of the one rite,² but he referred also to two events which came between these two major items of the initiation ceremonies. They were the anointing with oil and the signing or sealing with a cross, both of which are discussed in section two of this chapter. The anointing is particularly important for this study because it appears to be the ceremony from which the candidate took the name 'Christian'. Whether the anointing should be regarded as part of the baptismal ceremonies or as part of the confirmation ritual is much debated³ but is of no relevance for this present

¹ Tertullian did not himself use this word, but he made much of the significance of the Imposition of the Hand, as will be examined in Section X.3. The word 'confirmation' is therefore used, anachronistically, for convenient reference to that.

² As Gregory Dix put it in The Theology of Confirmation in Relation to Baptism, (London: Dacre Press, 1946). "For Tertullian baptismum does not mean only the Baptism in water, but other things as well. 'Not that in the waters we obtain the Holy Spirit, but that cleansed in the water we are prepared for the Spirit ... Leaving the laver we are forthwith anointed in the blessed oil ... which lent its name to the Lord. The oil flows upon our flesh, but profits our spirit ... then a hand is laid upon us, by its blessing calling down and inviting the Holy Ghost'. For Tertullian all this together is baptismum". (p 14)

³ Pierre Galtier considered that it belonged to baptism; "La consignation à Carthage et à Rome", Recherches de Science Religieuse, 2 (1911), 350-383. P. de Puniet, who everywhere else considered the post-baptismal anointing as part of Confirmation, made an exception for the African rite, "Onction et Confirmation", Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique, 13 (1912), 450-466, and Heinrich Elfers also considered the post-baptismal unction in the West to go with baptism, Die Kirchenordnung Hippolyts von Rom, (Paderborn: 1938) pp 111 and 116 ff. On the other hand, Franz Joseph Dölger, Das Sakrament der Firmung, (Vienna: Von Mayer & Co. 1906) p 189 and Backer, op. cit., p 128-130, were inclined to put it with Confirmation and Bernard Welte, who made a special study of the meaning in Tertullian, came to the same conclusion, Die postbaptismale Salbung (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder & Co., 1959) p 49-51. However, Welte's dogmatic conclusions have been criticised by Heinrich Elfers in "Gehört die Salbung mit Chrisma im ältesten abendlandischen Initiationsritus zur Taufe oder zur Firmung?", Theologie und Glaube, 34 (1942), 334-341; and by L. de Witte in Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique 35 (1939), 877, who concluded "La (continued on next page)

baptism

"The Final Ceremony of Christian Initiation at Carthage and at Rome",
periodical article in "Researches of Religious Science"

"Anointing and Confirmation", periodical article in the "Review of
Ecclesiastical History"

The Church Service/Ritual of Hippolytus of Rome (Book)

The Sacrament of Confirmation (Book)

Postbaptismal Anointing (Book)

"Does the Anointing with oil in the ancient western Initiation Ceremony belong to the Baptism or to the Confirmation?" periodical
article in "Theology and Faith"

Review of Ecclesiastical History

157

study. Equally debatable (and equally irrelevant for this study) is whether the Imposition of the Hand was the final item in the baptismal ceremonies as such or whether the ceremonies extended to include the first reception of the Eucharist.¹ The Imposition of the Hand, important as it was in itself, is only indirectly relevant to this study, because the major significance of the Imposition was the giving of the Holy Spirit and this study is confined to the relationship of man to the First Person of the Trinity. The consequences of it are, however, looked at briefly in section three.

Reference has been made from time to time to the grace of God, and the various references to it are gathered up in section four. The position of those who had been baptised but not 'confirmed' is then set out in section five. Although the exact position of the gustatio 'lactis et mellis',² is uncertain, Backer, with an abundance of citation to prove his point,³ placed it after the reception of the Eucharist, as the very last item in the baptismal ceremonies and his conclusion is adopted here. The taste of milk and honey is therefore taken along with the first communion and studied in section six. That, for Tertullian, was the high-water mark of the relationship to God, as far as

footnote 3 continued:

conclusion de cette etude est trop nette pour emporter la conviction." The position was concisely summarised by J. Coppers: "A l'origine, les diverses ceremonies sont etroitement juxtaposees, constituent une unite morale, et l'onction est interpretee comme un rite intermediaire entre le bapteme et l'imposition des mains, participant a la fois aux effets des deux sacrements. Telle est encore la position certainement primitive representee par les ecrits de Tertullien et de saint Cyprien: l'onction y complete les graces du bapteme, menage la transition entre l'ablution et la confirmation, prepare au Saint-Esprit une demeure sanctifiee, digne de sa venue." L'imposition des mains et les rites connexes, (Wetteren: 1925) p 355.

¹ res 8.3.11-12 and I Marc 14.3.22 seem to imply that Tertullian regarded the first reception of Eucharist as part of the baptismal ceremony; praes 36.5.19-20 is ambiguous; cor 3.3.17-18 seems definitely to say that he regarded them as separate. The point is of no significance for this study and is not pursued.

² cor 3.2.17-18.

³ op. cit., pp128, 131 & 172.

The conclusion of this study is too "cut and dried" to carry conviction

At the beginning, the different ceremonies were narrowly juxtaposed, they constitute a moral unity and the Anointing is interpreted as an intermediate rite between baptism and the Imposition of Hands, participating simultaneously in the effects of the two sacraments. Such is still the position certainly represented originally by the writings of Tertullian and St. Cyprian. Anointing completes the graces of baptism, linking the transition between washing (baptism) and Confirmation, and prepares a holy abode for the Holy Spirit, worthy of His coming.

"The Imposition of Hands and Associated Rites" (Book)

382

earthly life was concerned;¹ by that time, man had achieved the complete forgiveness of sin; he had not yet fallen into any post-baptismal sin, and Tertullian himself appeared to look back nostalgically to that event as the highest and purest in his relationship with God thus far. The relevant words from Roman law are then set out in section seven and conclusions drawn in section eight.

In the reconstruction of the baptismal ceremony in Chapter IX.1, reference was made to the giving of a ring. The context is Tertullian's comment on the parable of the prodigal son. In interpreting Luke 15.22, he remarked that the ring which the Father bid the servant put on his son's finger was "the mark of baptism,"² or answered to baptism. No trace of such a custom is found elsewhere, but whether an actual ring was given or whether that is an unjustified inference from Tertullian's words, there is no ground for supposing that it had any effect on the relationship of the candidate to God, and so is not further mentioned in this chapter.

¹ Martyrdom was, in Tertullian's view, the most glorious way to God.

² anulum ... signaculum lauacri; pud 9.11.48; and again Anulum quoque accepit tunc primum, quo fidei pactionem interrogatus obsignat - pud 9.16.72-73.

the ring, the seal of baptism

Then, for the first time, he also receives a ring, and after he has been questioned, this seals the pact of faith.

319

X.2 THE ANOINTING AND THE SIGNING WITH THE CROSS

The first of the several ceremonies which normally followed the immersion in water was an anointing of the whole body¹ with oil. Tertullian related this to the anointing of the priests of the Old Testament² and to the (spiritual) anointing of Jesus.³ Just as the Aaronic priests and the Lord Himself had received the title of Christ because of their anointing, so by virtue of the anointing after baptism the catechumen could now be called "Christian", i.e. anointed:

Exinde egressi de lauacro perungimur benedicta unctione de pristina disciplina qua ungui oleo de cornu in sacerdotium solebant ex quo Aaron a Moyse unctus est; unde christi dicti 4 a chrismate quod est unctio 5 quae et domino nomen adcommodauit, facta spiritalis... 5c

While there is no conclusive evidence in the works of Tertullian that the catechumen was called "Christian" exactly at the point of anointing, his writings indicate that it was not his practice to use the name "Christian" until after the

¹ Tertullian did not say much about the physical act but both Lupton (*op. cit.*, p 20) and Dekkers (*op. cit.*, p 197) suggest that the preposition *per-* in the verb *perungimus* might indicate that the oil was poured over the entire body, (no doubt accounting for the prohibition of bathing during the days following baptism). Lupton also discussed the composition of the unguent, (*op. cit.* p 20).

² Exodus 29.7; 30.30; Leviticus 8.12.

³ In the case of the Lord, the anointing was not physically but with the Spirit by God the Father - quia spiritu unctus est a deo patre, sicut in Actis: Collecti sunt enim vero in ista ciuitate aduersus sanctum filium tuum quem unxisti. - bapt 7.1.5-8.

⁴ There are variant readings for these two words, but since they are not critical to this enquiry, the possibilities are not explored here. '*Christi*' was altered in T to '*Christiani*' because it was not understood, and in B it was changed into the singular for the same reason. Borleffs in the text of *Corpus Christianorum* reverted to *Christi dicti*. As Evans commented, the sense is not lost, whichever words are used, because the ordinary Christian is brought into the significance of the event by sic et in nobis at the beginning of the next paragraph (7.2.8-9). (Evans, "Baptism", p 70.)

⁵ bapt 7.1.1-5.

⁶ The Greeks, unlike Tertullian's Latin readers, would have had no need for such elucidation; the relationship between the word "Christ" and the commonly used verb *chrío*, would have been obvious to them.

After we come up from the washing we are anointed with the blessed unction, following that ancient practice by which, ever since Aaran was anointed by Moses, there was a custom of anointing them for priesthood with oil out of a horn. That is why (the high priest) is called a christ, from 'chrism' which is the Greek for 'anointing and from this also our Lord obtained His title, though it had become a spiritual anointing.

thoroughly

we are thoroughly anointed

because He was anointed with the Spirit by God the Father, as we have it in the Acts of the Apostles, "For truly they were gathered together in this city against Your Holy Son whom You have anointed"

Christ (anointed)

Christ - Christian -

Collection of Christian writings - "he is called Christ (anointed)"

So also in our case ...

(the Greek word for anointing)

neophyte had been baptised at very least,¹ and other passages, apart from the one just quoted, connect the name with the anointing with oil following baptism:

Christianus uero, quantum interpretatio est, de unctione deducitur. 2

Christianum uero nomen, quantum significatio est, de unctione interpretatur. 3

Itaque Christum facis Patrem, stultissime, qui nec ipsam uim inspicias nominis huius, si tamen nomen est Christus et non appellatio potius; unctus enim significatur. 'Unctus' autem non magis nomen est quam 'uestitus' quam 'calceatus' accidens nomini res. 4

The point may seem to be of small consequence, but it is more than mere word-play. Just as with baptism, the physical act had spiritual significance:

Sic et in nobis carnaliter currit unctio sed spiritaliter proficit, quomodo et ipsius baptismi carnalis actus quod in aqua mergimur, spiritalis effectus quod delictis liberamur. 5

As Evans pointed out,⁶ the use of the word ipsius with baptismi in that quotation is a reminder that while there was significance in the additional ceremonies, Tertullian was anxious to retain the main focus on the immersion in water and its spiritual effect, the deliverance from sin.

Next followed the signatio - the making of the sign of a cross on the forehead⁷ of the candidate.

¹ e.g. mart 3.1.11-13; bapt 18.5.30-31; III Marc 12.4.26-27; mon 7.88.56-57; pud 6.18.73-74.

² apol 3.5.26-27.

³ I nat 3.8.11-13.

⁴ Prax 28.1.1-5.

⁵ bapt 7.2.8-11.

⁶ Evans, "Baptism", p 71.

⁷ This appears from praes 40, where Tertullian accused satan of imitating the res diuinorum sacramentorum in his mysteries. "Tingit et ipse (diabolus) quosdam utique credentes et fideles suos: expositionem delictorum de lauacro repromittit; et, si adhuc memini Mithrae, signat illic in frontibus milites suos." (praes 40.3.4-4.7).

The term "Christian", on the other hand, as far as etymology goes, is derived from "unction"

The name "Christian" however, so far as its meaning goes, bears the sense of anointing.

And so you make Christ into the Father, you great fool, because you do not even examine the force of this name, if indeed "Christ" is a name and not rather a title; for it means "anointed". Yet "anointed" is no more a name than "clothed" or "shod", but is something attributive to a name.

So also in our case, the unction flows upon the flesh but turns to spiritual profit just as in the baptism itself there is an act that touches the flesh, that we are immersed in water, but a spiritual effect that we are set free from sins

"itself" with "baptism"

signing/marking

For he too (the devil) baptises certain persons - his own believers and his own faithful ones. He promises the removal of sins by his washing, and, if my memory still serves me, Mithras seals his own soldiers on their foreheads in this rite.

Sed et caro abluatur, ut anima emaculetur; caro unguitur, ut anima consecratur; caro signatur, ut (et) anima (et) muniatur; caro manus inpositone adumbratur, ut (et) anima spiritu inluminetur; caro corpore et sanguine Christi uestitur, ut et anima de deo saginetur. 1

Caro signatur has nothing corresponding to it in the treatise de baptismo, but it had particular relevance in de resurrectione carnis, where Tertullian was concerned to include the body in the relationship of man to God. That passage located the signatio very clearly between the anointing and the Imposition of the Hand, but comparison with the Ordo baptismi of Hippolytus and also with the writings of Cyprian, who both put the sign after the Imposition, prompted Dekkers to ask:

Zou het dan vermetel zijn samen met Fr. J. Dölger en P. Galtier te onderstellen dat de door T. in dezen zo rhetorischen passus aangegeven volgorde niet met de werkelijkheid overeenstemde en dat men in Afrika de signatio altijd geplaatst heeft na de handoplegging als laatste rite en voltooiing van de eigenlijke initiatie? 2

The order is not of basic importance for this study, but another of Tertullian's references is, because it gives a clear picture of the spiritual consequences of the signatio. Tertullian regarded this outward sign of the cross as a protection against evil, especially against the attacks of the evil spirit. He saw in it a fulfilment of Ezekiel's mark Thau on the foreheads of certain men of whom it was said, "on whoever you shall see Thau, kill him not". 3

Ipsa est enim littera Graecorum Tau, nostra autem T, species crucis, quam portendebat futuram in fontibus nostris apud ueram et catholicam Hierusalem... Quae omnia cum in te quoque deprehendantur, et signaculum frontium et ecclesiarum sacramenta et munditiae sacrificiorum... 4

Although Tertullian referred the fulfilment of that prophecy primarily to the suffering involved in bearing the sign of the cross, nevertheless he regarded the

¹ res 8.3.8-12.

² op. cit., p 271. Roughly translated: "Would it be too daring to assume, together with Fr. J. Dölger and P. Galtier, that the sequence given by Tertullian in this rhetorical passage did not correspond with reality and that in Africa the signatio was always placed after the laying on of hands as the last rite and completion of the initiation proper?"

³ Ezekiel 9.4.

⁴ III Marc 22.6.2-4, and 7.18-20.

For example, the flesh is washed that the soul may be made spotless: the flesh is anointed that the soul may be consecrated: the flesh is signed (with the cross) that the soul too may be protected: the flesh is overshadowed by the Imposition of the Hand that the soul may be illumined by the Spirit: the flesh feeds on the Body and Blood of Christ so that the soul also may be replete with God.

the flesh is signed/marked

"On Baptism" and "On the Resurrection of the Flesh", (two of Tertullian's treatises)

signing/marking

order of baptism

(translation below)

For this same letter TAU of the Greeks, which is our T, has the appearance of the cross, which he foresaw we should have in our foreheads in the true and catholic Jerusalem ... And since all these are found in use with you also, the sign on the foreheads, and the sacraments of the Churches and the pureness of the sacrifices, ...

signing after baptism as a strengthening of the soul, and a permanent defence against evil, an invocation of Christ's power to assist the baptized. Tertullian referred to the signaculum on several other occasions, but since it was noted in chapter IX.9 that Tertullian was as likely to have derived this word from the mystery religions or from military usage as from Roman law, it is sufficient here to note the fact that he used it as an important link in the baptismal ceremonies and not to pursue the matter any further beyond that.

One further point remains to be made here. Bender was surely in error when he wrote:

Dem Wasser entstiegen, werden die Täuflinge mit heiligem Öl gesalbt. Wiederum verweist Tertullian auf das Vorbild im Alten Testament: die Salbung zum Priestertum und die Salbung Aarons. Das heilige Öl gibt dem Gläubigen den gleichen Namen wie Christus, der vom Vater mit dem Geiste gesalbt wurde.

Sic et in nobis carnaliter currit unctio sed spiritaliter proficit, quomodo et ipsius baptismi carnalis actus quod in aqua mergimur, spiritalis effectus quod delictis liberamur.

Es liegt die Annahme nahe, dass Tertullian dieser Salbung eine Vermittlung des Heiligen Geistes zuschrieb. Er spricht ja ausdrücklich einerseits von der Salbung Christi mit dem Geist und andererseits von einer geistigen Wirkung (spiritaliter proficit) der Salbung des Körpers, so wie das körperliche Untertauchen in der Taufe die Reinigung des Geistes von Sünden bewirkt. ¹

This is perhaps the appropriate place to mention yet again that the spirit of God, breathed into man at creation, so that the soul of every man was afflatus dei, was not the Spirit of God Who descended on the water at baptism and on the individual candidate at the Imposition of the Hand. Tertullian's complaint against Hermogenes and other heretics was that they mistranslated flatus in Genesis 2:7 as spiritus so as to make the Holy Spirit, i.e. God himself, responsible for Adam's sin. This was not so. Just as a jug produced by a potter is not the potter himself, so the breath created by the spirit is not the Spirit Himself. The

¹ Wolfgang Bender, Die Lehre über den heiligen Geist bei Tertullian. (Munich: Max Hueber, 1961) p 128.

the sign of the cross

Having stepped out of the water, the candidates are anointed with holy oil. Once again Tertullian points to the precedent in the Old Testament: the anointing to the priesthood, and the anointing of Aaron. The holy oil gives to the believers the same name as Christ, who was anointed with the Spirit of the Father.

So also in our case, the unction flows upon the flesh but turns to spiritual profit just as in the baptism itself there is an act that touches the flesh, that we are immersed in water, but a spiritual effect that we are set free from sins.

The obvious assumption is that Tertullian attributed to this anointing a mediation of the Holy Spirit. He speaks expressly on one hand, of the anointing of Christ with the Spirit, and on the other, of a spiritual effect (spiritualiter proficit) of the anointing of the body, just as physical immersion in baptism effects the cleaning of the spirit from sins.

breath of God

breath

spirit

The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit in Tertullian (Book)

393

possession of the Holy Spirit was possible only after the soul had come to faith and been reformed by the second birth by water and when the Spirit was invoked on bodies cleansed and preparéd for Him. This is now briefly examined.

X. 3 THE IMPOSITION OF THE HAND

The fourth of the four spiritual consequences of baptism, set out by Tertullian in his argument against Marcion, was that in baptism,¹ the Holy Spirit was received. It is commonly stated that this was accomplished by the Imposition of the Hand - Tertullian normally used the singular, "manus imponitur".² While that is more accurate than the generalisation that "the Holy Spirit was given in baptism (sic)" it is still not exactly what Tertullian wrote. He did not say that the Imposition of the Hand imparted the Holy Spirit but that it invited and welcomed the Holy Spirit, as the texts quoted in this section will show.

The Imposition of the Hand was to be performed only by the Bishop and normally followed immediately on the water-baptism:

Dehinc manus inponitur per benedictionem aduocans et inuitans spiritum sanctum 3 and

caro manus inpositione adumbratur ut (et) anima spiritu inluminetur. 4

¹ "Baptism" defined in its wider sense, as set out in the introduction to chapter IX. Tertullian regarded the water baptism and the Imposition of the Hand as so closely connected, being two parts of the ceremonies normally surrounding baptism, that sometimes he spoke of the two as one, where the consequences of the two parts of the ceremony did not have to be distinguished. When, however, the context required it, he was careful to distinguish the forgiveness of sin (effected by baptism) from the communication of the Holy Spirit to the individual (effected by the Imposition of the Hand). On one occasion (the end of de baptismo chapter five) Tertullian seems to have realised that the line of his argument might seem to infer that the candidate received the Spirit in water-baptism, so Tertullian opened the next chapter by stating explicitly that no such thing occurred - bapt 6.1.1-2. The way in which Tertullian emphasised the point may imply that he was correcting a popular or erroneous belief that the Holy Spirit was in fact given in water-baptism.

² This 'manus impositio' was not a stretching out of the hand over the baptised person, but a laying of the hand on the head of the individual - Dölger, "Das Sakrament", p 90.

³ bapt 8.1.1-2.

⁴ res 8.3.10-11.

Imposition of the Hand

(thus it is quoted, although the quoter believes it to be wrong)

Next follows the Imposition of the Hand in benediction, invoking and inviting (welcoming) the Holy Spirit.

the flesh is overshadowed by the Imposition of the Hand in order that the soul may be illumined by the Spirit

"On Baptism" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

Imposition of the Hand

The Sacrament (of Confirmation) (Book)

The Holy Spirit had therefore a twofold role in baptism in Tertullian. First, as mentioned in the introduction to chapter IX, prayer was made to God at the beginning of the baptismal ceremony and in response to that prayer, God sent the Holy Spirit (or rather, an angel on His behalf) to sanctify the baptismal water. Tertullian was, however, careful to point out that this did not confer the gift of the Spirit on the individual candidate - the washing away of sins in the water was only a preparation, although a very necessary preparation, for the gift of the Holy Spirit at the Imposition of the Hand; "in aqua emundati sub angelo spiritui sancto praeparamur".¹ The Spirit became the individual possession of the believer only by the Imposition of the Hand. This second activity of the Spirit in baptism was set out in detail by Tertullian in de baptismo chapter 8.

With the Imposition of the Hand per benedictionem aduocans et inuitans spiritum sanctum, the Holy Spirit descended from the Father on bodies which had been cleansed and blessed. Tertullian hinted at, but did not quote, the formula which accompanied the Imposition of the Hand;² he did, however, use a variety of symbols to demonstrate how God used the consecrated hands of the bishop to create in His creature, man, a new spiritual reality. He referred, for example, to the Old Testament story of Jacob who blessed Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph, by laying upon them his crossed hands;³ he found further illustration in the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove at the Lord's baptism, seeing a repetition, in every individual case, of what had taken place at the Lord's own baptism:

Tunc ille sanctissimus spiritus super emundata et benedicta corpora libens a

¹ bapt 6.1.2.

² There is no reason to suppose a standard formula in Tertullian's time - D. van den Eynde, "Notes sur les rites postbaptismaux dans les Églises d'Occident", Antonianum, 14 (1939), p 266 ff.

³ bapt 8.2.7-9.

in the water, we are made clean by the action of the angel, and made ready for the Holy Spirit.

"On Baptism" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

In benediction, invoking and inviting the Holy Spirit

At that point that most Holy Spirit willingly comes down from the Father upon bodies cleansed and blessed ...

"Notes on Postbaptismal Rites in the Churches of the West" (periodical article)

396

patre descendit superque baptismi aquas tanquam pristinam sedem recognoscens... 1

He referred also to the dove coming out of the ark at the cessation of the waters of the Flood, bringing peace to men:

...recognoscens conquiescit columbae figura delapsus in dominum, ut natura spiritus sancti declararetur per animal simplicitatis et innocentiae, quod etiam corporaliter ipso felle careat columba. 2

A further concept, apparently introduced into theology for the first time by Tertullian in de anima, was that of marriage between the soul and the Holy Spirit. Before the baptismal ceremony, the catechumen might have experienced passing touches and effects of the Spirit, but the indwelling of the Spirit was possible only after the soul had been prepared by its second birth. It was only by baptism, man's second birth, that the 'curtain' of corruption caused by original sin could be torn away; the soul then beheld its own light, after which the Holy Spirit took it under His protection just as at birth it had been caught by the evil spirit. This does not mean that the Spirit could never have been given to man before Christ's coming, but that He was only given in an accidental manner, for example in prophecy. Now, for every believer:

Excipitur etiam a spiritu sancto sicut in pristina natiuitate a spiritu profano. Sequitur animam nubentem spiritui caro, ut dotale mancipium, et iam non animae famula, sed spiritus. O beatum conubium, si non admiserit adulterium! 3

As has been noticed through this thesis, and in particular in chapter I.6, Tertullian was careful to include the body in the relationship of man to God. When this new relationship (i.e. with the Spirit) was established, not only was the soul wedded to the Holy Spirit but the flesh followed it, as a slave

¹ bapt 8.3.12-14. 'Tunc' at the beginning of the passage obviously refers back to the water, omitting (in this situation) any reference to the unction which came in between the water baptism and the Imposition of the Hand.

² bapt 8.3.14-17.

³ an 41.4.23-27.

... and (comes to rest upon) the waters of baptism as though recognising/revisiting his primal resting-place

... as though recognising/revisiting (his primal resting-place), He comes to rest, He who came down upon our Lord in the form of a dove, in order that the nature of the Holy Spirit might be clearly revealed/declared by means of a creature of simplicity and innocence because even in her bodily structure the dove is without literal gall.

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

Then is it welcomed by the Holy Spirit as, at its physical birth, it was met by the evil spirit. The flesh naturally follows the soul which is now wedded to the Spirit and, as part of the wedding dowry, it is no longer the slave of the soul but the servant of the Spirit. A blessed marriage, indeed but would that no infidelity were to follow!

Then

forming part of the dowry - dotale mancipium, a legal word which is taken up in section X.7 along with the very similar phrase which appears in de resurrectione carnis, namely dotis nomine sequetur animam caro.¹ In the de anima passage, Tertullian's emphasis was naturally on the soul, as "the bride of the Holy Spirit" but when in de resurrectione carnis he was more concerned with the body, he stated the body was so closely connected with the soul that it could reasonably be called 'the slave of the bride':

utrumque iam in semetipso foederavit, sponsam sponso et sponsum sponsae comparavit. Nam et si animam quis contenderit sponsam, uel dotis nomine sequetur animam caro. Non erit anima prostituta, ut nuda suscipiatur a sponso: habet instrumentum, habet cultum, habet mancipium suum carnem;
2

and, quoting from Ephesians, he related the gift of the Spirit to the significant day on which the catechumen had received salvation: Et nolite contristare spiritum dei sanctum in quo signati estis in redemptionis diem.³

¹ res 63.2.7-8.

² res 63.1.5-2. 10.

³ res 45.11.36-37.

part of the wedding dowry

"On the Resurrection of the Flesh" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

the flesh will go with the soul in the name of dowry

"On the Soul" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

He has already made an alliance of both (spirit and flesh) in Himself, has brought the bride to the bridegroom and the bridegroom to the bride. For even if one should claim that the soul is the bride, the flesh will go with the soul, at least in the name of dowry. The soul must be no prostitute, to be taken up by the bridegroom without assets; she has her chattels, her raiment, her serving-maid, the flesh.

And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God with which you were sealed on the day of your redemption.

398

X.4 THE GRACE OF GOD

Tertullian made a number of references to the grace of God operating in the life of man, at different stages of life and at different levels. For example, he stated that the grace of God operated toward the heathen, so that God, although incomprehensibilis, etsi per gratiam repraesentetur;¹ it was the grace of God which could bring the unbelieving husband of a Christian wife to faith.² Elsewhere, Tertullian stated that the capability of prophecy was given per dei gratiam,³ but the greatest experience of the outpouring of God's grace was at baptism and at the Imposition of the Hand which followed:

omnis hora, omne tempus, habile baptismo: si de sollemnitate interest, de gratia nihil refert. 4

gratia dei expectat, cum de illo sanctissimo lauacro noui natalis ascenditis. 5

This was consistent with the pattern of God's overall dealings with man⁶ and Tertullian's clearest statement that God's grace accompanied the giving of the Holy Spirit came when he was distinguishing the baptism of John from Christian baptism. John's baptism was exclusively a baptism of penance, and gave neither the forgiveness of sins nor the grace of the Spirit of God.⁷

The relationship in the thought of Tertullian, between the grace of God and the part played by man in his own salvation, is not clear. In places⁸ he

¹ apol 17.2.6-7.

² Ita facilius huiusmodi lucrifiunt, in quos dei gratia consuetudinem fecit - II ux 7.2.13-14.

³ an 22.1.6-7 and an 47.2.5-9.

⁴ bapt 19.3.17-18.

⁵ bapt 20.5.28-29.

⁶ Proficiente itaque in omnibus gratia dei plus aquis et angelo accessit: qui uitia corporis remediabant nunc spiritum medentur, qui temporalem operabantur salutem nunc aeternam reformant, - bapt 5.6.41-44.

⁷ paen 2.4.17-22.

⁸ e.g. paen 2.9.37-40.

He (God) is intangible/incomprehensible, although manifested/revealed by grace.

by the grace of God

Any house, any season is suitable for baptism. If there is a difference of solemnity, it makes no difference to the grace.

The grace of God is waiting, when you come up from the most sacred washing of the new birth.

So it comes about that men like this are rather easily won over, once the grace of God has brought them into contact with the faith.

Therefore as the grace of God makes general progress, both the waters and the angels have obtained more power. They used to remedy bodily defects, but now heal the spirit: they used to administer temporal health, but now restore the health which is eternal.

399

appears to say that God not only helped man to perform good deeds, but that those deeds were the deeds of God Himself. On the other hand, Tertullian emphasised equally the freedom of man; grace was stronger than nature and enabled man to shake off the limitations of sinful nature and to exercise his free-will in favour of good. However, the problem of reconciling the efficacy of grace with the freedom of man's will was clearly not a problem for Tertullian, and is not pursued here.¹ Two points should, nevertheless, be noted as relevant to this study. First, it is obvious that in Tertullian grace was opposed to nature, but not to merit. By the grace of God, all past transgressions were cancelled in baptism, but thereafter grace operated by potentiating the free-will of men, so that he became able to gain merit, if he chose to do so. Furthermore, any future transgression had to be expiated by self-inflicted punishment and mortifications for sin or else it would be punished by God. Grace helped the infirmity of man, but only to the extent of aiding the will; the New Testament concept of grace as God's fatherly care, forgiving, preserving, instructing and drawing man to Himself with everlasting love and patience seems to find no place in Tertullian's thought - but that is to go outside the scope of this study. What should be noted finally here is that the grace with which this section is concerned did not come ex opere operato; it was given in response to the faithful prayers of God's people:

cum de illo sanctissimo lauacro noui natalis ascenditis et primas manus apud matrem cum fratribus aperitis, petite de patre, petite de domino peculia gratiae distributiones charismatum subiaccere. Petite et accipietis inquit.²

That prayer leads on to the first admission to the Eucharist, with which this thesis closes, but before that is examined, one category of person remains to be mentioned - those who had been baptised but not confirmed, and they are discussed next.

¹ There are studies of the relationship in d'Alès "Theologie", pp 270, 286; Karl Rahner, 'Sünde als Gnadenverlust in der frühkirchlichen Literatur,' Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie 60 (1936), 491-507 and Paul Galtier, L'Eglise et la rémission des péchés aux premiers siècles. (Paris: 1932) p 52 ff.

² bapt 20.5.28-32.

by virtue of a work done

When you come up from that most sacred washing of the new birth: and when for the first time you spread out your hands with your brethren in your mother's house, ask of your Father, ask of your Lord, that special grants of grace and apportionments of spiritual gifts may be yours. "Ask," He says, "and you shall receive."

"Theology (of Tertullian)" (Book)

"Sins as a Loss of Grace in Early Church Literature": periodical article in "Journal for Catholic Theology"

"The Church and the Remission of Sins in the First Centuries" (Book)

X.5 BAPTISED BUT NOT CONFIRMED

For Tertullian, baptism and confirmation were normally so linked together that they constituted only one single (composite) ceremony. By virtue of the fact that baptisms were normally concentrated into the period from Easter to Pentecost, when the bishop would make himself available to complete the initiation rites, and by virtue of the fact that there seems to have been enough bishops in the area of Carthage to realise the Ignatian ideal that every Christian should have a visible Vicar of Christ within reach,¹ the position of catechumens who had been baptised but not confirmed appears to have been rare and was mentioned only once by Tertullian.² However, an occasional emergency would no doubt arise, where the attendance of the bishop could not be arranged in time; if Tertullian was to be consistent in his view that baptism was essential for salvation, it was to be expected that he would give some teaching about baptising in such emergencies, and he did.

A catechumen seriously ill or otherwise expecting death ought to be baptised at once, by a layman if no ordained priest was available - etiam laicis ius est ... et in necessitatibus ut utaris sicubi aut aut loci temporis aut personae condicio compellit.³ More than that, Tertullian pursued his theology of baptism to its logical conclusion - reus erit perditioni hominis si supersederit praestare quod

¹ In Proconsular Africa, there appears to have been a great number of sees, all with a single bishop, and every modest town seems to have expected to have its own bishop. "Auf der Synode zu Karthago unter Agrippinus (spätestens um 218-222) über die Gültigkeit der Ketzertaufe waren bereits 70 afrikanische und numidische Bischöfe zugegen ... Erwägt man, dass erfahrungsgemäss nur ein Teil der Bischöfe die Synoden besucht hat, so lassen diese Zahlen auf eine ausserordentliche Verbreitung der Kirche schon vor der Mitte des 3. Jahrhunderts schliessen. Allerdings ist dabei nicht zu vergessen, dass die Organisation der Kirche in Nordafrika augenscheinlich ein Bistum verlangte, wo auch nur wenige Christen waren, also in jedem Städtchen." Harnack, "Die Mission" p 516.

² bapt 4.4.21-5.27, quoted below.

³ bapt 17.2.6 and 3.15-17.

Even laymen have the right ... you should use it in emergencies, if ever conditions of place or time or person demand it.

He will be guilty of man's destruction if he forbears to give the help he is free and able to give.

Even at the synod of Carthage held under Agrippinus (not later than 218-222 A.D.) to discuss the validity of heretical baptism, there were seventy African and Numidian bishops present ... when one bears in mind the well-known fact that only a certain proportion of bishops attended synods as a rule, the above numbers enable us to infer that a remarkable expansion of the Church had occurred by the middle of the third century, although one must never forget that the organisation of the Church in Northern Africa evidently demanded a bishopric even when there were but a few Christians, i.e. in every township, ("The Mission ...")

libere potuit.¹ However, Tertullian warned against anyone going any further than that and assuming the specific dictatum of the bishop, because the Imposition of the Hand was the special privilege and duty of the bishop and his alone.² Morgan was surely in error in writing, "He makes no distinction between the minister of Baptism proper and the minister who performs the duty of the Imposition of Hands."³

If the candidate recovered, or if the emergency passed, then the initiation ceremony would presumably be completed later by the bishop. Tertullian does not seem to have contemplated the situation where a bishop might make visits through his diocese, in order to administer "confirmation" to those who had meantime been baptised by the pastors or priests of outlying congregations; it may have been because "Tertullian ist auch als Christ Grosstadter - das Land kummert ihn nicht".⁴ However, de baptismo chapter four seems to contain, at least in parenthesis, a reference to emergency baptism. Perhaps because of urgency or perhaps because of lack of experience or perhaps even by oversight, the water had not been blessed; Tertullian's words ad simplicem actum, seem to accept that in such an emergency, water and the word were enough for salvation.

Igitur omnes aquae de pristina originis praerogativa sacramentum sanctificationis consecuntur inuocato deo: superuenit enim statim spiritus de caelis et aquis superest sanctificans eas semetipso et ita sanctificatae uim sanctificandi conbibunt. Quamquam ad simplicem actum conpetat similitudo, ut quoniam uice sordium delictis inquinamur, aquis abluamur.⁵

Presumably Tertullian approved of baptism, however grave the

¹ bapt 17.3.18-19.

² bapt 17.1.3-6.

³ op. cit., p 138-139.

⁴ Harnack "Die Mission", p 514.

⁵ bapt 4.4.21-5.27.

} On reflexion, I think Morgan was right and I am wrong here.

appointment/designation (past participle of dicto)

For Tertullian remained the citizen of a great city, even when he became a Christian. The country was no concern of his.

"On Baptism" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

about the simple act

Therefore, in consequence of that ancient original privilege all waters, when God is invoked, acquire the sacred significance of conveying sanctity: for at once the Spirit comes down from heaven and stays upon the waters sanctifying them from within himself, and when thus sanctified they absorb the power of sanctifying though the simile would equally apply to the simple act, that as we are defiled by sins as though with filth, we are washed clean in water.

"The Mission ... " (Book)

emergency, only if the catechumen was iam corde lotus and so (in Tertullian's view) fit to be baptised. Conversely, it can be presumed (because there is not the slightest indication to the contrary in Tertullian's writings) that not even the most sincere desire to receive baptism would confer the benefits of baptism if the outward ceremony did not take place - Tertullian insisted that the external rite was essential for salvation. Accordingly, the performance of the rite, even by a layman, would suffice for the forgiveness of sin and the salvation of God. In such a situation, the baptised person would not have received the gift of the Holy Spirit, but such a person surely stood in a saving relationship to God. Tertullian might well have adjusted some of his statements, if the question of the relationship of Confirmation to Baptism had been an issue. Whether a man was a 'Christian' after baptism without confirmation, and at what moment of the composite transaction he was regenerate, Tertullian would no doubt have answered plainly, if asked. It was not, however, in his mind when he wrote, and it is not fair to draw inferences from his language when he was not dealing with that question.

already washed/clean in heart

X.6 THE FIRST ADMISSION TO THE EUCHARIST

From the baptismal ceremonies, the catechumen would normally go straight on to participate for the first time in the Eucharist. That is not studied here in itself, but the importance of the first Eucharist after Baptism for the relationship of the believer to God was emphasised by Tertullian in three areas:

- (a) there was significance in the first prayer of the newly baptised; with an eloquence which displays more emotion than normal in Tertullian, he commended himself to those whom he had prepared for baptism because (he implied) they had the "ear" of God in a special way, qualifying them for blessings which could at that time be claimed for themselves and for others,
- (b) there was significance in their thanksgiving, on the analogy of sinners in Old Testament days attending the temple to offer sacrifice when cleansing had been received, and
- (c) there was significance in the tasting of milk and honey.¹

(A) THE FIRST PRAYER AFTER BAPTISM

Tertullian urged the newly baptised to profit from the whiteness of their souls by sending up ardent prayer to God, and he asked that in so doing, they would remember their catechist, himself: "quāsisites enim et inuenistis, pulsastis et apertum est uobis. Tantum oro ut, cum petitis, etiam Tertuliani peccatoris memineritis."² At that point, having been baptised and having received the Holy Spirit, having been accepted into the family of the Church,³ the candidates could

¹ Placed at this closing point in the ceremonies for the reasons set out in the introduction to this chapter, although Dekkers, op. cit., p 205, for whose work a high regard is due, placed it as a transition between the last of the post-baptismal rites and the receiving of the Eucharist.

² bapt 20.5.32-34.

³ Not to be overlooked, but not pursued here, is the close relationship which Tertullian saw between baptism and Mother Church. De baptismo, for example, closed with a vivid picture of the newly-baptised being admitted to liturgical worship and raising their hands in prayer for the first time at their Mother's (home) with their brothers. Thus the newly baptised have God for father, the Church for mother, and the other baptised for brothers.

So now, you have sought, and have found: you have knocked, and it has been opened to you. This only I pray, that as you ask you also have in mind Tertullian, a sinner.

"On Baptism" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

for the first time address God as Father; for the first time their prayers had full weight before God. Whether or not they recited the Lord's Prayer is not the concern of this section,¹ but it was an occasion for great rejoicing:

Der Ausdruck "die Hände "öffnen" ist dabei soviel wie die "Hände ausbreiten". Es ist für Tertullian selbstverständlich, dass diese Gebetshaltung zum freudigen Lobgebet gehört, im Gegensatz zum Bussgebet, bei dem man sich auf die Erde nederkniete oder niederwarf. 2

More than that, the time immediately following baptism and in particular the receiving of the first Eucharist was considered to be a time in which God showed Himself to be particularly benevolent, and the newly-baptised should take full advantage of that to pray for themselves and others.

(B) THANKSGIVING

No reference at all will be made here to the Eucharist itself, as it lies outwith the limits set for this study, but it was the first occasion when the candidate could respond to God in thanksgiving for the forgiveness of sin and the other benefits conferred in the baptismal ceremonies. When debating with Marcion, Tertullian referred to Old Testament typology in a way which implies he may well have used it to instruct catechumens along that line, namely typology:

quae significabant hominem quondam peccatorem uerbo mox dei emaculatum offerre debere munus deo apud templum, orationem scilicet et actionem gratiarum apud ecclesiam per Christum Iesum, catholicum patris sacerdotem. 3

(C) THE TASTE OF MILK AND HONEY

The origins of the custom of giving to the newly baptised a mixture of

¹ J.P. Bock, Die Brotbitte des Vaterunsers, (Paderborn: 1911) pp 70 ff and 204, thought that it was; Franz Joseph Dölger, Das Erste Gebet der Täuflinge in der Gemeinschaft der Brüder, Antike und Christentum, 2 (1930) 142-155, thought that it probably was.

² Dölger, op. cit., p 144.

³ IV Marc 9.9.27-03.

The expression "opening the hands" is therefore much the same as "stretching out the hands". It is obvious to Tertullian that this posture for praying belongs to joyful, laudatory praying, as opposed to the praying for penitence in which one kneels or throws oneself down onto the ground.

which indicated that a man who has been a sinner, as soon as he is cleansed by the word of God, is bound to offer in the temple a sacrifice to God, which means prayer and giving of thanks in the Church through Christ Jesus, the universal high priest of the Father.

The "Give us Our Bread" of the Lord's Prayer

"The First Prayer of the Newly Baptised in the Society of the Brethren" article in "Antiquity and Christianity"

milk and honey are obscure¹ but that it was common in the Church of Tertullian's day, is clear from his reference to it - Inde suscepti lactis et mellis concordiam praegustamus² - in support of his claim that other (non-Biblical) observations should be given authority in the Church. Tertullian mentioned the same custom among the Marcionites:

"Sed ille (deus Marcionis) quidem usque nunc nec aquam reprobavit creatoris, qua suos abluit, nec oleum, quo suos unquit, nec mellis et lactis societatem, qua suos infantat, nec panem, quo ipsum corpus suum repraesentat, etiam in sacramentis propriis egens mendicitatibus creatoris." 3

and gave at least some indication of its significance for himself when he allegorised the holy land, promised to the saints in the Old Testament, as being Christ himself:

carnem potius domini interpretandam, quae exinde et in omnibus Christum indutis sancta sit terra, uere sancta per incolatum spiritus sancti, uere lac et mel manans per suauitatem spei ipsius, uere Iudaea per fidei familiaritatem. 4

Milk, the food of childhood, and honey, the symbol of earthly happiness, were entirely suited to symbolise the hopes raised by the initiation ceremonies. There may also have been an eschatological meaning - a foretaste of heavenly joys, a spiritual application of the promise of a land flowing with milk and honey to which (heavenly) country, with all its blessed privileges, the newly baptised now belonged.

Be that as it may, on the night of his baptism, a man stood in a unique

¹ J. Schrijnen, "Melk en Honig in de oudchristelijke doopliturgie", *Studia catholica*, 2 (1925), 71-78, repeated in *Collectanea Schrijnen*, (Nijmegen: 1939) pp 296 ff; A. Wilmart, *La bénédiction romaine du lait et du miel dans l'euchologe Barberini*, *Revue Benedictine* 45 (1933), p 11; Franz Joseph Dölger, "Milch und Honig, eine Taufzeremonie im christlichen Altertum, Antike und Christentum 5 (1936), p 169, note 75; Browe, *op. cit.*, p 11-17 and Schümmer, *op. cit.*, p 177, note 57.

² cor 3.3.17-18.

³ I Marc 14.3.19-23.

⁴ res 26.11.42-46.

After this, having stepped forth from the font, we are given a taste of a mixture of milk and honey

Certainly he (the Marcionite god) has not even yet rejected the Creator's water, for in it he washes his own; nor the oil in which he anoints them; nor the compound of milk and honey on which he weans them; nor the Creator's breed, by which he makes manifest his own body. Even in his own rites and ceremonies he cannot do without things begged and borrowed from the Creator.

thought it (the holy land) ought rather to be interpreted as the Lord's flesh, so that flesh thenceforth also in all who have put on Christ is a holy land, truly holy through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, truly Judaeian through the familiar converse of God.

"Milk and Honey in ancient Christian Baptismal Liturgy", periodical article in "Catholic Studies"

"The Roman Blessing of Milk and Honey in the Barberine Prayer Book", periodical article in Benedictine Review.

"Milk and Honey, a Baptismal Ceremony in Christian Antiquity", article in "Antiquity and Christianity"

406

relationship to God. The slate had been wiped clean. Later as a Christian he might gain "merit"; later he might become a martyr; in the meantime, he had achieved a position which he might later come to envy and in which he might never stand again. Stufler¹ made the interesting suggestion, backed up by parallel studies in several other Church Fathers, that when Tertullian dealt with the uniqueness of the relationship to God achieved by baptism, he wanted to emphasise that even paenitentia secunda could never quite restore a man to that same relationship, once it had been lost by post-baptismal sin. There was a qualitative difference between the relationship to God at the conclusion of paenitentia prima and the relationship at the conclusion of even the most acceptable paenitentia secunda. It may have been the fact that in baptism all actual sins and also the vitium originis were erased, or it may have been that baptism was accompanied by a particular outpouring of the grace of God, but Tertullian does seem to have regarded the Christian, at the close of the baptismal ceremonies, as being in a unique relationship to God. After an examination of the only terms from Roman law which are relevant to this area, this study will be brought to a close.

¹ Johan Stufler, "Die verschiedenen Wirkungen der Taufe und Busse nach Tertullian", Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie, 31 (1907) 372-376.

repentance after baptism

repentance before baptism

fault of origin

"The Different Results of Baptism and Penance according to Tertullian",
periodical article in "Journal for Catholic Theology"

X.7 ROMAN LAW FOR THIS AREA

The phrases dotale mancipium and dotis nomine sequetur animam caro were noted in section three, where Tertullian emphasised that when the Holy Spirit was "married" to the soul, the body (which, in his thought, always followed the initiative of the soul) was like a slave who formed part of a dowry. That these were terms of Roman law is evident from Justinian's Code¹ and they provide a useful illustration of how Tertullian saw flesh as well as soul in a new relationship to God at baptism (in its widest sense). The Holy Spirit now took control, but it would be pressing the metaphor too hard to look there for a reference to man as the "slave of God"; that topic will be taken up in Excursus Two.

These appear to be the only two places where Roman law could have been in Tertullian's mind, as he expressed the relationship of man to God in the closing parts of the baptismal ceremonies. Once again, they seem to have provided a useful illustration of what he wanted to say, but they can hardly be said to have shaped his thought or substantially to have expressed the relationship of man to God in terms of Roman law.

¹ 5.12.3 and 7.8.1.

as a part of the wedding dowry - the flesh will go with the soul, at least in name of dowry

X.8 CONCLUSIONS FROM CHAPTER TEN

This thesis has been concerned with the relationship between God and man, as it developed through pre-natal life, infancy, adolescence, unregenerate manhood, the catechumenate and then baptism. That the first Eucharist (following after baptism, anointing and the Imposition of the Hand), was the "high-water mark" of the relationship between man and God, and accordingly the appropriate place to bring this study to a close, is seen by Tertullian's references to the first prayer of the catechumen, after his baptism. Tertullian implied that the newly baptised then had the "ear" of God in a unique way, which qualified him for blessings to be claimed for himself and for others. Along with the benefits, there went the opportunity of expression thanks to God for deliverance from sin, another situation which could never quite be repeated because this was the only occasion when one could receive not only the forgiveness of all actual sins but also the washing away of the vitium originis. It was indeed a unique occasion and a unique relationship with God.

The significance (for this study) of the anointing with oil was seen to lie in the fact that the catechumen was called "Christian" after he had been anointed and he was then "sealed" with the ⁹sin of the cross on his forehead. Both of these events emphasise the importance for Tertullian of the body in the relationship of the whole man to God; the importance of the soul was seen in the marriage of the soul, now cleansed of sin, to the Holy Spirit of God at the Imposition of the Hand - a concept introduced into theology for the first time by Tertullian. Nevertheless, if Tertullian had been asked to express a view as to when a man came into a saving relationship with God, baptism would presumably have been the critical and determining event - water and the word would, in an emergency, procure salvation. However, the norm was to proceed from baptism to the rite now called "confirmation" and from there to the Eucharist.

fault of origin

The taste of milk and honey symbolised man's new relationship with God. As a new-born child in the family of God, he received milk; for the promise of happiness through the forgiveness of sin he received honey; he was now on his way to a heavenly land where the spiritual equivalents of milk and honey flowed freely. The relationship with God, once broken and marred by sin, had been restored.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The first aim of the thesis was to set out systematically, on a factual basis, how Tertullian described the relationship of man to God from the time of conception until the first admission of the neophyte to the Eucharist. Although this does not appear to have been attempted before, at least not in one continuous study, this part of the thesis yielded a surprisingly full picture of the relationship of man to God for the areas under review. Every one of Tertullian's thirty-one treatises contributed something to his understanding of the relationship of man to God, up to the point of 'complete conversion' to the Christian faith.

From the beginning of life, which Tertullian insisted was the moment of conception, God stood in a two-fold relationship to embryonic man. First, the soul of the embryo was related to the flatus of God, breathed onto man at the original creation and directly transmitted from generation to generation. Every new soul therefore contained, from its earliest moment, something of the original goodness with which God had created man. Every new life would develop in its own individual way, but Tertullian taught that the human soul, although now marred by sin, was in its essential nature the soul which had been created by God. Maturity would come with passing of years, but no new substance required to be added to the developing life before man was able to enter into a conscious relationship with God.

Furthermore, God supervised the formation of the embryo. This (second) involvement of God with embryonic man was through the mediation of an angel, subservient to God's will, who (alone) controlled and supervised the process by which the human embryo was implanted in the womb, developed and brought to its final form. Accordingly, the human embryo, both by virtue of its descent from God's original creation and by virtue of God's concern for its development, stood in a relationship to God which was not parallel^{le} (at least not in the writings

breath

of Tertullian) by any other form of life on earth.

The only two 'component parts' of man were his body and his soul. As these grew together, they were under the close and personal notice of God throughout the pregnancy, as evidenced by Tertullian's teaching on abortion. At this early stage, embryonic man was totally unconscious of any relationship with God, but He was concerned with human life without distinction, from its earliest moment. One passage in Tertullian's works may seem to imply two different stages in the relationship of fetal life to God, but there was in fact no time when God was not concerned with the development of embryonic human life.

This settled and uninterrupted relationship during pregnancy was not basically altered by birth and by the coming of the child to independent life. However, the endowments which the soul had received from God at its original creation, and which had been transmitted (obscured but not extinguished) from generation to generation, were further blighted by the attack which satan launched on every child at birth, or at least on every pagan child. Nevertheless, Tertullian explicitly described all children as 'innocent' and the implication, nowhere contradicted in his works, is that neither the vitium originis of the soul nor the assault of the devil from birth onward had any immediate significance for the relationship of infant life to God.

The children of Christian parents were in a privileged position, because they were destined to be pure and they had the benefit of Christian instruction at home. Tertullian discouraged the baptism of infants (because sin after baptism was difficult, perhaps impossible, of forgiveness and so baptism should be postponed until the candidate had overcome the sinful tendencies of youth), but it appears that the baptism of a child in infancy would have washed away its original sin. Nevertheless, the fact that Tertullian said so little about the relationship of children to God leads to the inference that he had nothing really

fault of origin

distinctive to say about them, distinctive that is from the principles he had laid down for all infant and juvenile life.

Certain catechumens expressed the fear they might be martyred before they had been baptised. Tertullian allayed their concern with the assurance that martyrdom was the equivalent of baptism, but nowhere did he voice (or deal with) a similar concern about the status before God of unbaptised children. Some parents apparently wished to hasten the baptism of their children, but Tertullian counselled them to delay; the inference must be that he was not concerned about their present standing before God, as unbaptised infants, nor was he concerned that they might, without the opportunity of baptism, succumb to the many diseases and perils which afflicted life in Carthage. That is not to say that he would have discouraged the baptism of any child mortally ill; on the other hand, he did not distinguish between baptised and unbaptised when he designated infant life as 'innocent' before God.

By joining the body, the soul, even with all its potential, became infans, and so the relationship of the child to God was basically the relationship of the child's soul to God. Tertullian was not unconcerned about the body, and he stressed its importance against heretical denigration of the flesh, but ultimately it was the state of the soul which determined the relationship of human life to God. In any moral decision, and in all its conduct, the body could be guilty only if it was led into sin by the soul; the soul, on the other hand, had the ability to perform "actions" by itself and would be judged by God for them.

At the age of fourteen, every individual child left its paradise of innocence, and became accountable to God for the new attitudes which the advent of puberty had brought. On a broad view of Tertullian's theology, it is obvious that not even the innocence of children could be "absolute", because they were subject to the presence of original sin. Nevertheless, as the first part of

infant

the thesis concluded, Tertullian could speak of infancy and childhood as a time of "innocence" (that is "unaccountability") in the relationship to God. The judgment of God on human sin was not for original sin as such, but for the disobedience to the divine law which characterised every single human life after adolescence brought it to the age of accountability.

Part two of the thesis therefore examined the relationship and accountability of the natural man to God. For this, Tertullian employed a wide variety of words, but every single one of them implied estrangement. It was, however, an estrangement which God, out of His love for all mankind, wished to remedy. The various means by which God sought to make Himself known to all men need not be repeated in detail here, but God spoke so clearly to all man that Tertullian believed He would hold every man accountable if man failed to respond to the voice(s) of God. Tertullian repudiated the gnostic distinction between those who had the capability of understanding God and those who, by reason of the nature inherited at birth, could not apprehend God. Nevertheless, for those whose mental faculties had not developed to the point where they could respond to the initiative of God, it appears (although Tertullian did not say so) that they would be treated in the same way as children, namely on the basis of unaccountability and therefore innocence before God.

Although they were many graduations of heathenism, Tertullian divided mankind sharply into those who received and those who rejected the Christ of God. For the latter, he held out no escape from the judgment of God. For certain enemies of the Church, he mentioned specific judgments, and although he did not say expressly that all except the Christian would be found in hell in eternity, his theology leads irresistibly to that conclusion. There were some features of paganism which he could commend, but even the highest and best of pagan virtue could never bring a man into a saving relationship with God. God's

judgment of human sin was, however, almost invariably postponed until after death. In this world, God would continue to show His favour to all men, whether they responded him or not; pagans could, because of the freedom of the will, develop their lives in whatever way they wished. Tertullian rejected Marcion's accusation that the Creator God was thus responsible for human sin; if a man opted for a life of sin, that was his prerogative but it was also his responsibility. God would judge, and although judgment was postponed until after death, it was so certain that Tertullian could speak of it as if it had taken place already.

In the pagan religions of Tertullian's day, there was hope of the favour of the gods and fear of offending them, but no thought of man entering into a personal relationship with deity. Part three of the thesis therefore explored in some detail the distinctively Christian catechumenate. Here, partly by receiving instruction as to the nature and character of the one true God, and partly by amending his manner of life to conform to the known Will of God, a candidate for baptism could begin to move toward a totally new relationship with God. During the catechumenate, this relationship was prospective rather than actual, and Tertullian was critical of those who failed to make an adequate distinction between catechumens and baptised Christians.

Catechumens were, however, encouraged to move steadily forward to baptism because in it, after an appropriate period of preparation of mind, heart and will, they would receive the complete forgiveness of all past sin. To bring catechumens to the not inconsiderable effort required to prepare for baptism, Tertullian urged on them a reverential fear of God. Metus integer was the basic and fundamental attitude of a catechumen who was going to move toward a saving relationship with God; so important was this that Tertullian once described the catechumen with metus integer as iam corde lotus.

When a candidate's preparedness for baptism had been established, and after a final and intensive spell of spiritual preparation, the candidate entered on

perfect fear

already washed/clean in heart

the baptismal ceremonies. These were validly practiced only in the Church, as Tertullian understood the Church, and pretended baptism outside the Church did not restore the candidate to a proper relationship with God. Every aspect of the ceremonies surrounding baptism had its own significance - these were explored in detail in chapters 9 and 10 - and the candidate emerged, having renounced the devil, having received the forgiveness of all sin, having been anointed to spiritual priesthood, have been sealed with the Cross, and having received the Holy Spirit; the neophyte was then admitted for the first time to the Eucharist.

That was, for Tertullian, the 'high water mark' of spiritual experience on earth. He appears to have looked back, wistfully, to that time in his own experience; the candidate could never recapture that moment; even if fully forgiven for post-baptismal sin, he would never again (in this life) rise to the same relationship with God as he could enjoy at the conclusion of the baptismal ceremonies. It was therefore at that point that the first enquiry of the thesis was closed. There are areas where one would have liked to question Tertullian further - for example, the exact nature of the privilege of Christian parentage, the implication of inclusion in the "book of fate", the position of the mentally impaired, the status before God of those ingressuri baptismum and the position of those who were baptised but not confirmed - but Tertullian has left sufficient data for the modern reader to understand how he conceived most of the relationships of man to God throughout the areas under review.

The second aim of the thesis was to set out all the areas, within the subject matter of this study, where Roman law appeared to have been the vehicle for Tertullian's expression of the relationship of man to God. Certain specific words from Roman law were identified and certain forms of Roman legal procedure appeared in Tertullian's thought. Nevertheless when set against Tertullian's overall expression of the relationship of man to God for these areas, the influence of Roman law turned out to be suprisingly small.

about to be baptised (entering upon baptism)

From the time of conception to puberty, only one single word, (privilegium), used once only by Tertullian, seems fundamental to the relationship of the child to God. In other areas, where Roman law distinguished very sharply between legitimacy and illegitimacy, Tertullian drew no such distinction; where Roman law distinguished between the offspring of a free man and a slave, Tertullian made no distinction in the relationship to God; where Roman law insisted that a child had to come to live birth before it could be presumed to have had any persona in the womb, Tertullian dated life, in every instance, from the moment of conception. Because he held that view, Tertullian had consciously to enlarge the Roman legal words for murder (which never applied to embryonic life) to state forcibly that the destruction of embryonic life was an offence in the sight of God, Who was concerned for it and Who stood in direct relationship to it.

Tertullian flatly repudiated the right of pagans to sacrifice children, either in religious ceremonies or simply to dispose of unwanted children. Where they claimed that parenthood gave them the right to dispose of infant life, Tertullian rejected their claim, stating that infant life was already sacred to God, and in relationship to Him. Where Roman law gave the inheritance of the father to the child, by the mere fact of the child's legitimate and live birth, Tertullian stated that the child of a Christian parent was destined for holiness but had to come personally to that holiness, of its own accord. No child, and certainly not by the mere fact of birth, inherited status before God in the manner in which a pagan child inherited civil and legal rights from its natural father.

Furthermore, Roman law regulated the capacity and responsibility of men, on a graduated scale according to age - infancy, childhood, puberty, maturity and old age. Tertullian knew of only one such distinction, puberty, and he expressly disclaimed that Roman law was the reason for his fixing on the age

a law concerning an individual only

personage

of fourteen for that. When discussing the respective responsibilities of soul and body before God, Tertullian began to use the analogy of an instrument used in a crime. He then appreciated that the Roman legal position was going to lead him into a unacceptable position in respect of the body (instrument), so he rejected the strictly legal position and argued that men did in fact (notwithstanding the law) give honour to a sword which had brought them glory in battle and destroyed a chalice which had contained a drink not to the diner's taste. On the same theme, Tertullian made only limited use of the master/servant relationship, drawing on his knowledge of Roman law where it seemed appropriate.

The sharp distinction in Roman law between the rights and responsibilities of men and women found little place in Tertullian's thought. There were certain areas in church life where women could not officiate, but this thesis is concerned with the relationship to God only up to the point of commitment to the Christian faith, and within that area Tertullian seems deliberately to have ignored the major social and legal distinctions between men and women.

The use of Roman law for the relationship of the unregenerate adult to God, which was the subject of the second Part of the thesis, was summed up in the conclusion at the end of that Part, and it would be inappropriate to repeat it here in detail. It was noted there that although Tertullian did borrow certain words from Roman law - libripens and lex naturae were noted in chapter five, delictum (perhaps), exceptio, and edictum in chapter six - it appears that nearly all these words either had other and non-technical meanings, or that Tertullian used them only as illustrations and not basically to express the relationship of man to God. They formed, in any event, a very small percentage of Tertullian's total vocabulary for the relationship at that stage.

The third part of the thesis, dealing with the relationship of catechumens to God, yielded rather more material from Roman law but still very few words

one who held the balance, as if to weigh out money, at (nominal) legal sales

the law of nature

fault - exception/limitation - Edict of the Magistrate

where Tertullian appears to have depended on Roman law to express the fundamentals of the relationship of man to God. As the enquirer entered the catechumenate, he began a relationship with God which Tertullian contrasted with Roman justice, and although reverential fear (of God) was at the root of that relationship, it was suggested that the domestic patriapotestas provided a better model for Tertullian than did the Roman judicial system.

As the catechumenate advanced, the words satisfactio and compensatio were introduced but it was seen that Tertullian did not use these in a strictly legal sense. Obsignata may have provided a useful illustration for him for the sealing of faith, but it was scarcely fundamental to his expression of the relationship. Praescriptio, as applied to the unbaptised, was no more than a 'standing rule' and not a formal legal exclusion. Furthermore, although aspects of the ceremonies rested on traditio, the basis of this concept for Church usage was very different from a jurist's understanding of the word. Sacramentum was a word of much wider application than the Roman legal system, and even the commonly expressed view that Tertullian regarded baptism as a 'contract', was found to rest on several unjustified assumptions.

While it would be entirely misleading to contend that Tertullian made no use of Roman law, it is the contention of this thesis that he did so to a very limited extent. The bold and dogmatic general statements, quoted in the preface to the thesis, and ranging over the last ninety years or so, seem difficult to justify for this area of Tertullian's thought. To bring this study to its completion, three reasons are suggested why such statements continue to be made.

1. Failure to restrict passages addressed to Christians to the relationship of Christians (only) to God.

Many statements make no attempt to distinguish between the relationship of the baptised Christian to God (where concepts like offendere, satisfacere, and promereri may well be relevant) and the relationship to God of

the authority of the father of the house over his descendents

satisfaction/reparation/amends

recompense/equivalent/compensation

sealed/attested under seal

exception/preliminary/objection/a limitation of the subject-matter in a law-suit

handing down from ancestors

Sacramental oath

to give offence/to commit a fault

to give satisfaction/to make amends/to make reparation

to deserve merit/to earn/to be worthy

the unbeliever and the catechumen (where the concepts of satisfaction and merit were never applied by Tertullian). For example, Nygren claimed that Tertullian had introduced into Western thought "an outlook which unites Old Testament nomism and Roman moralism and jurisprudence",¹ and Kirk spoke of the relationship of man to God in Tertullian's thought as that of "an arbitrary rule, set out by an arbitrary ruler, to be obeyed without question, comprehension or assent, and to be crowned by the promised guerdon."² These statements have, with respect, no relevance at all to the situation of the pagan or the catechumen, to say nothing of the child or the adolescent. Tertullian was further quoted by Kirk, "if we do well we merit of God, and he becomes our debtor",³ and the same sentence was quoted by Nygren in the form, "By good works man can make God his debtor".⁴ Statements like that really ought to make clear that Tertullian was there dealing with the restoration of believers, who had fallen into serious post-baptismal sin. Confusion will arise if one does not distinguish those (later) areas of life, where there may well have been considerable influence on Tertullian's thought and terminology from Roman law, from the relationship of man to God from the inception of life up to conversion to the Christian faith.

2. Failure to appreciate the complexity of the influences on Tertullian.

Recent studies have brought out the extreme complexity of the influences on Tertullian's thought - philosophy, law, history, rhetoric, language, literature, the natural sciences, medicine, occultism, etc. His primary concern, in all of his works, was to defend or to secure or to extend or to explain the Christian point of view (or at least the point of view regarded by him as the Christian one). He drew on all the many skills which he possessed and the many resources open to him to make his point; it is therefore hazardous in the extreme

¹ op. cit., p 132.

² op. cit., p 138.

³ idem., p 139.

⁴ op. cit., p 132.

to suggest any one synthetic, unifying view of Tertullian's thought, such as the influence of Roman law. One is in danger of reading Tertullian superficially if one sees his concepts as being exclusively rhetorical, or exclusively legal or exclusively sophistic. He was, in any event, such a highly original thinker, that even when he borrowed views or facts from others, he often adapted them to his special purposes. Any investigation of his sources must therefore distinguish what is his own and what has been processed by him - which leads to the third and final point here.

3. Many 'legal' words also had other (non-legal) meanings.

This is perhaps the real thrust and burden of this thesis. The fact that words from Roman law, legal concepts, images, expressions, individual pieces of information and also legal procedure are to be found in many of Tertullian's treatises, intermingled and amalgamated with many other sources, makes one wonder to what extent they were common ideas, borrowed from vocabulary which was current at the time in everyday speech. It is the attempt to read such words and phrases as technical terms of Roman law in Tertullian's thought which this thesis has questioned. Most - nearly all - of the words identified as being words of Roman law were found to be not only legal words - their legal usage was one of a wider range of both legal and non-legal meanings. Most of the quotations in the preface to this thesis lose their point (quite apart from not being applicable to certain areas of life) unless a technical legal meaning can be established for the words on which they rely.

It is/

It is the final contention of this thesis that much of what has been offered over the last ninety years as Tertullian's theology of the relationship of man to God has been based on the assumption that any word capable of being traced to a legal background must have been used by Tertullian as a word of Roman law. It seems equally possible that Tertullian used many of these words in the knowledge that his readers would understand them in a wider sense and would not necessarily assume that he was expressing the relationship of man to God in terms of Roman law.

EXCURSUS ONE - THE POSITION OF HERETICS

Tertullian recognised heretics as a distinctive group, neither pagan nor Christian - ethnici et haeretici cotidie ex blasphemia emergunt - pud 13.20.80-81. However, not all of his references to heretics, even in their relationship to God, are relevant to this study, because Tertullian made a point of emphasising that, as a rule, hoc sit negotium illis, non ethnicos conuertendi sed nostros euertendi - praes 41.1.2-3; even Marcion and Valentinian in catholicae primo doctrinam credidisse apud ecclesiam Romanensem (praes 30.2.3-5) before they were expelled. Heretics who had come first to the orthodox faith and who had then lapsed into heresy are outwith the scope of this thesis, because it stopped at the point of conversion to the true faith. Since, however, there may have been heretics who had been attracted directly from paganism into a heretical sect calling itself Christian, and since Tertullian believed that any "established" Christian who lapsed into heresy had never really come to true faith at all (praes 3.2.2.-3.6), the relationship requires to be set out in a little detail.

In the matter of bulk, Tertullian's fight against heretics occupies the largest part of his extant works. Their relationship to God can, however, be set out in one simple but basic tenet of Tertullian's theology. If a heretic had received baptism in his own sect and if he then applied to join the orthodox Christian Church, Tertullian insisted, for at least three reasons, that true baptism be administered to him.

The first reason was that Tertullian believed the commandment to baptise, recorded in Matthew 28.19, had been given to the Catholic Church alone. Since heretical baptism was administered outside that Church, it could not by definition be valid baptism. - bapt 15.1.4 - 2.10. The second reason was that heretics did not (Tertullian

pagans and heretics are daily emerging out of blasphemy

they make it their business not to convert the heathen but to subvert our people

at first they were believers in the doctrine of the Catholic Church in Rome

429

claimed) have the same understanding of God as did Christians, so even if their baptism was in the name of the Trinity, it was not Christian baptism and was not effective for salvation - bapt 15.2.11-14 and I Marc 14.3.19-20. The third reason was that heretics had not themselves been validly baptised, so they could not baptise others - bapt 15.2.14-15 and pud 19.5.21-23. Since baptism, following profession of faith, was in Tertullian's view the single most important event for establishing a saving relationship with God, heretics could not be in that relationship. References could be made to a number of other areas of Tertullian's teaching, but the matter is not really in dispute and the point need not be laboured. The relationship of heretics to God was not only a distinctive one, but it was an unenviable one - Haereses uero mortem aeternam et maioris ignis ardorem inferentes - praes 1.4. 10.11.

No reference to heretics in this thesis would be complete without some mention of the term praescriptio. As will be seen, it does not basically affect the relationship of the heretic to God, but it does illustrate yet again the way in which an apparently legal word, found in Tertullian, has been assumed to reflect (only) a legal usage of that word.

The background can be briefly stated. Since heretics were outside the Catholic Church, and since the Catholic Church alone had the right to the correct interpretation of Scripture, then in Tertullian's view heretics had no right to appeal to Scripture to establish their teaching. He therefore attempted to "rule them out of Court" - i.e. the Court of theological argument - by invoking a praescriptio, a preliminary argument before the main pleading. In Roman law, if this plea was sustained, the main pleading became unnecessary; in the theological debate, Tertullian wished to limit the dispute with the

Yet in the case of heresies, which inflict eternal death and the heat/
burning of a kenner fire

exception/preliminary objection/a limitation of the subject matter in
a law-suit

heretics to one single point - the legitimacy of their appeal to Scripture. He attempted this chiefly in the treatise de praescriptione haereticorum, but he returned to the theme on no less than six other occasions - apol 47.10; I Marc 1.6; III Marc 1.2; V Marc 19.1; Herm 1.1 and carn 2.3 and 5. (Tertullian did, however, recognise that he could not rely only on this technical point and he met the arguments of the heretics at length in his treatises adversus Marcionem, adversus Praxean and adversus Hermogenem).

Michaelides (op. cit) maintained the traditional viewpoint that the word praescriptio had in Tertullian a juridical background. Not only did he set out the traditional arguments, but pp 154 - 162 of his monograph contain a most useful bibliography of everything worth-while previously written on the subject. Since he wrote, Barnes too has accepted a technical legal background to Tertullian's use of the term praescriptio: "Tertullian has cast a whole treatise into the form of a legal simile. To paraphrase his own words, he applies for an injunction to restrain any heretic from trespassing upon holy Scripture, which is the sole property of Christians." (op. cit. "Tertullian", p 64). The argument as to whether Tertullian was referring to one single praescriptio of Roman law or whether he was referring to praescriptiones in the plural was discussed by Refoulé (introduction to op. cit. "Prescription") with a full bibliography at pp 20 - 26 of that monograph.

On the other hand, Fredouille (op. cit. pp 195 - 234) argued that the origin of Tertullian's use of praescriptio was not to be found in legal terminology at all, but that it was a general term of argumentation. The significance of Fredouille's argument, for this Excursus, is his convincing demonstration that the word praescriptio had at least two possible meanings, one from Roman jurisprudence, the

"On the Prescription of Heretics" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

"Against Marcion, Against Praxeas, Against Hermogenes" (three of Tertullian's treatises)

exception/preliminary objection/a limitation of the subject matter in a law-suit

425

other from general (non-legal) usage - (idem., p 232). It is outside the scope of this thesis to pursue the matter further, because it is clear that Tertullian's use of praescriptio has no direct bearing on the relationship of the heretic to God; Tertullian used it, in the sense under discussion here, solely to decide who held the true faith, i.e., through whom, when and to whom it had been committed. (His use of praescribitur in the sense of a "standing rule", in relation to baptism, was examined in chapter VIII.7 above, pp 334-335).

The truth of the matter, which is not without significance for this study, is probably that praescriptio had at least two uses and two possible meanings in Tertullian's day. The etymological meaning of preface or information given in advance had indeed acquired a technical value in juridical language, but it was also used (as Tertullian's other usages demonstrate) to mean a general precept or rule. It seems that Tertullian combined both of these meanings in his use of praescriptio, making it almost a personal neologism in his fight against the heretics. In other words, it seems to be yet another example of his taking a word with a technical meaning and using it in a non-technical sense. Since, however, it did not bear on the relationship of heretics to God, it is not appropriate to pursue the matter here. What is of interest to this study is the extent to which commentators on Tertullian have assumed that because praescriptio was a word of Roman law, it follows that Tertullian not only borrowed it from the language of the Courts (and from there alone), but that he used it in a technical juridical sense. Such assumptions overlook the other uses of praescriptio, collected by Fredouille from oratorical language and indeed from common speech.

exception/preliminary objection/a limitation of the subject matter in
a law-suit

it was appointed/directed/laid down beforehand

EXCURSUS TWO - THE DIFFICULTY OF ASCERTAINING ROMAN LAW AS PRACTICED
AT CARTHAGE IN TERTULLIAN'S DAY.

To consider the influence of Roman law on any particular aspect of Tertullian's thought is rendered more difficult by the fact that almost nothing has been preserved of the general Roman law as practised in Tertullian's day, and even less is available of the particular format of Roman law as Tertullian would have known it at Carthage. The difficulty is three-fold.

(A) Modern knowledge of Roman law for Tertullian's era, even as it was taught at Rome and standardised throughout the Empire, is almost exclusively dependent on the extant writings of one man - Gaius. His Institutes, published in four parts in A.D. 161, are the only legal works of the classical period of Roman law to have survived in anything like their original form. It was not until the sixth century, that is three hundred years after Tertullian's death, that the next collection, of which copies have survived, was made - the Institutes, the Digest (or Pandects), the Code and the Novels of Justinian. The Institutes and the Digest are, however, very relevant for endeavouring to reconstruct the law of Tertullian's period, because the former were deliberately modelled on the Institutes of Gaius and the latter cited the works of many of Tertullian's contemporaries, (those mentioned on page (iii) of the preface to this thesis.) Because the Institutes of Gaius and of Justinian can be read in parallel, assumptions can be drawn from Justinian's Institutes about the earlier law in areas where Gaius is silent.

However, neither society nor law had remained static for three hundred years, and there had been many changes in the law since Gaius wrote his treatise - what was obsolete had been discarded, inconsistencies had been remedied, and Justinian's Institutes were intended

to be read as contemporary law, not as history. Accordingly, the reconstruction of much of Roman law for Tertullian's day must remain largely a matter of conjecture, even where the Institutes and Digest appear to be reflecting a historical situation.

For the scholar of today these discrepancies - 'antinomies' as they are called - are provocative and alluring. They help him to see the Roman law not as a static system, but as a dynamic force, changing through the centuries, adapting itself to changing social and moral ideas and a changed environment.

R.W. Lee, The Elements of Roman Law, (4th ed.; London: Sweet & Maxwell, 1956) p 30.

Justinian's Institutes were intended to be an elementary text book for the use of students, an introduction to the larger system of the Digest and the Code and to the study of Roman law generally. The Digest (or Pandects) was a sorting out, bringing up to date and putting into order of all the many surviving juristic works of the classical and earlier periods. It was basically a collection of and a selection from the writings of eminent jurists, intended to reflect the law from Cicero's day to Ulpian - the ius vetus. Since the great bulk of the material is from Tertullian's contemporaries, like Papinian, Paul and Ulpian, the giants of the "classical period" of Roman jurisprudence, the Digest (together with the Institutes) has been of considerable help to this thesis. The Code and the Novels have been referred to also, from time to time, but it must be remembered that the Code contained only the law after Ulpian - the ius novum. The "Novels" (a contraction for Novellae Constitutiones) were the new decrees which had been issued between the publication of the Code and the end of Justinian's reign and so obviously are of very limited relevance to this study.

(B) The second problem is similar to the first, and in many

old law

new law

New Regulations

421

ways is even more difficult. There is only one single reference in the entire works of Justinian to the Carthaginian situation (D.32.11. pr) and no reference at all in Gaius. The dominions of Rome embraced many cultures - Egyptian, Semite, Greek, Iberic and Celtic as well as Berber and Punic - and Rome made no attempt to impose a unified system of law on these diverse peoples. Legal relationships inside their own communities went on in many ways as before, at least in Tertullian's day, and it is impossible to compare them because almost nothing is known about most of them. (The exception is Roman Egypt, from which has survived a mass of legal and economic papyri, so that it is possible to make some reconstruction of the legal relationships of ordinary life there. Because, however, of the diversity of Egypt's population and the pedantry of its bureaucracy, the law of Egypt was a thing apart and the papyri are of no assistance in determining the law of Carthage.)

On the other hand, this thesis has been concerned only with what can properly be described as Roman law, not with any local variations of Roman law as practised at Carthage. No doubt Tertullian took back with him, from his studies in Rome (Gemmarum quoque nobilitatem uidimus Romae - I cult 7.2.8-although Barnes was of the view this was not intended to be autobiographical - op. cit 'Tertullian' p 245) - the basic rules and principles laid down by the great Roman jurists. Nevertheless, it was in Carthage that Tertullian's writings had to be understood and the local variations of the Roman law, operating in Carthage, are just not known today.

(C) The third problem relates to the restricted areas of law which have been preserved, even in Justinian's massive Corpus Juris Civilis, (the collective name for the four works mentioned above.) This, as the name implies, was concerned almost exclusively with the civil law, and even then with only a part of it. Except for a small

We ourselves have seen the nobility/noble family of jewels blushing
before the matrons in Rome

Collected Works (of Justinian) on the Civil Law

section at the end of the fourth book of the Digest, which touched on criminal law, the works of Justinian, like the Institutes of Gaius, dealt only with "private" law (ius privatum), that is the law regulating the relationship of individuals among themselves. The law relating to the Constitution, government and general administration of the Roman state, and to relations between the state and the individual, and almost the whole of Roman criminal law, has not been preserved.

For the sake of the completeness of this Excursus, it is mentioned that the principal works consulted for the thesis were: William Warwick Buckland, A Textbook of Roman Law from Augustus to Justinian, (already cited in Part One of thesis), and The Main Institutions of Roman Private Law (Cambridge: University Press, 1931); Herbert Felix Jolowicz, Historical Introduction to the Study of Roman Law (already cited in Part One of thesis); Fritz Schulz, Principles of Roman Law (translation by Marguerite Wolff, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936); and Classical Roman Law (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1951); and John Keiran Barry Moylan Nicholas, An Introduction to Roman Law (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962). An invaluable reference book was Adolf Berger, Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Roman Law (Philadelphia: 1953).

One matter remains to be dealt with. Throughout the thesis, there have been references to the works of Gaius and Justinian. The citation of the former presents no problem, as his Institutes are universally referred to by Book and Section; "1.162" therefore = Gaius' Institutes, Book 1, Section 162. These Institutes (unlike those of Justinian) are not further sub-divided into paragraphs.

The methods of citing Justinian's Institutes, Digest, Code and Novels vary enormously. In Great Britain, the most common method of citing the Institutes is by reference to the Book, the Title (i.e. chapter) and the "lex" (i.e. section); "Institutes 2.9.6" therefore =

private law

"law" = "section/paragraph of the chapter"

430

Book 2, Title 9, lex 6. Some of the Titles and some of the leges have an introductory paragraph or preface (proaemium), usually contracted to "pr", so "Institutes 1.25 pr"= Preface to Title 25 of Book 1 of Justinian's Institutes.

However, in the Digest, the term "lex" is not used for the sections; the term "fragment" is generally used in its place. Every fragmentum is a passage from a named author of legal repute, and these fragments (unless they are very short) are paragraphed, the first being called principium, followed by paragraphs 1, 2 and so on. A typical Digest reference is therefore "26.6.4.3", meaning the Digest, Book 26, Title (i.e. chapter) 6, fragment (i.e. section) 4 and paragraph (i.e. sub-section) 3; "43.27.1 pr"= the Digest, Book 43, Title 27, fragment 1, and the initial paragraph of the fragment.

The Code is cited in the same way as the Digest, except that the term "constitution" is used where the Institutes use "lex" and the Digest uses "fragment". The Novels are usually distinguished nowadays by their number and chapter, so that "118.1"= the Novels, 118, Chapter 1.

"law" = "section/paragraph of the chapter"

introductory paragraph

"fragment" = section/paragraph of the chapter

the first paragraph

431

EXCURSUS THREE - SLAVERY AND ADOPTION

Tertullian did not consider it improper to possess or to employ slaves - serui nostri - II cult 5.4.17; seruulis nostris - pat 10.5.18; peūro irascamur - res 16.6.26; domesticorum curiositas - I nat 7.15. 10-11; and domestici nostri - apol 7.3.15 (although this may mean "the home circle" rather than "slaves"); nor did he consider manumission to be a Christian duty. This Excursus is not concerned with Tertullian's social attitude towards slavery but only with the use which he made of the institution of slavery, either to illustrate the relationship of man to God or the extent (if any) to which he regarded slaves as being in a different relationship to God from free men and women.

According to Roman law, as practiced in Tertullian's day, slavery might arise in one of three ways - capture in war, birth or judicial sentence. Prisoners of war were regarded by the Romans as the absolute property of their captors. The issue of a slave woman was born a slave and the father's status was immaterial; the offspring of a slave woman and a free man was born a slave, but that of a free woman and a male slave was born free. A free Roman citizen might be condemned to slavery for certain offences and such persons became slaves of punishment (serui poenae) or ownerless slaves (serui sine domino), or slaves of the State. A free woman who persisted in cohabiting with a male slave, without the consent of the slave's master, was liable by law to be reduced to slavery and to be adjudged a slave of the master. Roman law divided free men into those who were born free and those who were emancipated (ingenui and libertini) but the distinction is of no relevance for this study.

The Roman law on slavery has been expounded in massive detail by William Warwick Buckland, The Roman Law of Slavery. The condition

our slaves - our young male slaves

we are angry with the boy-slave - the inquisitiveness of the domestic servants

our domestic servants

slaves of punishment - ownerless slaves

born free - set at liberty/emancipated

of the slave in private law from Augustus to Justinian (Cambridge: University Press, (1908) and also by Reginald Haynes Barrow, Slavery in the Roman Empire (London: Methuen & Co., 1928). Two of the points which they made, relevant to this study are:

- (1) The fundamental difference in status between a free person and a slave.

All men were aut liberi aut servi. Servi had no caput, no persona, no status, and no potestas. In the estimation of Roman law, a slave was a "thing" (res), although a res mortalis. He was subject to the same rules of ownership, possession and transfer as domestic animals and, like them, could be owned by several people at once - that is one could own a part of a slave. The union of slaves was not recognised by law as marriage; it was known as contubernium, mere cohabitation, for slaves were incapable of contracting marriage.

Although it is not directly relevant to this Excursus, it should be mentioned that Roman law did give some recognition to the fact that a slave was a res mortalis. For example, the union of slaves, although not marriage, was recognised to the extent of creating ties of blood relationship (cognatio) between the offspring of such unions, so that there could not be incestuous marriage if the children subsequently became free to marry. For the same reason, a slave was capable of increasing his master's property by using his intellectual powers, and Roman law recognised at least his potential personality because, if manumitted, he became a "person" and acquired caput. Furthermore, a slave differed from domestic animals and inanimate objects, in that he was liable to punishment for crime. However, having said all that, there was a fundamental difference in Roman law and society between liberi and servi, a difference which was basic to the everyday routine of life, to business, to social life and to domestic management.

either slave or free

slaves - civil rights

legal standing/legal personality - rank/position/status - authority/
control

thing - a human thing

literally "companionship in a tent", but used as "marriage" for slaves

blood relationship/kinship by birth

x39

Tertullian therefore lived in a world where a free man was confronted daily with innumerable distinctions between his position and that of a slave, so he had ample opportunity to make comment on the position of free men and of slaves in their relationship to God.

In the event, Tertullian made no specific reference to the relationship of slaves to God but, in another context, he made his position abundantly plain - non regis apud illum (i.e. Christum) maior gratia, non barbari alicuius inferior laetitia; non dignitatum uel natalium cuiusquam discreta merita; omnibus aequalis, omnibus rex, omnibus iudex, omnibus dominus et deus est - Jud. 7.9.66-70.

(2) The various methods of manumission.

Manumissio could take place in one of two ways - either the unilateral and deliberate act of the dominus or the intervention of the law, without the consent of the master. Only the former is relevant to this study, and only one of the many forms of manumissio is relevant to the works of Tertullian. It is therefore not appropriate even to mention the nine different methods by which a slave might be freed. If Tertullian's teaching was as permeated by Roman law as some would suggest, he might have made some reference to the formal ceremony of manumission per vindictam, by which one person styled the "asserter of freedom" brought a fictitious legal action and claimed the slave from his master as being a free man. It was a ceremony full of symbolism. The adsertor libertatis touched the slave on the head with a rod (vindicta) or wand (festuca); the master then turned the slave round and allowed him to go, this being known as missio manu or "the sending away by the hand"; the magistrate then declared the slave to be free. One might have expected Tertullian to make use of such symbolism - for example, to call the Cross the vindicta of liberation - but none of the nine methods of manumission, which could so vividly have illustrated

no king, with Him, (i.e. Christ) finds greater favour, no barbarian lesser joy; no dignities or pedigrees enjoy distinction of merit; to all He is equal, to all King, to all Judge, to all "God and Lord".

setting-free of a slave

master

by the rod

assertor of liberty (claimant)

rod - wand

sending away (freeing) by the hand

474

deliverance from the bondage of sin, where utilised by him in this way.

The only form of manumissio which is of any relevance to this thesis is the one to which reference was made in chapter IX.9, (pp 377-378), namely where a person to be adopted was "sold" three times by his father into "bondage", twice "manumitted" by the adopter, then finally claimed by the adopter. To enable the adopter to acquire potestas over another, it was essential that the natural father's patria potestas should be destroyed. This was effected by mancipatio. In early Roman law, obsolete by the time of Tertullian, a father could sell his child into slavery. For adoption, the natural father therefore went through a (fictitious) form of sale of his son, repeated three times in the presence of five Roman citizens of adult age and in the presence of a libripens. After the third sale, the natural father's power was destroyed in accordance with the rule in the Twelve Tables. The son was then in mancipio to the purchaser, who was usually the adopter. The latter re-mancipated him to the natural father and then claimed him as his son by another legal process called in jure cessio; this consisted of a fictitious suit before a Roman Magistrate, who declared that the child was the son of the adopting father. (Gaius, Institutes 1.134 and Justinian, Institutes, 1.12.8).

Because of the similarity of the ceremony (although then obsolete) of sale into slavery and the fictitious sale incidental to adoption, the presence of witnesses was still essential in Tertullian's day; otherwise, in theory at least, it might be suggested after the death of the adopting father, that the adopted son had not in fact entered into the inheritance, but had come into the patria potestas as a bondsman. The witnesses could declare, if need be, that the deceased had adopted a son, not purchased a slave, and that the ceremony was truly one of adoption. As was pointed out in chapter IX.9 (page 378),

setting-free of a slave

authority/control

the authority of the father of the house over his descendents

a making over/delivery/transfer of a thing to another

one who held the balance, as if to weigh out money, at (nominal) legal sales

formal possession/ownership/a slave obtained by legal transfer

in iure = in open court - cessio = a formal giving up

435

this enabled Tertullian to combine both concepts and (set out in the texts quoted there) to regard the new Christian as both son of God and also slave of God.

Adoption became an increasingly important aspect of Roman social life, because of the failure of the governing classes to rear sufficient children to maintain its numbers. There were many factors involved in this - the desire of society women to avoid child-bearing, the infertility of men in the governing classes, the high death rate, the desire to hide the consequences of adultery, and so on. If a family was in danger of dying out, adoption provided the only solution to the problem. (It had little to do with the welfare of the child). There were two forms of adoption, (1) adrogatio, where a person sui iuris was involved, and not only the adopted person but all his dependents were transferred, and (2) adoption proper, where a man or woman or child individually left the original paterfamilias and came by himself or herself to the potestas of another person.

With such a wealth of illustrative material available to him, it is surprising that Tertullian's treatment of conversion to the Christian faith made so little use of the New Testament concept of adoption into divine sonship. His emphasis seems to have been instead on the aspect of slavery to a new master, not on the filial relationship to God which adoption involved.

full adoption (of oneself and all one's dependents)

not subject to the authority of a paternal ancestor

head of the family

authority/control

436

EXCURSUS FOUR - MONTANIST INFLUENCE ON TERTULLIAN

Throughout the thesis, the works of Tertullian have been quoted in support of various propositions, with little reference - unless it was particularly relevant to the text in question - as to whether he wrote as a Catholic or as a Montanist. It is therefore necessary to show, at this stage, that none of the areas where Tertullian's views altered materially from about A.D. 207 onward affect the conclusions of any part of this thesis. The date 207 is suggested because the first reference to the New Prophecy appears to be in I Marc 15, which bears to have been written in the fifteenth year of the Emperor Septimius Severus' reign (i.e. A.D. 206/07); however, there were several editions of Tertullian's work against Marcion, so it would be hazardous to date the beginning of Montanist influence on that ground alone. In any event, there was no sudden decision, only a growing conviction that the Holy Spirit could not work through an organisation as lax as the Catholic Church; there had been no open breach with the orthodox Church by A.D. 212, in which year Tertullian pled the cause of all Christians and spoke in their name in his letter to the Proconsul Scapula. After that date, the alienation became more rapid and more marked, although Tertullian would always have considered himself orthodox - schismatical perhaps, but never unorthodox.

As will be seen, this subject can safely be relegated to an Excursus, because none of the conclusions reached in the thesis are dependant on passages or themes where Montanist influence basically altered Tertullian's views. Montanism possessed certain definite and definable differences from orthodox Christianity but these (at least in so far as Tertullian took them up) were in the area of Christian discipline and conduct, not in the area of doctrine. Furthermore, Tertullian's efforts as a Montanist were directed to raising the

spiritual life of the Christian community, so little of his extant work from that period is directly relevant to the outsider or to the catechumen. As a Montanist, Tertullian propounded rules of behaviour which differed from his earlier teaching, but the difference was about the place of fasting, about the occupations which a Christian might follow, about marriage and remarriage, about flight during persecution, about what he considered the growing laxity of Church government, about the efficacy of paenitentia secunda and about similar matters. All this (in Tertullian's view) affected the relationship to God of the Christian, but not (except in so far as Tertullian taught the catechumens what lay ahead) the relationship of outsiders or of catechumens to God.

(A) DOCTRINE

Although Tertullian claimed in de monogamia that his teaching on the subject of marriage was regarded by the Catholics as heretical, and claimed in de ieiunio that the same charge was laid against his teaching about fasting, he nowhere made any corresponding complaint about attacks on his doctrinal beliefs; it was only later writers who accused the Montanists in general, and Tertullian in particular, of doctrinal^{al} error. (There is a useful list of such writers in Kurt Aland, Bemerkungen zum Montanismus und zur frühchristlichen Eschatologie, in Kirchengeschichtliche Entwürfe (Gütersloh: 1960) p 117.) That this is not an argument from silence is seen by consulting the contemporary cataloguers of heresies, who accepted Tertullian's orthodoxy of doctrine and who distinguished Montanists from other Christians because of their belief that the Holy Spirit had spoken through Montanus, Prisc(ill)a, and Maximilla, and because of the practical matters of Christian discipline which followed from accepting the "New Prophecy". This interpretation by the ancients has the support of many modern writers, whose views were

repentance after baptism

"On Monogamy" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

"On Fasting" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

Observations on Montanism and on Early Christian Eschatology, in Out-
lines of Church History (Book)

498

put as succinctly by Cruttwell as by any:-

His error was of discipline, not of faith: it estranged him, indeed, from the company of the orthodox, but no Father is more free from heresy. As a champion of Christian doctrine he stands second to none. On all the cardinal points he is not only at one with the Catholic view, but his statements of it are as accurate as those of any other Ante-Nicene writer.

Charles Thomas Cruttwell, A Literary History of Early Christianity, (London: Charles Griffin & Co., 1893), I., 554.

Although written over eighty years ago, the words quoted seem as accurate a statement of Tertullian's position of doctrine as many more recent statements, and considerably more concise! Tertullian himself consistently refuted the suggestion that the New Prophecy introduced novelties of doctrine and maintained that the Paraclete only confirmed its orthodoxy. As evidence of the reasonableness of his claim, it should be noted that all Tertullian's anti-heretical works except de praescriptione belong to his Montanist period, and even then he never seriously modified the teaching of that book.

In short, the Montanist Tertullian did not seek to innovate in any matter of doctrine. His concern was to uphold the regula fidei, which he accepted without question, defending it at all times as the inherited depositum of doctrinal truth, not susceptible of any alteration. If he found teaching in the Phrygian prophets which he could not accept - for example the place which they gave to women in the organisation of their Church - he did not adopt it. His contact with Montanism simply intensified his orthodoxy of doctrine, and the Montanist revelations, far from contradicting the traditional faith, supplied (he claimed) additional offensive and defensive ^margument.

(B) CHRISTIAN LIVING

Hac lege fidei manente cetera iam disciplinae et conuersationis

"On the Prescription of Heretics" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

Rule of Faith

deposit/trust

The rule of faith remaining stable, everything else, belonging to discipline and conduct,.

439

admittunt nouitatem correctionis, operante scilicet et proficiente us-
que in finem gratia Dei: ^{virg 1.4.23-25.} / Tertullian was attracted to Montanism more
 by the enforced rigour of its disciplinary system than by any theolo-
 gical doctrine which he learned from it. Accordingly, in relation to
 questions of Christian conduct and behaviour, his views were very much
 coloured by Montanism. For example, he no longer spoke in glowing
 terms, as in ad uxorem, of the beautiful fellowship of married believers
 - marriage was not unlawful, but it was not ideal, and it was better to
 be continent throughout life. Frequent fasting was enjoined, flight
 during persecution was forbidden, and Tertullian assigned a special,
 God-propitiating, significance to martyrdom. It was here that Tert-
 ullian was in danger of falling into error - in danger of regarding
 fasting as holiness, instead of a means to holiness, in danger of re-
 garding penance as intrinsically meritorious and as having its own
 efficacy for the remission of sin and restoration to the favour of God.
 Since however, all of this relates to the life-style of those who had
 accepted the Christian faith, its significance for this thesis is
 limited, although not altogether irrelevant in one respect.

As noted in chapter VII.1., Nisters made the suggestion that an
 unacceptably ascetic emphasis in Tertullian's regular instruction of
 the catechumens was the cause of the friction which led to his break
 with the Church. While there is no indication, as set out in para-
 graph (A) above, that Tertullian's teaching changed over the years on
 the basic doctrines governing the relationship of man to God, Tertull-
 ian's later emphasis on the discipline taught by the Paraclete must
 have altered the content of the choice which he put to the catechumens,
 on what the implications would be of their accepting the Christian
 faith - for example, on their expectation of marriage, on the nature
 and severity of fasting, on flight during persecution, and on the

... will admit of innovation through a kind of improvement, through which the grace of God works and progresses towards its end".

"To His Wife" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

occupations which a Christian could follow. To that extent, and to that extent only, his progression toward Montanism is relevant to his teaching of the relationship of catechumens to God.

(C) THE CHURCH

Tertullian's later writings reveal an increasingly bitter and antagonistic attitude toward the Catholic Church, whose members he had once addressed as 'brothers' but whom he came to think of only as 'psychici'. The more that he leaned toward Montanism, the more he contrasted the organised Church with the spiritual Church, the Church of the bishops with the Church of the Spirit. He and his followers began to form an ecclesiola in ecclesia, to whose group meetings he openly referred: Est hodie soror apud nos reuelationum charismata sortita - an 9.4.24-25. However, Tertullian's views on the episcopate, on the apostolate and on the work of the Holy Spirit, (the three main areas where his views altered over the years), must be passed over without so much as a mention here, because there is no indication of any basic change in his attitude to infants, to children, to adolescents or to non-Christians, in so far as their relationship to God was concerned, at the earlier and later stages of his Christian experience.

It is true that he would have endeavoured to initiate his catechumens into that exclusive and spiritual group to which he belonged, but even in his most extreme Montanist days, Tertullian regarded adherence to the Rule of Faith as an indispensable mark of a Christian - whether in the "psychic" Church or in the "spiritual" Church; indeed, he argued that the Montanists' adherence to the Rule proved they were not heretics. He himself was never excommunicated, although his arrogant attacks on the Catholic Church must have been, as St. Vincent of Lerins put it, (Common.18) a severe trial to the faithful. Critical in the extreme of the discipline in the Catholic Church, Tertullian

carnal/carnally minded

a small church with the church

There is now among us (Montanists) a sister who has been favoured with wonderful gifts of revelation

441

never refused to meet with the "psychics" in common assembly, nor did he refuse to participate in the Catholic Eucharist; many of the problems to which he devoted his attention, even as a Montanist, were as real within the Catholic community as within the Montanist. In short, his definition of the Church may have altered, but the necessity to accept basic doctrines and disciplines, to be baptised and to receive the Holy Spirit, were his requirements for salvation at all periods of his teaching ministry.

(D) PAENITENTIA PRIMA

It may seem unnecessary to include the question of paenitentia in this Excursus, because in the treatise de pudicitia, which is the Montanist work especially devoted to paenitentia, Tertullian was openly and avowedly attempting to transform the Church, not the outsider nor even the catechumen, into a community of saints. However, into the dispute between Catholics and Montanists about discipline there came the problem of the "Power of the Keys", and Tertullian modified some of his former ideas about the forgiveness of sin. He turned against both the "psychics" and his own earlier agreement with them, but he was not ashamed of his change of mind; as he put it in one of his pertinent sentences: Nemo proficiens erubescit - pud 1.12.49.

In Tertullian's Montanist work, certain sins were called irremissible, but this distinction of sins (some of which the Church could forgive and some of which were beyond her absolving power) was applied only to those who had sinned after baptism and so is not the concern of this thesis. As far as the relationship of the catechumen to God was concerned, there was no doctrinal difference between the Catholic teaching propounded in de paenitentia and the Catholic teaching attacked in de pudicitia. In the former, it was no part of Tertullian's purpose to emphasise the Church's part in paenitentia; in the

repentance before baptism

repentance

"On Modesty" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

no one blushes when he makes progress/improvement

"On Repentance" (one of Tertullian's treatises)

842

latter, he discussed in detail the extent to which the Church could effect reconciliation in the case of post-baptismal capital sins; but these are not the concern of any of the relationships explored in this study. Here (too) there was no material alteration in Tertullian's views, as a Montanist, relevant to the conclusions reached in the main thesis.

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NOTE REGARDING THE FINAL SEVEN PAGES

Submission of a Ph.D. thesis requires 'defending' it at a lengthy interview with the supervisor and an external examiner. At the conclusion of the interview, in the early summer of 1980, they expressed themselves satisfied and gave me a copy of two pages of notes which they had made while reading through it. These are appended.

I was flattered when Professor René Braun, Professor of Latin Language and Literature at the University of Nice, France, and a man whose writings on Tertullian I had greatly admired, asked for a full copy of the thesis. (I had sat next to him at a dinner at Oxford University shortly before the thesis was submitted, and although he could speak excellent English, he insisted that the conversation throughout the meal had to be, because of the Gallic phobia about their language being swamped by English, conducted in French.) His review of the thesis – the next two pages, with an English translation on the two pages following – was critical, but my supervisor (final page) thought the review was 'less than generous'.

Ian Balfour.

X 21 n. 3 - missing

X 108 n. 3 - series or periodical title missing?

118 nn. - pp. missing

145 Petré's point not quite taken - stress falls on pardon granted in response to prayer etc.

156 what does iniquisitis universitatis mean here? (When citing phrases like this, make sure that the component words are grammatically linked to one another: e.g. 381 - frontem signaculo.)

157 n. 1 - 'the basis of all original human religion' - not if this implies something innate or primitive rather than revelation to Moses.

158 did Clement reflect Neoplatonism, or Middle Platonism?

Aristotelian

180 A fourth-century date for Namphamo and co. is now generally accepted. The Scillitan martyrs were condemned and martyred at Carthage.

189 n. Frend has another article on Jews and Christians in third century Carthage in Paganisme, Judaïsme, Christianisme: Mélanges...M. Simon (1978)

253 Should this be Maximus of Turin? What did TLL mean by the Itala? Other lexicons of no help here?

271 'Tertullian's break with the Church'? I note that D. Powell, 'Tertullianists and Cataphrygians', VC 29(1975), 33-54 is not in your Bibliography.

306 Teeuwen ref. - check Bibliography

313 'Lent' - anachronistic

282 (and elsewhere): Dionysius of Halicarnassus, I take it?

376 n. 1 Nock's collected essays are now in print, ed. Zeph Stewart.

382 negative missing?

401-2 misreading of De Bapt. 17, which speaks about baptism, without the distinction you draw. (The use of 'confirmation' trails such a load of debris that it is best omitted wherever possible.)

436 ~~def~~ consequences

Some points for discussion:

64ff. - your interpretation of the crux in De anima 37:2 is not wholly clear to me after your discussion.

141ff./

- 141ff. - God as love, mercy, patience: the overall weight of this side of T.'s theo-logy is still open to question. I note that most of your quotes here are biblical material - is the restriction significant?
- 217f. - did T. use the tares and the wheat parable here?
- 253-4 - delictum, delinquentia - usage in Vetus Latina needs clarifying. These pages are rather condensed and obscure.
- 198, 261 etc. - how far might T.'s theological concepts reflect legal shaping even when legal terminology is not evident?
- 281ff. - reverential fear and/or fear of punishment? How does paterfamilias model relate to fear of punishment?
- 305, 328ff. - even if all elements of compensatio are not present, surely T.'s notion of God selling pardon on payment of penitence is remarkable?
- 343 - restriction to God the Father works well for most of the thesis but sounds a little odd at one or two points near the end. And no role for Logos (cf. Justin)?
- 381-3 - stipulatio: the question-and-answer baptismal confession ('Do you believe in...?' 'I believe') bears formal similarity, but almost certainly antedates T.
- 400 'grace opposed to nature, not to merit'

Bulletin Tertulien

BALFOUR (Ian Leslie Shaw), The relationship of man to God, from conception to conversion, in the writings of Tertullian ; - Thèse dactyl. de la Faculté de Théologie de l'Université d'Edimbourg (mars 1980), XVI + 460 p.

Etablir, de façon suivie et systématique, d'après l'oeuvre de Tertullien, la relation de l'homme à Dieu depuis le moment où ce théologien fait commencer la vie humaine, c'est-à-dire la conception, jusqu'à l'achèvement du baptême par la participation eucharistique, tel est le premier objet de cette thèse ; examiner si cette relation s'exprime, comme on l'a affirmé, selon le langage et les catégories du droit romain, tel en est le second. Même si l'on peut trouver un peu scolaire la technique d'annonces et de résumés observée dans chaque chapitre, on reconnaîtra le mérite de la clarté à cet ouvrage formé de trois grandes parties. La première couvre toute la vie fœtale et l'enfance, jusqu'à l'âge de 14 ans environ où Tertullien situe la fin de l'"innocence", avec la connaissance du bien et du mal liée à la sexualité (cf. An. 38,1) : sont notamment étudiés les problèmes du traducianisme, dont l'A. fait voir qu'il n'exclut pas une activité créatrice de Dieu dans la genèse de toute nouvelle vie, et du pédo-baptême, dont Tertullien demande le report avec une parfaite cohérence : le uitium originis n'est pas à proprement parler "péché originel", car l'essence du péché réside dans la désobéissance personnelle et consciente à la Loi divine. Analyse qui rejoint celle de P.F. Beatrice, Tradux peccati, Milan, 1978, pp.260-271 (cf. Chr. Tert. 1979, n°34), qui n'est pas connu de l'A. - La seconde partie porte sur l'adulte non chrétien, elle traite de la connaissance qu'il a de Dieu, de son libre arbitre et de sa responsabilité : on voit quels vastes problèmes sont abordés ici (connaissance naturelle et surnaturelle, rapports de la raison et de la révélation etc...). On ne s'étonnera pas que l'apport sur ces questions tant de fois débattues soit moins original. - Avec la troisième partie, consacrée à l'adulte chrétien, le lecteur retrouve la perspective chronologique : l'homme est suivi de son entrée dans le catéchuménat jusqu'à sa première eucharistie. Au fil de cette reconstitution descriptive sont évoqués, avec beaucoup de prudence et une information généralement sûre, d'importants problèmes de théologie baptismale et de liturgie.

.../...

Concernant le second objectif qu'il s'est fixé, l'A. aboutit à un constat négatif : ou Tertullien s'oppose à des notions de droit romain (ainsi pour l'embryon qu'il considère comme homo alors qu'il est réputé mulieris portio par la loi civile) ou, s'il lui arrive d'utiliser des termes juridiques, c'est en leur donnant un sens large et non technique : ainsi pour compensatio et pour satisfactio (sur ce dernier terme n'est pas connue la tentative "juridicisante" de M. Brück, Remugtum bei Tertullian, dans Vig. Christ. 29, 1975, pp.276-280 ; cf. nos observations critiques dans Chr. Tert. 1975, n° 5). Il arrive aussi que certains usages où l'on a prétendu voir la marque du juridisme de Tertullien, sont en fait reçus de la tradition chrétienne : ainsi pour delictum, plus fréquent chez lui que peccatum, et qui proviendrait de la Vetus Latine des Epîtres pauliniennes. Pour intéressants que soient ces résultats, ils ne sont pas entièrement neufs, du moins en France. Dès 1962, à la suite de H. Finé, nous avons attiré l'attention sur le mirage "harrackien" d'un panjuridisme terminologique de Tertullien (cf. Deus Christ. p.18 et n.3). L'étude de J.C. Fredouille sur praescriptio, désormais classique, est allée dans le même sens. Depuis, même des connaisseurs du droit romain comme R. Martini (cf. Chr. Tert. 1976, n° 15) et J. Gaudemet (cf. Chr. Tert. 1978, n° 17) dont les travaux ne sont pas cités - ont multiplié les réserves sur les connaissances juridiques du Carthaginois et sur l'application qu'il en a pu faire dans le domaine théologique.

Pour terminer, voici quelques observations au fil du texte : P.61 : il faut retirer des testimonia sur l'avortement le passage de Nat. I, 15, 8 concernant les fellatores (cf. A. Schneider, Le premier livre de l'Ad Nationes de Tertullien, Rome, 1968, p.272) . P. 69-72 : la discussion sur An. 37, 2 n'emporte pas la conviction et, comme J.H. Waszink l'a bien vu, Tertullien ici s'est laissé influencer par la distinction de la LXX à Ex. 21, 22-23 entre ἐκγονίμνος, et ἢ ἐξ ἐκγονίμνου, même s'il ne fait pas la distinction que lui prête Dölger, entre ζῶον et homo . - P.86 s. : sur la mortalité infantile, il faut se référer aux conclusions prudentes de J.E. Lasserre, Vie du peuplement et mouvements de population dans l'Afrique romaine (- 146 à + 235), Paris, 1977, pp. 560 . - P.138-139 : on regrette que, parmi les désignations des "païens", n'ait pas été compris ingratus (cf. TLL VII, 1, c.1562, 1. s., où sont donnés plusieurs exemples de Tertullien, et C. Moussey, Gratia et sa famille, Paris, 1966, p.187 et p.192) . - P.188-189 :

.../...

sur les rapports avec le judaïsme, il faut renvoyer à la thèse de C. Aziza (cf. Chr. Tert. 1977, n° 23) . - P. 282-285 : cette analyse, très juste, où le rôle de Dieu dans la pénitence et la vie chrétienne est rapproché, non du modèle judiciaire, mais du modèle fourni par le paterfamilias, doit faire référence à l'importante étude qu'a consacrée à la même conception chez Lactance A. Wlosck, Laktanz und die philosophische Gnosis, Heidelberg, 1960, pp. 232-246 .

R. B.

BALFOUR (Ian Leslie Shaw), The relationship of man to God, from conception to conversion, in the writings of Tertullian

- Typescript thesis presented to the Faculty of Divinity of the University of Edinburgh (March 1980), XVI + 460 p.

To determine in a continuous and systematic fashion, in the light of Tertullian's work, the relationship between man and God from the time when this theologian reckons life starts, that is, at the time of conception until the completion of baptism by participation in the eucharist, such is the first aim of this thesis; to examine whether this relationship is expressed - as has been said - in terms of the language and categories of Roman Law, is its second aim. Even if one can consider as somewhat laboured the technique observed in each chapter of headings and summaries, one must allow the merit of clarity to this work made up of three main parts. The first one covers the entire foetal life and childhood, until the age of approximately 14, a stage which Tertullian considers to be the end of 'innocence' with the knowledge of good and evil linked with sexuality (cf An. 38,1): in particular the author studies the problems of traduciamism showing that it does not exclude a creative activity of God in the genesis of each new life. He also studies the problems of pedobaptism, the deferment of which Tertullian calls for with perfect consistency; the uitium originis is not properly speaking original sin, for the essence of sin resides in personal and conscious disobedience to the Divine Law. This analysis chimes with that of P.F. Beatrice Tradux peccati Milan 1978, pp. 260-271 (cf. Chr. Tert. 1979 no 34) unknown to the Author.

The second part is concerned with the non Christian adult, it deals with the knowledge he has of God, of his free will and his responsibility: it can be seen what vast problems are touched upon here (natural and supernatural knowledge, relationship between reason and revelation etc...). It will not be found surprising that the Author's contribution to these problems so often discussed should be less original.

In the third part devoted to the adult Christian the chronological perspective is resumed from the time of his catechumanate until his first eucharist. As this descriptive reconstitution develops with much prudence and generally sound information important problems of baptismal theology and of liturgy are brought up.

As for the Author's second objective, he comes to a negative conclusion: either Tertullian takes his stand against notions of Roman Law (for instance for the embryo which he considers as homo even though it is considered as mulieris portio by civil law) or else, if he sometimes uses juridicial terms, he takes them in a broad and non-technical sense: e.g. for compensatio

and satisfactio (concerning this latter term the Author is not aware of the "juridicizing" argument of Mr. Brück's : "Genugtuung bei Tert. (satisfaction/gratification)" in Christ. 29,1975,pp.276-280; cf. our critical observations in Chr. Tert. 1975 no. 5). There are also cases where certain usages in which the mark of Tertullian's juridicism has been claimed are in fact inherited from the Christian tradition: as for instance delictum more frequently found in his writings than peccatum, and the origin of which might be the Vetus Lati of the Pauline Epistles. However interesting these findings may be, they are not entirely new, at least in France.

As early as 1962, following H. Finé, we drew attention to the "harnackian" mirage of a terminological panjuridicism in Tertullian (cf. Deus Christ p. 18 and n.3). J.C. Fredouille's now classic study of praescriptio points in the same direction. Since then, even experts in Roman Law like R. Martini (cf. Chr. Tert. 1976, no. 15) and J. Gaudemet (cf. Chr. Tert. 1978 no. 17) whose writings are not quoted, have expressed many reservations concerning the juridical knowledge of the Carthaginian and the possible use he makes of it in the theological field.

Finally, some observations made while reading the text: P. 61 one should remove from the testimonia on abortion the passage of Nat I,15,8 dealing with the fellatores (cf. A. Schneider, le premier livre de l'Ad Nationes de Tertullien, (the first book about); Rome, 1968,p.272); ps. 69-72: the discussion on An 37,2 is not convincing and as H.W. Waszink has correctly pointed out, Tertullian has allowed himself to be influenced here by the distinction made by the LXX at Ex. 21,22.23 between ἐξ κοινῆς and ἐξ ἐξικονίου, even if he does not actually differentiate, as Dölger makes him do, between zōr and homo ; p.86 s.: about infantile mortality, it is essential to refer to the prudent conclusions of L.M. Lassère: Ubique populus, Peuplement et Mouvements de Population dans l'Afrique romaine (Peopling and Movements of the Population in Roman Africa) -146a + 235 -, Paris, 1977, pp. 560; ps.138-139: one regrets that among the designations of the "pagans" the word ingratus has not been included (cf. TLL VII,1,c,1562,l.s.) where several examples are given from Tertullian and C. Moussy Gratin and his family, Paris, 1966,p.187 and p. 192); ps. 188-189 on the links with judaism reference should be made to the thesis of C. Aziza (cf. Tert. 1977, no.23); ps. 282-285 this analysis which is very accurate, where God's part in penitence and in Christian living is likened not to the judicial model but to the model provided by the paterfamilias , should refer to the important study dealing with the same notion in Lactantius by A. Wlosck. Laktanz und die philosophische Gnosis (Lactantius and the philosophical gnosis). Heidelberg.1960. pp. 232-246.

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9th August, 1982.

Dr. Ian Balfour,
38 Murrayfield Road,
Edinburgh, EH12 6ET.

Dear Ian,

Thank you for letting me see the reply from *Études Augustiniennes* about your thesis. The review must be by Braun (cf. the reference to 'our' Deus Christianorum). It strikes me as a little less than generous. A few bibliographical omissions are not unexpected and not unpardonable. I suspect he is evaluating the thesis more in terms of a French thesis, which would be produced at a somewhat more senior level. Georges Folliet's letter is more appreciative but Braun's review will appear in print and may influence others' assessment of the work. Another possibility might be the Théologie Historique series published by Beauchesne of Paris, but perhaps you should turn westwards. The Scholars Press of Chico, California (formerly Missoula, Montana) publishes many theses, and there are one or two other possibilities, such as the Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 99 Brattle St., Cambridge, Mass. 02138. This issues a Patristic Monograph Series. Pittsburgh has something comparable, I believe. Much depends how keen you are to pursue the possibility of publication as a whole, which would almost certainly involve some rewriting, probably reduction in size. You might want to pursue Folliet's suggestion and carve out sections (more than he indicates) for periodical articles. We could discuss this in more detail some time if you wanted.

Best wishes,

David Wright

met

P.S. Another avenue you might try is Brill of Leiden - very expensive but publishing a lot of highly academic volumes.