

TERTULLIAN AND THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

I. Tertullian – Originator of the Trinity

Tertullian's Legend

At the end of the second century there were three main centers of church organization – in Antioch, in Alexandria, and in Rome. The language used in the church writings was Greek. But the situation was soon to be changed; due to the writings of Tertullian, Carthage, his city, and Latin, his language, were to gain prominence and give rise to a Latin Christianity.¹ Though Tertullian (ca 170-ca 230) is the most important Christian writer² in the development of Christian doctrine, he was not mentioned during the third century. He inspired, however, other writers in Africa: Minucius Felix (fl. second half of the second century), Cyprian (200-258), Arnobius of Sicca (fl. ca 300), Lactantius (ca 240-ca 320), and the first Italian theologian who wrote in Latin, Novatian (210-280), whose *De Trinitate*³ is just a repetition of Tertullian's treatise. Novatian's treatise was written in 257 and probably in reaction to the doctrine of Sabellius (fl. ca 215) which he began to propound shortly before. Even today Tertullian's importance is not fully recognized. Adolf von Harnack (1851-1930), a preeminent German theologian, writes:

When the Nicene formulary is praised, it is always of Athanasius that we think; when the Chalcedonian decree is cited, it is the name of Leo the Great that is magnified. But that Tertullian is in reality the father of the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity and of the Person of Christ, and that in the whole patristic literature there is no treatise that can be compared in importance and influence with the tract "*Against Praxeas*" it has necessarily been left to the investigation of our own day to exhibit.⁴

We do not know much about Tertullian, and what we know is primarily from his own writings.⁵ We know that Septimius Tertullianus⁶ lived during the reigns of Emperor Septimius Severus (193-211) and his son Caracalla (211-217) in Carthage, and was probably born ca 170. He was brought up in a Hellene family and we have no account of when he became a Christian. His last work can be dated with certainty to the year 212, so it can be deduced that he died shortly afterwards, probably ca 230. In the Middle Ages his name, without any justification, was augmented to Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus. Tertullian spent most if not all his life in Carthage where Apuleius of Madauros (ca 124-ca 170) also wrote.⁷ Apuleius was famous and older, an important figure in Carthage as the provincial priest of Isis and Osiris, a barrister, poet, and historian. He was also a Platonic philosopher and a critic of the Christian movement, and consequently disliked by Augustine.⁸

Table 1

Suggested chronology of Tertullian's writings⁹	
All Tertullian's literary works come from the period 196-207 C.E.	
Year C.E.	Titles
<i>196 or 197</i>	<i>De Spectaculis</i>
	<i>De Idolatria</i>
	<i>De Cultu Feminarum II</i>
<i>197</i>	<i>Ad Nationes</i>
	<i>Adversus Judaeos</i>
<i>197 to 198</i>	<i>Ad Martyras</i>
	<i>Apologeticum</i>
	<i>De Testimonio Animae</i>
<i>between 198 and 203</i>	<i>De Baptismo</i>
	<i>De Oratione</i>
	<i>De Paenitentia</i>
	<i>De Patientia</i>
	<i>Ad Uxorem</i>
<i>203</i>	<i>De Praescriptione Haereticorum</i>
<i>203 or 204</i>	<i>Scorpiace</i>
<i>204 to 205</i>	<i>Adversus Hermogenem</i>
<i>205</i>	<i>De Pallio</i>

<i>205 to 206</i>	<i>De Cultu Feminarum I</i>
<i>206</i>	<i>De Carne Christi</i>
<i>206 to 207</i>	<i>Adversus Valentinianos</i>
	<i>De Anima</i>
	<i>De Resurrectione Mortuorum</i>
<i>between 207 and 208</i>	<i>Adversus Marcionem</i>
<i>208</i>	<i>De Corona Militis</i>
<i>208 to 209</i>	<i>De Exhortatione Castitatis</i>
	<i>De Fuga in Persecutione</i>
	<i>De Virginibus Velandis</i>
<i>210 to 211</i>	<i>Adversus Praxean</i>
	<i>De Monogamia</i>
	<i>De Jejunio</i>
	<i>De Pudicitia</i>
<i>212</i>	<i>Ad Scapulam</i>

Through the centuries, scholars and religious writers repeated the erroneous legend about Tertullian created by Eusebius of Caesarea (263-339) and Jerome (345-440). This legend was discredited by exhaustive studies conducted by Timothy David Barnes.¹⁰ It will be useful to summarize briefly his arguments.

Eusebius reported in his *History of the Church*, written sometime between 309 and 326, that Tertullian was “an expert on Roman law and famous on other grounds – in fact one of the most brilliant men in Rome.”¹¹ There is no evidence whatsoever that he has ever been in Rome, though it is likely that he visited this city.¹² Eusebius knew only Tertullian's *Apologeticum* and since Tertullian often cites Roman law, e.g., one statute that in Rome no one could be regarded as a god unless he had been approved by the Senate, Eusebius probably drew his conclusion. Tertullian may have been educated in Rome but he spent the greater part of his life in Carthage where he was, as Cassiodorus (487-580), a Christian senator correctly points out, a teacher of rhetoric, a Christian sophist, and that he belonged to the same literary circles as Apuleius. Tertullian's enormous erudition and his thorough classical education in which rhetoric was the queen of subjects, point unmistakably to this

conclusion.¹³

Eusebius made a total of five references to Tertullian's treatise.¹⁴ He had an extremely limited knowledge or none at all of the Latin writers. Legend also has it that Tertullian composed two legal textbooks *De castrensi peculio* and six volumes of *Quaestiones*¹⁵ which are cited in the *Digest* and *Institutions* of Justinian¹⁶ as authored by a certain “jurist” Tertullianus. The surviving fragments¹⁷ give little information on their scope. The law relative to *castrense peculium* originated with Augustus and dealt with the acquisitions during service that a soldier could claim as his own. No conclusion can be made as to the date of these laws. The other book, *Quaestiones*, deals with a series of problems unrelated to the previous legal issues. For the chronology it is important to note that one of the opinions of the jurist Tertullian is cited by Ulpian who, under the rule of Caracalla, wrote a verbal opinion from Sextus Pomponius. So it was deduced that the jurist Tertullian was the pupil of Pomponius and thus born ca 150. But nobody ever established any connection between the jurist and the Christian writer. They may have been contemporaries and Eusebius might have thought that they were one person. Knowledge of law was not an exclusive prerogative of jurisconsultants, it was rather a general need for any public speaking, and ancient education in oratory required knowledge of law. All Latin writers were knowledgeable of the law and made use of it. There were thus probably two contemporaries – the jurist Tertullianus who may have been a disciple of Pomponius and was born ca 150, and the Christian writer, who was a Christian sophist and rhetorician in Carthage, born ca 170. The treatise *Ad uxorem*¹⁸ suggests that Tertullian was already a Christian when he married a Christian wife. Eusebius probably heard of the jurist and confused him with the Christian writer. Moreover, many scholars emphasize that Tertullian's legal terminology influenced his theological statements and cite this as evidence of his being a jurist. However, Lactantius¹⁹ makes no comment on Tertullian's legal knowledge. If he were a jurist he would know that there was no *lex senatus consultum* or imperial decree

prescribing Christianity as illegal, yet he acknowledges that Christians were treated differently and even speaks of a law against them.²⁰

Eusebius wrote his history in a triumphant period for Christianity when it gained the upper hand due to support from Emperor Constantine and followed the general tendency among the early Christian writers to exalt Christians as known figures and of high social standing. The facts contradict this assumption – jurists were impervious to Christianity and the Roman Senate was largely “pagan” even in the fourth century.²¹

Eusebius knew only Tertullian's *Apologeticum* which was probably poorly translated into Greek. Eusebius also claimed that Tertullian was supposed to have addressed his *Apologeticum* to the Senate in Rome,²² but Eusebius deduced this erroneous conclusion from the introduction to the *Apology* where Tertullian addresses the magistrates governing Carthage as: “Rulers of the Roman Empire, if, seated for the administration of justice in your lofty tribunal, under the gaze of every eye, and occupying there all but the highest position in that state,...” (*Si non licet uobis, Romani imperii antistites, in aperto et edito, in ipso fere uertice civitatis praesidentibus ad iudicandum, palam dispicere et coram examinare, quid sit liquido in causa Christianorum*).²³

Among other Christian writers Lactantius does not recognize Tertullian as a jurist or a priest.²⁴ The presumed legal knowledge of Tertullian leaves much to be desired. Tertullian often used legal terminology and legal language to formulate theological concepts, but he was often mistaken. For example, there was no *lex, senatus consultum* or imperial decree proscribing Christianity as illegal.²⁵ Yet Tertullian never makes a point of it. Although both Christians and criminals were tried by the same legal process, the punishment of common criminals was originally laid down by law while that of Christians was not. Though it would be a good legal point, Tertullian does not make an argument of it but contends that Christians are not in the same category as other criminals because they are treated differently by the

magistrate.²⁶ In a passage in *Apology* he even speaks of laws against Christians.²⁷ He does not know about the various punishments meted out against Christians which were the subject of a chapter in the seventh book of Ulpian's *De Officio Proconsularis*.²⁸ He is basically ignorant of Roman law and his knowledge derives only from his personal experience and literature. Tertullian probably adopted in his *Apology* the texts written by previous apologists²⁹ and added facts from Tacitus or Pliny.

The next writer who left an account of Tertullian's life is Jerome (345-420) in his *De Viris Illustribus* written ca 392-393:

Tertullian the presbyter, now regarded as chief of the Latin writers after Victor and Apollonius, was from the city of Carthage in the province of Africa, and was the son of a *centurion proconsularis*. He possessed a sharp and vigorous talent, and flourished in the reign of the emperor Severus and Antoninus Caracalla. He wrote many volumes which I shall omit because they are well known. I myself saw a certain Paul, an old man of Concordia [which is a town in Italy], who, while he himself was a very young man had been secretary to the blessed Cyprian who was already advanced in age. He said that he himself had seen how Cyprian was accustomed never to pass a day without reading Tertullian, and that he frequently said to him: 'Give me the master,' meaning by this, Tertullian. He was presbyter of the church until middle life, afterwards driven by the envy and abuse of the clergy of the Roman church, he lapsed to the doctrine of Montanus, and mentions the new prophecy in many of his books. Moreover, directly against the church, he composed the volumes: *On Modesty, On Persecution, On Fast, On Monogamy*; six books *On Ecstasy*, and a seventh which he wrote against Apollonius. He is said to have lived to a decrepit old age, and to have composed

many small works, which are not extant.³⁰

According to Jerome, the first Christian to be distinguished in the Latin letters was Seneca.³¹ Jerome included him there because of Seneca's spurious correspondence with Paul which was reportedly widely read.³² The next two writers in Latin in Jerome's catalogue, in fact, wrote in Greek: Victor, bishop of Rome (ca 189-ca 195),³³ and Apollonius, who, according to Jerome, was to have been a senator in Rome during the reign of Commodus (180-193).³⁴ Apollonius, betrayed by a slave, obtained leave to prepare a defense which he read in the Senate, but was condemned and beheaded.³⁵ Jerome copied the words of Eusebius but he inferred from Eusebius's text that Apollonius was a Senator, because he was tried by the Senate. But Eusebius implies that Apollonius was not a senator, rather he was famous for his learning and philosophy.

Jerome's is the only testimony that Tertullian was a priest. This legend was probably based on Jerome's misreading of Tertullian's treatises which are cast in the form of sermons. But Tertullian never asserted that he was a priest; on the contrary, he twice classifies himself as a layman.³⁶ We know that he was a Christian ca 185 as he classified himself as a lay person and married, as indicated in his *Ad uxorem*.³⁷ But Tertullian had a detailed knowledge of the proceedings of the church against Marcion and Valentinus.³⁸ In view of Tertullian's importance to the development of Christian dogma, we can understand why it is so difficult psychologically to admit that Tertullian was not a priest.

As to Tertullian's father's title, "*centurio proconsularis*," Barnes proves that it had never been attested in any rank in the Roman military. No centurion was a *centurio proconsularis* nor did any *centurio* anywhere ever bear the title "*proconsularis*." The legend was probably created by Jerome's misreading of a passage in Tertullian's *Apology* (9.2) where the expression "*patriae nostrae*" Jerome misread as "*patris nostri*." Thus there is no valid evidence that Tertullian's father was a soldier.³⁹

Tertullian himself implied that he was in Carthage during the reign of Septimius Severus (193-211) and Caracalla (193-217) and that he lapsed into Montanism in middle age. But Jerome is silent on the existence of the supposed contemporary sect of Tertullianistae. The sect which appeared in the fourth century had no connection with Tertullian. It was of Carthaginian origin, gained rapid adhesions in Rome, and was patronized by the usurper Magnus Maximus. The sect soon vanished when its surviving members in Carthage rejoined the Catholics and surrendered their basilica to Bishop Aurelius after a spectacular conversion in 388.⁴⁰

There is no evidence in history of Tertullianistae before 388 and there is no connection between the Tertullianistae and Tertullian except the name. Tertullian passed his life in constant rebellion against his father, the church, and finally the Montanists and awaited the promised *parousia* in virtual isolation.⁴¹ Augustine and Praedestinatus claimed to know that Tertullian founded the sect after quarreling with the Montanists.⁴² It is most probable that Augustine associated the Montanist party in Africa with the name of Tertullian. Both Augustine and Praedestinatus simply inferred from the name of the sect a connection with Tertullian. It is also possible that the Tertullianistae were simply the Montanist party in Africa.

Tertullian and Montanism

We have an account of the origin of the movement given by an anonymous writer, a contemporary of Montanus, which was preserved by Eusebius.⁴³ Montanus, presumably a converted priest of Cybele, began his prophecies in the Phrygian region of Mysia in Asia Minor, somewhere around the years 150-160.⁴⁴ The anonymous writer, associated somehow with the Bishop Apolinarius of Hierapolis,⁴⁵ said that a recent convert to Christianity, Montanus, in a village called Ardabau in Phrygia, “was filled with spiritual excitement and suddenly fell into a kind of trance and unnatural ecstasy.” These prophecies appeared rather on the background of natural disasters occurring at that time such as the plague and earthquakes. Christians, however, expected the second coming and the New Jerusalem in a millenarian movement.⁴⁶

The movement's name derived from the name of its first prophet and leader, Montanus, but the adherents of the movement called it "Prophecy." The opponents labeled it "New Prophecy." The movement spread rapidly to Antioch of Syria, Thrace, Gaul, Carthage, Alexandria, the capital of the Empire, Rome.

The evaluation of Montanists, the so-called "Cathaphryges," and the "Phrygian heresy," varies among the exegetes. All exegetes agree, however, that they were orthodox in all matters of Christian doctrine. Only in the fourth century were they accused of an error on theological grounds based on the anachronistic interpretation of Montanus's utterances.⁴⁷

According to Eusebius the devil possessed Montanus and incited him to pronounce ecstatic prophecies. Also his two women followers Priscilla (or Prisca) and Maximilla were pronouncing prophecies. After some deliberation the mainstream churches in Asia declared these prophecies not to be of divine origin.⁴⁸ Montanists were now accused of all kinds of transgressions. The anonymous writer claimed that they were no better than the Gnostics and accused them of deliberately avoiding martyrdom. He stated that not a single Montanist has ever suffered for the faith.⁴⁹ These charges were false, but they were repeated by Apollonius and believed by Eusebius.

According to Eusebius Christians looked approvingly at the Montanists. Even, as Eusebius relates, Christian in Gaul sent Irenaeus, who was at that time presbyter in the church of Lyon, with a letter to the bishop of Rome, Eleutherus (174-189), asking him to take a positive stand toward them.⁵⁰ His successor, Victor (ca 189-199), recognized the prophecies of Prisca and Maximilla as genuine utterances of the Holy Spirit⁵¹ and at first recommended acceptance of their congregations in Asia Minor and in Phrygia into the fellowship of the forming Catholic church. The church in Rome accepted the Montanists in 203,⁵² but eventually the bishop of Rome changed his mind under the influence of Praxeas, favors were reversed, and suppression began.⁵³

Tertullian became a follower of Montanus adopting his mystical and ascetic principles. Later, Augustine even created the legend that Tertullian founded the aforementioned Tertullianistae as his own sect. Tertullian became recognized as a “heretic” and Montanist only in the Middle Ages beginning in the fourth century⁵⁴ because he became inconvenient to the growing domination, accumulation of wealth, and tyranny of the totalitarian church. His criticism confirms what the Hellene writers were also saying about the Christian church.⁵⁵ Though he was classified as a “heretic,” his influence could not be avoided. Cyprian, for example, never mentions Tertullian, though he studied him diligently.

Jerome deduced that Tertullian remained orthodox in his beliefs and loyal to the established ecclesiastical hierarchy until middle age when he became a Montanist and began to criticize the church.⁵⁶ Jerome could not have any indication as to the age of Tertullian, but there is a certain progression in Tertullian’s theological development that is also seen in his writings.⁵⁷ Tertullian’s reaction was the result of his critical view of the evolving church and its doctrines. The accusation of being a Montanist was an easy excuse to ostracize Tertullian because he did not deviate in any dogmatic sense; on the contrary, he developed the fundamental dogma for the evolving post-Nicaean Christianity.

According to Jerome, Tertullian lapsed into Montanism as a result of envy and insults from the Roman clergy: “invidia et contumeliis clericorum Romanae ecclesiae.” It seems, however, that Jerome projected on Tertullian his own problems with the church.⁵⁸ Tertullian never broke with the church; rather he expressed criticism of the church’s deviation from the Christian moral and doctrinal principles, and the presumed change in his doctrine reflected the evolution of his own feelings and views.

Tertullian recognized this prophecy⁵⁹ as being in accordance with the promise of the scripture⁶⁰ and claimed that Catholics – those representing the dominant Christian beliefs – were wrong in denying the New Prophecy and refusing to accept

the Holy Spirit.⁶¹ Montanists became officially condemned in Rome by the bishop of Rome, Zephyrinus (199-217), and in Antioch in Asia Minor under the bishop of Antioch, Serapion (190-211), and became designated as a heresy.⁶² The New Prophecy encouraged readiness to embrace martyrdom and discouraged flight in persecution. It is debatable, however, whether Montanists actively sought martyrdom. Montanists survived until the sixth century when they were finally systematically persecuted by Bishop John of Ephesus (507-589) who ordered burning of their churches and writings.⁶³

Irenaeus in his own writings seems to support the Montanists against those who rejected the Gospel of John. Other church Fathers such as Hippolytus and Epiphanius confirmed their orthodoxy concerning the view of God, Christ, and resurrection. It is probable, however, that there were around the year 200 two branches of Montanists, one in Rome and the second in Asia Minor. The second branch held the modalistic view of God according to the doctrine of Noetus and Sabellius that God himself was born, suffered, and died just as the Son.⁶⁴

The reason for the appearance of prophecies is related to the rural character of the region where there were many Jewish settlers, a Jewish rural diaspora, descendants of the colonists brought there by Antiochus III ca 200 B.C.E. Christianity here originating from the Jewish synagogue, could thus preserve the original prophetic and apocalyptic character not spoiled by the Greek intellectual doctrines. The prophecies of Montanus would thus represent the revival of the synoptic gospel doctrine of the coming Kingdom⁶⁵ and Montanism is regarded as a reaction to the growing organization and power of episcopal government.⁶⁶ Montanists considered the mainstream Christians to be “prophet slayers.”⁶⁷

Some later Motanists fervently expected the imminent coming of the end and the New Jerusalem. Scholars linked this expectation with the chiliastic emphases. It seems that Montanists waited to see the beginning of the millenarian kingdom in the form of a Heavenly Jerusalem descending on the town of Phrygia, Pepuza.⁶⁸ But this

Montanist eschatology is reconstructed after Tertullian. Montanists knew, however, about chiliastic speculations since they employed the *Apocalypse of John* and probably the *Fourth Book of Ezra*.⁶⁹ Linkage to Pepuza was done because this town was known to later anti-Montanist writers as the birthplace of the earliest Montanist prophets.

The New Prophecy was based on the scriptural statement “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate [Paraclete], to be with you forever” (John 14:16-17) and is as believable as any other prophecy accepted by the church. The church, however, detected in it a threat to its exclusive economic and ideological monopoly and power.⁷⁰ The other problem the anonymous writer had with the Montanists was that he could not agree that they had as many martyrs as the orthodox Catholics. In any case, he cannot recognize the claim to martyrdom as proof of possessing the true faith: “some of the other heretical sects have an immense number of martyrs; but this is surely no reason why we should approve of them or acknowledge that they have the truth.”⁷¹ Other writers who are quoted by Eusebius as opponents of the Montanists are: Miltiades,⁷² one of the first Apologists, author of several lost treatises (*The Greeks Answered*, *The Jews Answered*, *Defense Before the Rulers of this World*), and a Christian writer, Apollonius,⁷³ who refuted “the fraudulent character of their ‘prophecies.’” As reported by Eusebius, Apollonius in his treatise written thirty nine years after Montanus began his mission, accused the Montanists of the dissolution of marriage and laying down the laws of fasting, renaming Pepuza, a small town in Phrygia,⁷⁴ as Jerusalem in order that they could be saved at the imminent second coming, and of appointing special agents to collect money and gifts as “offerings.”⁷⁵

Though the original sources of the Montanist writings did not survive, some of their contents are attested in traces left in the extant anti-Montanist writings. It seems that in the early stage of their development they disallowed marriage. Priscilla and Maximilla divorced their husbands after prophecies.⁷⁶ The Montanists valued

celibacy and did not accept a second marriage after divorce or the death of one's spouse. Such strict ascetic rigors were common among Christians.

Montanism was one of the few second-century Christian movements in which women occupied a prominent and visible role.⁷⁷ The prophetic proclamations of both Priscilla and Maximilla often led to an attempt to exorcise the spirit the exorcists believed to be effective in these women.⁷⁸ Montanism was an egalitarian movement which is confirmed by preserved inscriptions and by Epiphanius who stated that among Montanist groups women were ordained as clergy and women acted as presbyters and bishop, and that this was based on the New Testament text.⁷⁹ Firmilian, bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia (d. 269), in his letter to Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, (martyred in 258), reported that Montanist women baptized and administered eucharist.⁸⁰ This free access to positions of leadership for women in the Montanist movement derives from the emphasis on prophecy. For prophecy was a legitimate function for women according to traditional Jewish and Christian understanding.

The other aspect of differences between the Montanists and the mainstream Christian movement was the manner in which churches operated. Apollonius states that Montanists paid salaries to those who proclaimed the word in the churches. The money was collected at offerings by specially appointed tax gatherers.⁸¹ Apollonius is indignant about this practice. In the mainstream Christian churches the leader was often the one in whose house the Christian group gathered and who was responsible for the financial aspect and spiritual activities and who was often a wealthy patron. Montanists reversed this tradition and their leaders came from the poor countryside. Thus Montanist churches became independent of the control exerted by the mainstream leaders. They became a challenge to large city churches which were led by the wealthy individuals.

All this challenged the power of the ecclesiastical hierarchy and was the reason for the Montanists' persecution and eventual extermination.

Tertullian was disappointed with the church and could not accept its teaching that the Holy Spirit would not communicate with one who believed in the Gospels. He tried to persuade the Catholics that only belief in the New Prophecy could give one courage to face martyrdom, and only a Montanist could be a true Christian.⁸² Tertullian in his impatience despaired of convincing others and used violent invectives. According to him, the recognition of the Paraclete separated the true believers from the disbelievers – the so called “*psychici*,” men of the soul, materialists, or men of the flesh.⁸³ He resolved now to be critical taking as a motto the words of Speratus, the Scillitan: “In a cause so just there is no deliberation.” The function of the Holy Spirit in individual believers and the autonomy of their relations with God became a similar issue during the Reformation in the sixteenth century.

Tertullian never left the church.⁸⁴ On the contrary he was one of the first Christian writers who opposed a growing tendency in the church in the second century, namely, the establishment of a rigid and dogmatic hierarchical structure where the bishops became the central figures imposing the doctrines, the style of operation, and had absolute power in controlling the thought and behavior of the members of the church. Individual enthusiasm and communion with God became inconvenient for the bishops and a threat to their domination. Tertullian was the first who noticed this distortion of religiosity and dared to protest when he emphasized that the church is not a consortium of bishops but a manifestation of the Holy Spirit: “*Ecclesia spiritus per spiritalem hominem, non ecclesia numerus episcoporum.*”⁸⁵ Tertullian, for example, vehemently opposed the church’s usurpation of power to remit and forgive sins as unscriptural.⁸⁶ Tertullian’s criticism coincided with that of the Hellenes.

Irenaeus indicated that the Montanists objected to the use of the portion of the Gospel (John 14:16) where Jesus promised to send the Paraclete.⁸⁷ They maintained that the Holy Spirit was still speaking to men in the New Prophecies and visions as was promised long ago. As a Montanist Tertullian maintained that Catholics

committed a sin by quarrelling with the Paraclete and refusing to accept the New Prophecy of the Spirit.⁸⁸

Tertullian's other writings were received with abuse and condemnation in subsequent centuries when a rigid hierarchical chain of command in dogmatic matters was established in the church.

Barnes cites eight types of expressions or ideas found in Tertullian's writings which indicate his Montanist beliefs: 1. Referring to Montanus, Priscilla or Maximilla, and the appeal to the oracles uttered by them; 2. Introducing the New Prophecy or rebutting the charges against it; 3. Commending the ecstatic state; 4. Mentioning spiritual gifts possessed only by the Montanists; Describing the Holy Spirit as a paraclete; 5. Identifying things and persons with Montanist; 6. Separating himself from the things described as "Catholic" Christian; 7. Denigrating the "Catholics" as "psychici."

Twelve treatises *in toto* were classified as containing expressions of his Montanist views and four as particularly colored by them: 206/207, *Adversus Valentinianos, De Anima, De Resurrectione Mortuorum*; 207/208, *Adversus Marcionem*, 208, *De Corona Militis*; 208/209, *De Virginibus Velandis, De Exhortatione Castitatis, De Fuga in Persecutione*; 210/211, *Adversus Praxean, De Monogamia, De Jejunio, De Pudicitia*.

Early Christians and Carthaginian Environment

Carthage was invaded by the Romans in 146 B.C.E., restored since 28 B.C.E., and became a thriving center where the new religion was tolerated for a long time. All religions coexisted in the city and we know that Jews and Christians even had a common cemetery. Nothing is known about Christianity in Carthage before Tertullian's writings or about its origin though many theories abound.⁸⁹ It probably arrived in North Africa late in the second century, and increasing evidence points to the fact that it originated in the Jewish community. Though Judaism and Christianity or rather Messianism seem to have separated in Palestine during the years of the

Jewish war of 66-73, this is not necessarily so in other parts of the Roman empire.⁹⁰

The view that in Carthage and in Africa as in other parts of the Roman Empire, Christian preaching originated in the Jewish community, was postulated by Paul Monceaux in 1901, though he also indicated a possibility of multiple sources for Christian development.⁹¹ The existence of a strong and viable Jewish community in Carthage is well documented by historical documents and archaeology.⁹² There are many archaeological and written documents indicating a connection between the Jewish and Christian communities. There were also at the end of the second and beginning of the third century vigorous discussions between these two communities.⁹³ The Jews in Carthage preserved their Hebrew language⁹⁴ and the Latin versions of the Old and the New Testaments used by the North African Christians were influenced respectively, by the Hebrew and Jewish-Christian *Gospel of Thomas*. The Latin text of the scripture used by Tertullian and the Christians was probably inherited from the Jewish synagogues when Christians still formed part of the synagogue.⁹⁵ In the synagogues the Hebrew text was read with a simultaneous translation into Latin. And such a custom of reading the Hebrew text was retained in many Christian churches in the middle of the second century throughout Asia and Africa.

There are many Jewish traditions which were followed by the Christians in Carthage: the use of the *Gospel of Thomas* which emphasized the role of James as undisputed head of the church; the name *Nazarenes* applied by the Jews for Christians,⁹⁶ a term used for a Christian-Jewish sect, according to Epiphanius;⁹⁷ Christians observed the food laws imposed on Gentile converts at the Council of Jerusalem in 48/49;⁹⁸ a Cyprian congregation still used the Jewish name of “corban” used for collection box in the church;⁹⁹ in Tertullian’s time and in Augustine’s time some African churches still kept the Jewish Sabbath;¹⁰⁰ the number of bishops assembling at various important occasions was 70 plus the presiding or convening bishop modeled on the institutional organization of the Jewish Sanhedrin;¹⁰¹ the strict

hierarchical organization of the North African church so vigorously implemented by Cyprian and the monarchical character of the episcopacy already opposed by Tertullian owe much to the Jewish habits; the appointment of lay-elders in the church as secular administrators was a practice used in the synagogues in Italy. The severe and ascetic ethos of African Christianity, its fatalism and view of God as a ruthless and severe ruler are indicative of its Jewish origin. Also the Christian liturgical rites differed in Africa from those in Rome. One of the most important differences was the insistence by Africans on the rebaptism of the so-called “heretics” upon their conversion.

Among archaeological evidence one may list: Christian burials found among the Jews in an ancient cemetery at Gamart in Carthage, and the excavated Christian complex from the late second or early third century, Damous el Karita, composed of a church, a baptistery and a series of cell-like buildings which were constructed over another Jewish cemetery.¹⁰²

Tertullian himself provides us with testimony about the relations with the Jews of his time. He praises the fidelity of the Jews to their traditions but at the same time remains hostile towards them and encourages Christians to surpass Jews in unimportant religious practices. In the words of W. H. C. Frend, “Christianity in Tertullian’s hands became a baptized Judaism.”¹⁰³ Tertullian most probably participated in debates and discussions with Jewish apologists.¹⁰⁴ During Tertullian’s time Christians had at least one temple, built as indicated above on the site of a Jewish cemetery, thus indicating its Jewish-Christian origin. Tertullian claimed that before the Law of Moses God instituted an unwritten law in nature which was understood by all those preceding Moses. Subsequently, the Law of Moses was instituted and imparted to the Gentiles as well. Thus he considered Christianity a genuine successor to Judaism. For him Judaism was an unchanging, fossilized religion in which Jews denied that the Messiah had already come. Tertullian considered that the Christians inherited the privileged position of the Jews as people

of God.¹⁰⁵ To prove from the scripture that Jesus was a Messiah he wrote six chapters on the argument from the biblical prophets.¹⁰⁶ Both groups, Christians and Jews, viewed each other with hostility and persecuted each other. Hippolytus (170-236) reports, e.g., that Callistus, after becoming bishop of Rome (217-222), invaded a synagogue one Sabbath and disrupted the service. He was sentenced by the prefect of the city, Fascianus, to labor in mines in Sardinia and later was released.¹⁰⁷ But at that time Christianity was illegal and such hostility could only intensify once Christianity became a state religion. Tertullian, like most church Fathers, supported persecution of the so called “heretics” and even developed a concept that “the end justifies the means”¹⁰⁸ as a way of coercing the heretics and perhaps others into his faith: *Duritia uicenda est, non suadenda.*¹⁰⁹

Christians in Carthage were still called Nazarenes¹¹⁰ in the first decade of the third century and represented a very conspicuous group of people with a miserable outlook on life and fanatical adherence to their religious expectations. They held martyrs in a special honor, regarded baptism as an act rejecting the values of the Hellene world and joining the exclusive world of God’s elected.¹¹¹ They awaited the imminent second coming and in their conception of God and righteousness they rejected any joy of life in normal daily activities as sinful. Everything – money, social status, enjoyment of food, sex – all this became immoral and hateful.¹¹² They hated secular studies, forbade military service, entering public offices.¹¹³ Tertullian accepted the view of the Apologists who condemned the Hellenes as immoral people, ridiculed their religion and declared their gods as demons and as immoral as their worshippers.¹¹⁴ Tertullian symbolized this type of Christian mentality, and probably as a lay person, was not persecuted by the Romans.

The next Carthaginian ecclesiastical leader, Cyprian, bishop of Carthage (248-258), died as a martyr. He represented a more rigorous and exclusive religious ideology than Tertullian. His ideology was based on the Bible, the cult of martyrdom, and inspiration by the Holy Spirit. It promised salvation only to those who were

within and eternal damnation to all schismatics, “heretics,” Jews and Hellenes, to all those who were outside the church.¹¹⁵ Only the church and the ecclesiasticals could provide salvation. Moreover, only the priests, themselves in a state without sin, could provide the means of salvation to the church members.¹¹⁶ Christians who failed to adhere fanatically to the confession of faith in the face of persecution were considered traitors and committing the gravest sin. The problem with such “*traditores*” became acute and glaring in 311 when archdeacon Caecilian was elected bishop of Carthage. The opposition led by a certain Donatus of Casae Nigrae led to a schism in the church and formation of a Donatist church that survived in Carthage to the time of the capture of Carthage by the Arabs in 698.¹¹⁷ The Donatists initially dominated in Carthage, but from 411, the Catholics got the upper hand with varying success until the invasion by the Vandals in 439. Again Catholic toleration was restored by Hilderic, a Vandal ruler (523-530), and their domination was established by Justinian in 535 until the invasion by the Arabs.

The Carthaginian church inherited from the Jews an authoritarian system of governance and the authority of the bishop was absolute. No crime was worse than disobedience to a bishop and it deserved severe punishment.¹¹⁸ In such an environment the dominant doctrines both among Catholics and Donatists were the doctrines of predestination, grace, original sin, and final judgment. The church also assumed many social and legal functions in the society of North Africa. In the early days the day of judgment was imminent; repentance and baptism cleansed away man's sins. With time came the realization that the day of judgment may be remote and then a problem arose: the clever and credulous, like Constantine, deferred their baptism to avoid the risk of eternal condemnation. Gradually a penitential system was developed. A gradation was developed for every type of delinquency, and renunciation of pleasure on earth offered greater pleasure after resurrection.¹¹⁹

The first persecution in Africa occurred in 180. A very interesting document was preserved to our time, namely, the transcript of the trial entitled *Acts of the*

Scillitan Martyrs of the first Christians persecuted at this time.¹²⁰ Twelve Christians from the small town of Scilla were persecuted because they refused to recognize, the rule of the emperor. One of the accused, Speratus, made such a statement: “The empire of this world I know not; but rather I serve that God, whom no man hath seen, nor with these eyes can see.” The Romans were very reasonable and the proconsul, Vigellius Saturninus, insisted on reflection and gave them time to reconsider. The document attests also to the fanatical character of the Christians who were eager to die and even actively aspired to death: “We give thanks to God Today we are martyrs in heaven, thanks be to God.”

Other documents give a true account of the state of the Christian church of that epoch. A certain document entitled *Passion of Perpetua*¹²¹ records the martyrdom of a lady of high birth, Vibia Perpetua, and her companions in the year 203. The document throws light on the fundamentalist character of the early Christians. Perpetua was accustomed to converse with God and received a message in her dreams: “she ascended to heaven on a bronze ladder – saw a vast garden, with an elderly shepherd milking a sheep and around him many thousand in white. The shepherd welcomed Perpetua and gave her a piece of the cheese from the sheep's milk.” Her next dream describes the torment of her deceased brother Deinocrates and the prisoners who prayed for him. In another dream he is represented as not suffering anymore. These writings represented a new fundamentalist eschatological theology of the immediate realization of the new prophecy: “God promised to pour his spirit on his servants in the last days, so that they should prophesy, so that young men should see visions and old men dream dreams”¹²² Also from such writings theologians could develop later the doctrine of a purgatory via the Gnostics and Origen. For Perpetua her dreams signified that her brother had been released from punishment and admitted to bliss.¹²³ In the dream of another martyr, Saturus, when the martyrs enter the presence of God, the bishop and the priest are excluded. They are isolated and their hope lies only in the martyrs at whose feet they fell.¹²⁴ Though the writing is

classified as Montanist it reflects an open dissension from the clergy who were not up to the moral standard.

Perpetua was considered a Catholic martyr and not a Montanist martyr. In the fourth century even a church was dedicated to her memory and Augustine preached sermons quoting from the *Passion*¹²⁵ which he treated as a canonical work.¹²⁶ Perpetua's anniversary was listed in the official calendar of Rome, probably since 336 C.E.

The wish for martyrdom is still more emphasized by the assistance martyrs offer to their persecutors. Saturus surrendered himself out of his own volition. Perpetua came to near suicide when she herself thrust the sword into her own throat by pushing the hand of the gladiator. And for this act she was applauded. The author of the story explains that since the devil was afraid of Perpetua, she could never have been killed had she not wished it herself.¹²⁷

This active attitude and seeking of martyrdom is typical for the early Christians as represented by the early Christian writings and Apologists.¹²⁸ The death of a righteous man, and only Christians were righteous, was an occasion for rejoicing. Moreover, the denial of death and its rejection was an evil to be avoided.¹²⁹ Martyrdom became a baptism by blood.¹³⁰

But the opinions on martyrdom and baptism by blood varied. Peter, bishop of Alexandria (300-311) who first fled persecution in Alexandria, condemned enthusiasm for martyrdom and advocated fleeing persecution.¹³¹ Unfortunately, upon returning to Alexandria, the bishop was arrested unsuspectedly by a secret agent of Emperor Maximinus Dada and beheaded in 311.

Tertullian assumed the attitude that martyrdom was a duty and necessity which was good and profitable and ordained by God.¹³² Gnostics, however, denied that God desired martyrdom from his followers. According to Tertullian persecution was a test of faith and he condemned flight as wrong and against the will of God.¹³³ There were many Christian volunteers for martyrdom at the end of the second

century.¹³⁴

At the same time Tertullian criticized Catholics for developing a cult of martyrs to whom special spiritual powers were ascribed.¹³⁵ The Hellenes also disagreed with this attitude.¹³⁶

The sources of the Christian doctrine of martyrdom go back to their Jewish origin. Martyrdom was especially glorified during the Maccabean war 165-162 B.C.E. against the dynasty of Seleucids in Palestine. Jews under the Greek rulers were being forced to abandon the Law and ways of their fathers.¹³⁷ They would not, however, deviate from their ways and gladly submitted to martyrdom in defense of Jewish customs.¹³⁸ Martyrdom was rewarded in Jewish doctrines by the promise of resurrection. Thus martyrdom was a means of personal salvation and, at the same time, it represented a patriotic act as it was considered an act of atonement on behalf of Israel as a whole. Martyrdom was considered a witness to the Law¹³⁹ and an integral part of the Jewish doctrine:

But it becomes natural to all Jews, immediately and from their very birth, to esteem those books to contain divine doctrines, and to persist in them, and, if occasion be, willingly to die for them. For it is no new thing for our captives, many of them in number, and frequently in time, to be seen to endure racks and deaths of all kinds upon the theaters, that they may not be obliged to say one word against our laws, and the records that contain them.¹⁴⁰

No wonder that for the Christians martyrdom became witness to the new law and its glorification subsequently became a part of the Christian ethos.¹⁴¹ They simply imitated Jesus who was the ideal martyr. They believed martyrdom would hasten the second coming and atone for their sins.¹⁴²

In the subsequent years after the Maccabean war when the Hasmonaean dynasty accepted the Greek ways, the conservative, radical, and pious Jews separated themselves from the ruling party and the Temple in groups (most probably those like

the Essenes), similar to that represented by the Qumran scrolls, and prepared themselves for the arrival of the expected earthly Messiahs to rule in the Kingdom of Heaven.¹⁴³ From such a group originated John the Baptist and his messianic message. We do not know if Jesus was only a personification of an ideal prophet-messiah or if he depicted a certain political leader of the Jews who was idealized and subsequently a myth was created around his personality. Nevertheless, Jesus of the Gospels maintained a messianic prophetic tradition which was political in its main principle and, at the same time, he reversed the current Jewish moral ethos. His message found popular support in rural Palestine. His ideas were subsequently incorporated into a new religious movement created by Paul on the basis of the messianic figure of Jesus and Philonic concept of the Logos.¹⁴⁴ Paul grasped the idea of universality in the “universal” Roman Empire and intended to spread his sect not only among the Jews but also among the Gentiles, especially among the city dwellers who could read the Greek Septuagint and were familiar with the Greek religious and philosophical ethos. In Paul’s doctrines there was no implementation of the social teachings of Jesus. The fall of Jerusalem in 70 accelerated the separation of the new movement from the Judaism in Palestine but it still remained connected to the synagogue in the Hellenistic world probably until the beginning of the third century.

Carthage was also the site of activity of Hermogenes, an important nonconformist teacher.¹⁴⁵ Tertullian devoted two treatises to Hermogenes: *Adversus Hermogenem* and *De Testimonio Animae*. Among other events in Carthage, Augustine mentioned a gathering of bishops (about 70 of them) between 190 and 230. There was also a council in Carthage in 256 organized by Bishop Cyprian.

Tertullian's Theory of the Trinity

The most important treatise of Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, was written in the form of a polemic occasioned by the reappearance of an explanation of the New Testamental story and propagated by Praxeas, a contemporary writer. On this background Tertullian almost incidentally formulated his theory of the Trinity which

was to become the primary formulation for post-Nicaean Christianity. The Reformation, though it produced a radical reforming movement focused on reforming the theological doctrines, in its main core movement it did not reform the main theological doctrines. Thus the Protestant churches inherited the Catholic trinitarian doctrine. But in spite of the centuries of the theological tradition of the trinitarian doctrine, Christians remain in practice tritheists.

Insofar as there was one God and Jesus was a man and a Messiah (the anointed), and, as such, was considered his earthly “son” in a metaphorical sense which designation had in the Hebrew environment a specific social and political implication, there was no theological conflict. However, once Jesus was identified as a God, and therefore as a Son of God in the Greek naturalistic conception which was a popular assumption in the Greek environment, the problem arose; because now there were two Gods, two divine individuals, and a formula had to be developed to accommodate the contradiction and to explain the ontological status of Jesus’ personhood.

Many theories were developed trying to interpret mythical statements found in the scriptures according to the feelings, attitude, and intellectual background of the author. Christian writers tried to reconcile these statements using the various religious and philosophical doctrines current at the time of the interpreter. In the time of Tertullian we already find fully developed Logos theories based on Middle Platonic doctrines. Another early doctrine was that of Marcion who differentiated, on moral grounds, between the God of the Old Testament and the God of Jesus and Paul of the New Testament. Still others, like the Gnostics, represented Divinity as unity in multiplicity.¹⁴⁶ There is obviously no logical or rational premise why one doctrine should be better than the other. The proper approach would be to find out what the statements found in the scriptures meant for the writers of these scriptures. However, this was not the chosen approach and each author interpreted the scriptures and developed his own theory according to his emotional or intellectual preferences.

Thus the Logos Christology was developed to soften the impact of bitheism. In Logos speculation, it is inherent that the divine prolation should be of the very same essence (substance) as God; on the other hand, as a prolation, it should be capable of acting as a distinct being. But this could not provide for the intended naturalistic identity of Jesus as the Son of God with one God, that is with all that God is as was required in a popular and highly emotionally charged understanding of his divinity. And it was so because the Logos speculation implied a reduced status of deity for the prolation in diminished grade and a temporal rather than eternal status.

The starting point for all speculations was the Middle Platonic-Philonic conception of the transcendent God who mediates through the activity of an intermediate being. Under the influence of the scriptural passages like Proverbs 8 and John 1, interpreted in a popular Greek fashion, the historical Jesus was identified with the Greek Logos and the Logos Christology was developed. Its essence was postulation of the existence of a cosmic being whose function was to perform the work of creation and governing the cosmos for the transcendent God. The Christian Logos was thus conceived in relation to temporal and spatial things; therefore, it was a subordinate God. Its origin was through a process of emanation or prolation from God the Father. A corollary theory was developed by the Gnostics who emphasized the necessary process of the evolution of several emanations from the primal cosmic deity. Gnostics wanted a hierarchy of lesser divinities between the transcendent source deity and the material world itself.¹⁴⁷

The evolution of the Christian Logos theory emphasized rather the “personal” character of the deity, therefore, the act of emanation was a voluntary act on the part of God. Thus Christians could look upon Jesus identified with the Logos as a part of God that was charged with the function of the creation of the universe and its governance, while being subordinate to the will of God. These were the characteristics of the Christian and the Middle Platonic-Philonic Logos. Through this device Christians could preserve, to a certain degree, the unity of God and the deity

of the historical Jesus who was the Logos of God, i.e., the temporal protrusion of the deity for the purpose of creating the world, time-space, and mediating instrument of the deity in his dealings with the world and humans.

A. The Use by Tertullian of the Christian Logos Theory

In his earlier writings Tertullian fully used the Logos Christology which supplied a general paradigm for eventually building his own interpretation. This aspect of Tertullian theology was a conscious effort to integrate Christianity and classical Greek culture.¹⁴⁸ In *Apology* he expounded the divinity of Christ and identified him with the Logos of Numenius and Greek Stoic philosophy:

We have been taught that he [the Logos] proceeds forth from God, and in that procession he is generated; so that he is the Son of God, and is called God from unity of substance with God. For God, too, is a Spirit. Even when the ray is shot from the sun, it is still part of the parent mass; the sun will still be in the ray, a portion of the whole (*portio ex summa*), but the sun will be in the ray, because it is a ray of the sun – there is no division of substance, but merely an extension. This Christ is Spirit of Spirit, and God of God, as light of light is kindled. The material matrix remains entire and unimpaired, though you derive from it any number of shoots possessed of its qualities; so, too, that which has come forth out of God is at once God and the Son of God, and the two are one. In this way also, as he is Spirit of Spirit and God of God, he is made a second in manner of existence – in position, not in nature; and he did not withdraw from the original source, but went forth. This ray of God, then, as it was always foretold in ancient times, descending into a certain virgin, and made flesh in her womb, is in his birth God and man united.¹⁴⁹

Tertullian shared with the Apologists, who developed the Logos theory, the idea of the transcendence of God and impossibility of his direct relation with a world of time

and space,¹⁵⁰ the doctrine which was expressed in terms of the invisibility of God and in the fullness of his majesty. He shared also the current conception of the Logos as the form of God that is connected with the origin and governance of the world. Prolation of the Logos took place only for and with the world as a necessary mediator to perform a work which God could not perform. Thus the Logos assumed its “own form” when God said “Let there be light.” Only then God was pleased to put forth into their respective substances and forms the things he had planned and ordered within himself. “He first put forth (*protulit*) the Word (Logos) who was within him his own inseparable Reason and Wisdom in order that all things might be made through him.”¹⁵¹

But with respect to the previous works of the world what says the scripture? Its first statement indeed is made, when the Son had not yet appeared: ‘And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light.’ Immediately there appears the Word [Logos]; ‘that true light which lighteth man on his coming into the world,’ and through him also came light upon the world. From that moment God willed creation to be effected in the Word [Logos], Christ, being present and ministering unto him.¹⁵²

Though the scripture in Genesis refers to light as a physical phenomenon connected with day and night, Tertullian, in contradiction, ascribes to it a metaphysical and ontological meaning. There is no doubt that Tertullian’s concept of metaphysical light which was put forth by God as the Logos (Word), is derived from the Greek theology of the second century.¹⁵³

Tertullian also shared the view with the Apologists that the Logos is not God in his entirety, but only a “portion,” (*portio*) of God, in the same way as is the ray in which there is not the whole but only a “portion” of the sun. The difference between them is in measure not of mode. Tertullian claimed that “The Father is the entire substance, but the Son is a derivation and portion of the whole.”¹⁵⁴ The Logos was to

him necessarily a produced, and a reduced divinity, with its substance spirit or *pneuma*, brought to a level that could become creator and principle of the world, of time and space, made of four elements. Tertullian also accorded with the current conceptions in thinking of the prolation of the Logos as a voluntary act of the Logos and the will of God, rather than a necessary movement within the divine essence. The Logos Son came into being by the will of God and remains in being to fulfill the will of God; and at last, when he had fulfilled the will of God, retires once more into the divine unity. The prolated Logos Son is a temporary being who is dependent on the will of God. As such he is subordinate to and less than the Father subject to the Father's will and after accomplishing his mission he returns to the divine substance.¹⁵⁵ Only the Father has the fullness of his majesty and divinity, and by reason of his derivation, the Son stands to the Father as the ray to the sun. Thus the Son is second in every sense of the word.¹⁵⁶

As to the temporary origin of the Logos Son, Tertullian was very explicit in his treatise *Adversus Hermogenem* where he clearly stated that the Son had a beginning and origin. His argumentation came from the analysis of terms God and Lord. God is, according to Tertullian, a "designation of the substance itself," so the name God always existed. However, the name Lord is a designation of the power, not of substance, therefore the title Lord was added after that over which God is Lord (i.e., the creation) "began to exist." In the same manner, God is a Father and a Judge,

But he has not always been Father and Judge, merely on the ground of his having always been God. For he could not have been the Father previous to the Son, nor a Judge previous to sin. There was, however, a time when neither sin existed with him, nor the Son; the former was to constitute the Lord and Judge, and the latter a Father.¹⁵⁷

But later Tertullian distinguished between the uttered Logos, a *Sermo*, and the unuttered Logos or *Ratio* which was an integral part of the divinity:

For before all things God was alone – being in himself and for

himself universe, and space, and all things. Moreover, he was alone, because there was nothing external to him but himself. Yet even not then was he alone; for he had with him that which he possessed in himself, that is to say his own Reason. For God is rational and Reason was first in him; and so all things were from himself.¹⁵⁸

But certainly God's Reason was not an individual being as the prolated Son. The prolation of the Logos Son was a temporary mechanism to accomplish work by a transcendent God.

B. Opposition to Monarchianism

Tertullian was deeply influenced by such doctrines developed by the Apologists¹⁵⁹ and the occasion for rethinking this scheme was provided to Tertullian by the spread of the Monarchian doctrine. The term was given to a set of beliefs that emphasized God as one being to uphold his "monarchy" or rule of one person in opposition to the Logos theology of Justin Martyr. The Logos theory left much to be desired in the Christian doctrines of God and of his Mediator. It could not satisfy the rigorous demand for the unity of God and it diminished the divinity of Jesus demanded by the popular religious sentiments. Monarchianism was one of the solutions which attempted to elevate Jesus to absolute equality with God but by doing this it abolished the distinction between God and the Logos. Thus in further speculations the Logos would need another intermediary or, if a primeval God would now have the same function and tasks as the Logos, then his transcendence would be abolished as well. Monarchians arose in protest to those religious views which threatened the full divinity of Jesus. Hippolytus quotes the Monarchian Noetus saying in a highly emotionally charged voice: "How can I be doing wrong in glorifying Christ?"¹⁶⁰

We learn from Tertullian that one such author was his contemporary, Praxeas, who, adhering strictly to the formula of absolute unity of God, developed a theory

that the New Testamental Father himself descended into the virgin, was born as Jesus, and suffered on the cross.

Such a doctrine did not fit into Tertullian's own sensitivity and he described these speculations as the product of the "devil," and morally condemned them. Such speculations were termed heresy, and the church Fathers developed a series of very elaborate theories morally condemning independent speculation and prescribed legal persecution in order to combat any independent thought.

We learn from Tertullian that Praxeas came from Asia to Rome. Tertullian characterized him as a proud man who had been in prison, thus trying to denigrate him on moral grounds as well. It was Praxeas who instigated the revocation by a bishop of Rome of the acknowledgment of the prophetic gift by Montanus, Priscilla and Maximilla. Praxeas thus did a two-fold service to the "devil in Rome": "he drove away prophecy, and he brought in heresy; he put to flight the Paraclete, and he crucified the Father."¹⁶¹ Praxeas, according to Tertullian, disappeared from the scenery. He may have been reprimanded and may have returned to the church. His doctrine, however, did not die, because it found a new outburst in Africa and was now everywhere. Such was the situation which faced Tertullian and resulted in his reaction.

The doctrine of Praxeas was described in common terminology as Monarchianism or Patripassianism and there is only one mention of Praxeas independent of Tertullian, namely, in the work considered to be pseudo-Tertullianic, *Adversus omnes haereses*.¹⁶² We also know about the origin of Monarchianism from the account given by Hippolytus, a contemporary of Tertullian, who wrote in Rome. Hippolytus claimed that a certain Noetus of Smyrna derived this theory from the doctrines of Heraclitus. His disciple, Epigonus, propagated it in Rome together with his follower Cleomenes.¹⁶³ The theory was adopted by Bishop Callistus of Rome (fl. ca 210).¹⁶⁴

C. Tertullian's doctrine of the *oikonomia* of God and its Stoic source.

After having condemned Praxeas doctrine, Tertullian explains the true belief accepted by those who are “better instructed by the Paraclete,” implying that his theory of the Trinity was a product of Montanist speculation. God is one, but has the following internal structure, described in Tertullian's terminology as “dispensation” or “economy” (*sub hac tamen dispensatione quam oikonomiam dicimus*): he has a physical pneumatic Son (*Filius*), his Word (*Sermo*), who proceeded from himself. Through this Son all things are made, so he had a function of creating and maintaining the world. The Son was sent by the Father into the virgin and was born as a man and God, as Son of Man and as Son of God (*Filium hominis et Filium Dei*), and is called Jesus the Anointed (Christ). After his death he was resurrected by the Father, taken into heaven (*in caelo*) to be seated at the right side of the Father. He will come to judge all men, dead and alive, before the institution of God's kingdom on earth. In the meantime the Father in heaven sent the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete (*Spiritum sanctum, Paracletum*).¹⁶⁵

Before Tertullian there was a tradition of the unity of the Godhead as a concept derived from the Hebrew tradition, and a tradition of the triad, of his appearance and function, as formulated by the Apologists and based on Philonic hypostatization of the divine powers. Today Christians speculate that the trinitarian doctrine was present in the baptismal formula, but it was before Tertullian who formulated it explicitly.

Tertullian's “rule of faith” is based on the specific interpretation of the story found in the Gospels and the formula of the baptismal invocation found in all early Christian writers. This rule also imposed on him the necessity to formulate a doctrine of the Holy Spirit. The Apologists were preoccupied with the Greek concepts of the Logos and treated the Holy Spirit in a fashion analogical to the Logos. Tertullian made the Holy Spirit related to the Son as the Son is related to the Father.

The original sense of the crucial terms used for the development of Tertullian's doctrine is already changed in the Greek environment. And Tertullian

makes a special reference to the “beginning of the Gospel,” (*ab initio euangelii*), presumably that of John 1:1, as the source of his opinion, to him the true and original story. Any later theory must be considered a heresy. *Quo praeaeque aduersus uniuersas haereses iam hinc praeiudicatum sit id esse uerum quodcumque primum, id esse adulterum quodcumque posterius.*¹⁶⁶

The innovation introduced by Tertullian was the ascription of the relative unity to the triadic entities found in the Christian Logos theory as the unity of substance. Starting from the baptismal formula, Tertullian distinguished three persons and prolations with specific names in one God who is the common substance as a mode of existence of God and his economy, that is, his internal organization. Though Tertullian never defined what he meant by the term “person,” we must understand this word as a depiction of a distinct divine individual with distinct quality and function. Substance is the unifying element in the divinity while person is the differentiating characteristic in the life of God. If so, then there is no real division in the Godhead, only purely relative modal distinction. But then Tertullian is in contradiction when he claims a reality of the Word, and of the Holy Spirit by extension, as a *substantiva res* and a rational substance. Thus in any case it seems to be a verbal device to reconcile a popular triadic interpretation of the terms found in the New Testament and in the baptismal formula with the requirement of the oneness of God.

Such a term has obvious origin from the analogy with the human entity which is defined by a set of physical and behavioral characteristics, and its status is regulated by laws in a society. This unity of the three entities is produced by the unity of substance (*per substantiae unitatem*) though its structure, that is distribution of one into the three, still remains a mystery (*oikonomiae sacramentum*). Nevertheless Tertullian found a formula which would verbally justify the claim: the three (the Father, the Son, and the [Holy] Spirit) are formed not in condition (*statu*), but in degree or sequence (*gradu*); not in substance (*substantia*), but in form (*forma*); not in

power (*potentate*), but in manifestation (*specie*); yet of one substance, and of one condition, and of one power, inasmuch as he is one God, from whom (*unus Deus ex quo*) these degrees and forms and manifestations are designated (*deputantur*), under the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. And Tertullian promises to show how these three entities can be differentiated numerically without division. Moreover, he developed a concept of the prolation of the Holy Spirit from the Son, as the Son is a prolation of the Father.¹⁶⁷

In Tertullian's understanding, heaven is a concrete physical place located above the earth, the abode of divine beings in the pneumatic realm of the world whose substance must be "ether," "noetic fire" or "*pneuma*," in accordance with the current view.¹⁶⁸ This must be also the substance of all divine beings. Tertullian faces a problem, however, namely, how to reconcile the unity of God with the statements about the three entities, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit found in the New Testament writings, but understood and interpreted in the Greek naturalistic mode. Tertullian is aware that his opinion is not the only one; on the contrary the majority of believers cannot understand how one can believe in one God who may have his own dispensation in three entities. In popular folkloric interpretation they were considered three divinities. Thus the pressing issue was finding a formula which would reconcile their mutual relationship with the requirement of the unity of the divinity. He could not accept the solution proposed by Praxeas who reasoned that one cannot believe in one God in any other way than by saying that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are the very sameself, since this would imply that the Father or God suffered himself on the cross.

The task of Tertullian, therefore, was to develop a formula by which the complete deity of Jesus and the reality of his identity as the Logos or the Mediator is distinct from the source-deity yet without creating two Gods. In Logos theory the distinction was introduced between the transcendent God and the derivative God, the absolute and the relative, and special problems arise when we consider now the

question of eternity or temporality of this distinction.

The new trinitarian formulation evidently was not a popular or accepted belief during the time of Tertullian since he emphasized that the simple believers, and they are always in the majority, may have problems understanding this trinitarian assumption. Instead, they accept a triadic division of the unity of God, whereas, according to Tertullian, the triadic doctrine is a misunderstanding of God's economy (*oikonomia*) or dispensation/disposition (*dispensatio* or *dispositio*).

Tertullian was a profoundly Stoic philosopher and he developed his concept of the trinitarian God from the analysis of four general Stoic logical categories. His theory is based on the assumption of unity and unchangeability of the substance and the relative distinctiveness of the three members of the divinity, i.e., the Spirit as the substance of God. His concept of substance and the Spirit as the material substance of God is unquestionably Stoic and used to describe the nature of God.¹⁶⁹ The source of these assumptions is found in the four categories of being as formulated by the Stoics: substrates or substances of everything that exists (ὑποκείμενα), qualities (ποιὰ), the modes of existence or dispositions (πῶς ἔχοντα), and the relative modes or dispositions of existence (πρὸς τί πῶς ἔχοντα).¹⁷⁰

The term substrate or substance Stoics applied to the first matter of everything that exists, as a material and corporeal object. The object becomes specific if it acquires qualities which were described as certain matter or *pneuma* with a certain mode of existence.¹⁷¹ Plutarch reported that, according to Academy, two doves, e.g., are two substances with one quality, while the Stoics hold that they are one substance and two qualified entities. He quotes Chrysippus saying that when the universe is destroyed by fire, Zeus, who alone of all gods will survive the conflagration, withdraws into Providence and the two, presumably distinct entities, will continue to exist as a single substance, ether (ἐπὶ μίᾳς τῆς τοῦ αἰθέρος οὐσίας). According to this Stoic view everything that exists is present in one substance as the prime matter of all things. Zeus is different, however, from all other particular entities in

that sense that he will not disappear losing his individuality and will return to the action in the next cosmic cycle.

The term mode of existence or disposition was used to describe the qualitative substrate, not the existential substrate, of the particular thing by which the objects were differentiated.¹⁷² For example, in a certain mode of existence, a fist is not a hand for the fist remains in relation to the hand as to its substrate.¹⁷³ The category of the relative mode of existence or relative disposition arose from the distinction between “sweetness,” “bitterness,” and similar things on the one hand, and “father,” and “a person on the right side,” on the other hand. The former objects were distinguished according to a difference which consists in an intrinsic specific property. These objects are different because they refer to something else. The latter category of objects comprises all things which are characterized not by an intrinsic inherent difference, but by a simple relation to each other. The “son” and the “person on the right side,” in order to exist as such, depend on something external to them. It is sufficient that the son dies or the person on the right side changes his position that the father and the person on the right side cease to exist without any direct change to any of them. Whereas “sweetness” and “bitterness” cannot change unless their internal properties are changed. Therefore, if the relatively disposed things change without being affected themselves because of something else changing its relation to them, it is clear that their existence depends only on their relationship and not on any differentiating factor.¹⁷⁴

It seems that Tertullian, using such speculations, transposed the logical relationship between objects on the metaphysical existence of the divine Father and his Son, and also the third entity – the Holy Spirit. Thus the divine Father and the divine Son have their existence conditioned by their disposition only. They are not identical. Moreover, the Father makes a Son and the Son makes a Father by logical relationship, i.e., relative disposition.

These terms, *economy* (*oikonomia*) and disposition, dispensation (*dispositio*,

dispensatio), one Greek and the others Latin, which were used in everyday language to designate apportioning or distribution (e.g., of materials), management (e.g., of affairs), stewardship (e.g., of public revenue), arrangement of arguments or words, the orderly arrangement of time or actions, acquired in Tertullian's usage a metaphysical meaning describing the relative existence of the three divine individuals. Thus the best translation of these terms preserving the Tertullian meaning would be the relative "internal management," "internal structure," or "organization" of God.

Tertullian's critique of Monarchianism is also based on the analysis of the term. Tertullian expresses his dissatisfaction with Monarchianism by complaining that the Latins attempt to study the "pronunciation" of the word "monarchy" while the Greeks refuse to understand the term "economy." Thus he proceeds next to explain the meaning of both terms. Monarchy, according to Tertullian, means rule by one, but it does not preclude the monarch from having a son or from ministering his own monarchy by a few agents. Even if the monarchy is administered by another person most closely connected with the monarch, e.g., his son, that monarchy is not divided and does not cease to be one. Such an idea of the unity of the monarchy projected on the divine monarchy where the divine essence is one and is governed by the many Sons of God, was a common concept among the Greeks and non-Greeks as well as attested by Maximus of Tyre (flourished in the second century) and many other writers:

You will see one according law and assertion in all the earth, that there is one God, the king and father of all things, and many Gods, Sons of God, ruling together with him. This the Greek says, and the Barbarian says, the inhabitant of the continent, and he who dwells near the sea, the wise and the unwise.¹⁷⁵

By extending the analogy to the divine Monarchy, which is administered by so many legions of angels Tertullian asks:

How came it to pass that God should be thought to suffer division and severance in the Son and in the Holy Ghost, who have the second and the third places assigned to them, and who are so closely joined with the Father in his substance, when he suffers no such [division and severance] in the multitude of so many angels? Do you really suppose that those, who are naturally members of the Father's own substance, pledge of his love, instruments of his might, nay, his power itself and the entire system of his Monarchy, are the overthrow and destruction of thereof?¹⁷⁶

So the unity of God (monarchy of the king) hinges on the unity of substance (closeness of the king's family or administrators) which is the basis for “internal dispensation” or “economy,” that is, the internal organization of God. And there is no doubt about what kind of substance Tertullian had in mind.

The destruction and overthrow of the monarchy could be brought about by another dominion with its own peculiar status, e.g., if some other god is introduced in opposition to the creator, as in the opinions of Marcion, or by many gods, as in the opinion of Valentinus. The other gods would represent, according to Tertullian, a different rule and thus a different substance.

In the eye of Tertullian the sameness of the monarchy relies on the sameness of the rule and dominion and therefore in the sameness of the physical substance of the ruling entity which, by itself, has its own arrangement and organization as defined by the Greek word “economy.” Transposing this analogy to the situation of the Deity, the Son derives his substance from the substance of the Father and does nothing without the Father's will, since he received his power from the Father. In this way the divine monarchy (i.e., unity) is preserved. The same applies to the “third degree” (*tertium gradum*) because the third pneumatic being, the Holy Spirit (*Spiritus*) proceeded from the Father through the Son.

Tertullian now tries to prove his assertion by quoting the scripture, though in

his interpretation of the scripture he twists its meaning. He quotes 1 Corinthians 15:24-28 concerning the overcoming of the “enemies” of the Messiah by God when the messianic kingdom comes under the rule of the earthly messiah. In the end, however, God will take over and restore the immortality of the (resurrected) people. In the Tertullian interpretation this quote refers to the “arrangement and dispensation” (*dispositionem et dispensationem*) of the Trinity. Similarly the quoted Psalm 109 (110):1 expresses the idea of the restoration of the rule of God under the rule of the earthly messiah. These quotes do not support the inference of the Trinity as Tertullian thinks. However, Tertullian, though wrongly interpreting the scriptural texts, concludes that the Father and the Son are separate individuals not only because they have separate names but also because the one who delivers up the kingdom and the one to whom the kingdom is delivered must of necessity be different individuals (*qui tradidit regnum et cui tradidit, item qui subiecit et cui subiecit duo sint necesse est*).¹⁷⁷

II. Tertullian and the Son of God

Tertullian developed his doctrine of the Trinity almost incidentally on the occasion of a polemic with Praxeas, a Monarchian and his contemporary religious writer. Once Jesus was considered a deity, and therefore Son of God and a human being in the Greek sense, the problem arose in maintaining the relative monotheism inherited from the Jews. Jews were not monotheists in the absolute sense because they recognized the existence of other national deities belonging to other ethnic groups. The evolution of the Christian Logos doctrine emphasized rather the personal character of the deity, therefore the act of emanation was a voluntary act on the part of God. Tertullian started in his earlier writings with Logos Christology identifying Jesus with the Logos of Numenius and Greek Stoic philosophy emphasizing his unity of substance with God using the metaphor of “a ray of the sun.” Thus

Christ/Logos/Son becomes the second “in manner of existence” not in nature. Prolation of the Logos took place for the creation of the world as a necessary mediator to perform the work which God could not perform. Moreover, this Logos was the light generated in Genesis and interpreted in a metaphysical and ontological sense. This was in accordance with Greek and Egyptian theological doctrine. Also, the Logos/Son “was not the entire substance but a derivation and portion of the whole.” The prolated Logos/Son is a temporary being who is dependent on the will of God and who, after accomplishing his mission returns to the divine substance.

The innovation which Tertullian introduced to the Christian triadic doctrine was the relative unity of substance. Using the baptismal formula as a starting point Tertullian designated three persons and prolations with specific names in one God who is the common substance as a mode of existence and his economy or internal organization. Tertullian never defined what he meant by the term “person.” We must understand this term as a depiction of a distinct divine individual with a distinct quality and function. The substance is the unifying element in the deity while the person is the differentiating characteristic in the life of God. But if so, then there is no real division in the Godhead – only a purely relative modal distinction. Thus his doctrine seems to be a verbal device to reconcile a popular triadic interpretation of the terms found in the New Testament and in the baptismal formula with a requirement of the oneness of God. Moreover, Tertullian also developed a concept of the prolation of the Holy Spirit from the Son, as the Son is a prolation from the Father.

Tertullian’s concept of a trinitarian God was developed from the analysis of four general Stoic logical categories: substrates or substances of everything that exists; qualities; the modes of existence or dispositions; and the relative modes of dispositions of existence. Tertullian using these Stoic categories transposes the logical relationship between objects on the metaphysical existence of the divine Father and his Son, and also on the third entity – the Holy Spirit. The divine Father

and the divine Son have their existence conditioned by their disposition only. They are not identical, moreover, the father makes a Son and the Son makes a Father by logical relationship, i.e., relative disposition.

Generation and the Nature of the Son of God

Since Monarchianism claims that “the two are one” and that the Father is the same as the Son, Tertullian proposes to examine the question of whether the Son exists and, if so, who he is and what is his mode of existence (*an sit et qui sit et quomodo sit*).¹⁷⁸ Tertullian dismisses the claim that the scripture begins with the sentence “in the beginning God made for himself a Son” as groundless. But he derives another argument from God’s own dispensation (*dispensatio*) which states that God existed alone before the creation of the world and up to the generation of the Son, being for himself the universe, space (*locus*), and all things. Tertullian claims that God was alone because there was nothing external to him. But even then God was not really “alone” because he possessed in himself (*in semetipso*) his own Reason (*rationem suam*). This Reason is his consciousness (*sensus*) which the Greeks call Logos and Christians call in Latin *Sermo* (Word), and hence they say that “the Word was in the beginning with God” (*Sermonem dicere in primordio apud Deum fuisse*). It would be more suitable to say that Reason (*ratio*) was more ancient than Word (*sermo*). God had Reason even before the beginning and because Word consists of Reason, it proves its prior existence and substance (*et quia ipse quoque sermo ratione consistens priorem eam ut substantiam suam ostendat*). Thus, before the formation of the world, God had his Word in his Reason within himself. Such a speculation was promoted by Philo of Alexandria who made the Platonic Ideas the internal thoughts of God.

God, by planning and occupying himself with what was to be uttered through the word, was causing the Word to become. To understand this, Tertullian uses the analogy of the human process of thinking. Since a human being is a rational animal

not only because he is made by a rational artificer but also because he is actually animated by God's substance, a human in the process of thinking uses words. Whatever we think (*cogitaveris*) is a word, and whatever we conceive (*senseris*) is reason. We think in words and become aware by reason. We speak in our mind and the speech becomes an interlocutor (*conlocutor*). So in a sense, within a human there is a word through which one utters thinking and this word is someone else (*alius est*), another individual. If we can make such an analogy for ourselves, the more so can we do it for God, whose image and likeness we are.

Tertullian summarizes his reasoning. First he claims that before the formation of the universe (*ante universitatis constitutionem*) God was not alone because he had within himself Reason (*rationem*) and in Reason (*in ratione*) the Word (*sermonem*) which he made secondary to himself by agitating it (thinking) within himself. Next Tertullian claims that this God's disposition of power (*uis*) and consciousness (*sensus*) is represented in the Old Testament by the term Wisdom (*sophia*) which describes God's Reason and Word. And the quotes from the scripture (Proverbs 8:22-31) are supposed to prove that God constituted Wisdom as his second person (*secundam personam*) first before he put things into their respective substances and forms (*in substantias et species suas edere*) putting forth the Word itself (*ipsum primum protulit sermonem*), having within himself in his mind (*sensu*) their individualities (*individualitas*). Thus, according to Tertullian, God made all things already in his mind, just like Philo of Alexandria visualized Plato's Ideas present in the mind of God and representing the prototypes of things in the universe.

From such speculations later Christians came up with the concept of preexistence of or eternal generation of the Son because he existed within the consciousness of the divinity as his reason (or wisdom). This concept of the preexistence of the Son was ascribed to Tertullian by Bishop George Bull (1674-1710)¹⁷⁹ who was probably the most prominent scholar of the history of the doctrine of the Trinity. Even Bull admits that Tertullian uses expressions at variance with

Bull's own concept of the co-eternity of the pneumatic Christ-Son. For example, in *Adversus Hermogenem*,¹⁸⁰ we find a passage in which Tertullian explicitly asserted that there was a time when the Son was not.

Though theologians were preoccupied with the eternal generation of the Son, the same type of reasoning applies to the generation of the universe. But by a peculiar twist the same theologians ignore the "eternal generation" of the universe which pre-existed, according to Tertullian and Philo, in the mind of God as well. Obviously, Bull's insistence on the preexistence of the unbegotten Son has a psychological basis, in fear of diminishing otherwise the dignity and majesty of the Son's divinity. Since, according to the Christian theologians, the world is evil, they could not admit its being coeternal with God, even in this sense of preexistence as existing in his mind.¹⁸¹

Tertullian is explicit when he says that when God said "*Fiat lux*" the Word assumed its own form (*species*) and garb (*ornamentum*) – becoming light – and God made in this way himself a Son who proceeded from him as his first-born (*primogenitus*) and the only-begotten. The Son is the only-begotten because he is peculiar to God as he is generated from God's substance. Tertullian finds proof of this in the scripture misinterpreting Proverbs 8:22, Psalm 44 (45):2, Psalm 2:7, and Psalm 109 (110):3, as referring to the generation of the spiritual (pneumatic) Son, the divine being. Proverbs 8:22 is a poetical glorification of wisdom, though divine in quality, but partaken by humans in the context of the whole text, and almost its individualization is hardly any reference to a separate divine being. Psalm 44 (45):2 is an elocution of the writer in the dedication of the Psalm to glorify the king of Israel, the "God's anointed" (Hbr. messiah = Grk. christos; Psalm 2:2). The author says that his "heart has emitted (*eructavit*) excellent word (*sermonem*)."¹⁸¹ In Psalm 2:7 the author puts in the mouth of God the words addressed to the king as the messiah or christos: "Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten Thee" (i.e., I anointed you the king). This expression is paraphrased in the synoptic Gospels (Matthew 3:17; Mark

1:11, Luke 3:22) in the formula of baptism of Jesus, but its full text was used in the Gospel of Ebionites.¹⁸² Moreover, the gospel texts refer to the earthly Jesus who is supposed to become at the moment of his baptism the son of God (in the Hebrew meaning of the term). Tertullian's claim refers to the generation of the spiritual (pneumatic) Son before the formation of the universe. In Psalm 109 (110):3 God addresses in poetical terms to his anointed, the king of Israel: "I have begotten thee from the womb before the morning." In the entire Old Testament there is not a single expression which could be construed as referring to the future divine being, a divine pneumatic Messiah. Any mention of the messiah, or in the Septuagint of the christ (*christos*), refers to the earthly king, prophet or priest (sometimes even to the foreign ruler). They are also often addressed to as the lord, but Old Testament scripture differentiates clearly between the divine Lord and the earthly lord. There are two different Hebrew terms which are translated as lord (*Kyrios* in the Septuagint): the term *Adonay* means the Lord God, whereas the term *Adoni* means the lord, master (human). Whenever Tertullian saw the term *christos* in the Septuagint, he interpreted it as referring to the pneumatic being, the Son of God, the Christ.

And again, making reference to Proverbs 8:24-25, Tertullian claims that the Son is speaking under the name of Wisdom. Combining these expressions with the text of Psalm 32:6 which refers to the expressions of Genesis 1 where God speaks (*puts out his words*) – Tertullian claims that the Word was spoken under the name of Wisdom, Reason, and divine Mind (*divinus animus*), and Spirit is nothing else but the Son of God (*Filius Dei*) generated (*generatus*) when he proceeded (*prodeundo*) from God.

Tertullian explains also that the Word is a certain substance constructed from the Spirit (*spiritus*), Wisdom (*sophia*), and Reason (*ratio*, called by the Greeks *logos*) who "became also the Son of God, and was begotten when he proceeded forth from him." It is a substantive being (*eum substantivum habere in re per substantiae proprietatem*), a thing and a person (*res et persona*) constituted as second to God

(*secundus a Deo*) to make two individuals, the Father and the Son, God and the Word (*res et persona ... secundus a Deo constitutus duos efficere, Patrem et Filium, Deum et sermonem*).¹⁸³ Next, accepting the old principle of Parmenides that “nothing can be made out of nothing” and that that is incorporeal cannot make things which have bodies (referring to John 1:1; Exodus 20:7; Philippians 2:6), Tertullian claims that God is corporeal: “For who will deny that God is a body (*Deum corpus esse*), although ‘God is a Spirit.’ For Spirit has a bodily substance of its own kind, in its own form (*Spiritus enim corpus sui generis in sua effigie*).”¹⁸⁴ Therefore, how much more must that which has been sent forth from God’s substance be substance; and whatever the substance of the Word which he designates as a person is the Son and thus second to the Father (*secundum a Patre*).

Bishop Bull's argument for the preexistence of the Word is as follows: First, everything that has an origin has a “parent” and everything that derived from the origin is “progeny.” By the same token, one who may be generated (born) from a father is always in the father though not always born, thus the father may not always be a father.¹⁸⁵ The second argument¹⁸⁶ refers to the famous Tertullian statement in *Against Hermogenes* that “there was a time when the Son of God was not” (*Fuisse tempus, quando Filius Dei non esset*). Bull, however, twists Tertullian's testimony quoting the opinion of Bellarminus who said that it refers not to the Word of God but to “a holy man or an angel as adoptive son of God, that is external to God” (*Ille Filius de quo dicit Tertullianus in libro contra Hermogenem, quod non semper fuit, non est Verbum Dei, sed Filius per adoptionem, id est quivis alius sanctus homo, vel angelus*). Though Bull admits that it is not certain, he claims that another statement of Tertullian in the same treatise demonstrates that the Son was always in the Father. There, Tertullian making reference to the biblical statement about the generation of God’s Wisdom, emphasizes its origin and beginning by comparing it with the origin and beginning of things external to God, namely, material things. Tertullian wrote that God had within him a “counselor who knew things in God” and this was “his

Wisdom” that is the Spirit. And further:

That very Wisdom of God is declared to be born and created, for the special reason that we should not suppose that there is any other being than God alone who is unbegotten and uncreated. For if that, which from its being inherent in the Lord was of him and in him, was yet not without a beginning – I mean his Wisdom which was then born and created, when in the thought of God it began to assume motion for the arrangement of his creative works – how much more impossible is it that anything should have been without a beginning which was extrinsic to the Lord!¹⁸⁷

(Tertullian refers here to material things since it is the topic of his argument with Hermogenes.) Thus it seems that Bull concluded that Tertullian believed that the Son of God, or Wisdom, or Reason, or Word, was always in God or with God as a person and was declared begotten only as a device to demonstrate that nothing extrinsic to God may be coeternal with him. Bull wants to ascribe to Tertullian his own orthodox view of eternal generation of the Son and his procession from the Father when the Father wished, (*[Tertullianus] docet, ipsam hypostasin sive personam του λόγου, Rationis, Sermonis, Sophiae, et Filii Dei, [nam eidem personae nomina ista omnia attribuit,] ab aeterno exitisse cum Deo Patre, et apud ipsum; itemque divinam illam personam, quando Pater voluit, ex ipso processisse ad creationem universi; ac propter processionem istam Sermonem et Filium Dei dictam esse.*)¹⁸⁸

But Tertullian is inconsistent in another respect. He declares in *Against Hermogenes* that the Wisdom of God is the Spirit in God which was his counselor and “Of this he made all things, making them through it, and making them with it.”¹⁸⁹ In *Against Praxeas* Tertullian identifies this Wisdom of God with the Word of God, with the Power of God, and with the Son of God.¹⁹⁰ These names are for him one and the same thing. At the same time, however, Tertullian declares that the Power of God and the Wisdom of God are not things, substances, but attributes:

Much more will the power of the Highest not be the Highest himself, because it is not an actually existing thing, as being Spirit – in the same way as the Wisdom of God and the Providence of God is not God: these attributes are not substances, but the accidents of the particular substance. Power is incidental to the Spirit; but cannot itself be the Spirit.¹⁹¹

The Mode of Existence of the Divine Prolation (Son)

Now there was a problem for Tertullian in asserting the generation of the Son from the substance of the Father. In an attempt to oppose the doctrine of Valentinus¹⁹² about prolation (προβολή) of “Aeon from Aeon” (*Aeonem de Aeone*), which would lead to the formation of separate divine beings, thus to bitheism or tritheism, Tertullian proposes to use the term in a different meaning, not as a separate entity, but as an outgrowth united with the source.

The term Aeon (Αἰών) signifying “age”, “the ever-existing” or “eternity,” was applied by Gnostics to designate the series of spiritual powers progressively emanating from the eternal Being and personified. They constitute the Pleroma (Πληρωμα) or invisible spiritual world and intermediaries between the divinity and the Kenoma (Κένωμα), or visible material world. This concept of the Aeon originated in Platonic philosophy which postulated that a transcendent divinity was incapable of any interaction with the material world. Gnostics attempted to reconcile this philosophy with the Christian notion of a direct interference of God with the material world, in the creation and redemption of man. These Aeons were functional in the Hellenic religious systems, whereas in Judaism the function of Aeons was performed by angels. In different Gnostic systems there was a hierarchy of Aeons emanating, as in Egyptian religious systems, in pairs, from a starting point which was a divinity with an accompanying co-eternal Aeon. In Christian Gnosticism Christ was

an Aeon whose function was to restore harmony in the Pleroma and bring order in the material world by giving men knowledge which will free them from the dominion of evil.

Tertullian's proofs come from comparing the characteristics ascribed to the Aeons and to the Son, namely, that Aeon "does not know the Father ... he longs to know him, but cannot;" moreover, this is so because "he is swallowed up and dissolved in the rest of matter [substance] (*in reliquam substantiam*)." The Son, on the contrary,¹⁹³ "alone knows the Father ... has unfolded the Father's bosom (*sinum Patris ipse exposuit*)" (John 1:18); "has heard and seen all things with the Father;" he speaks "what he had been commanded by the Father," and "is not in his own will but the Father's, which he has accomplished" and "which he had known from the beginning." Therefore, the Word as formed from the Spirit (the Spirit is the body of the Word) is both always in the Father and is always with God. This is Tertullian's interpretation of the scriptural expressions found in John 14:11 and John 1:1. And they are supposed to indicate that the Son is "never separated from the Father and other than the Father," again supposedly supporting the scriptural text (John 10:30). Tertullian still insists on using the term prolation, because this meaning is found in the scripture "God sent forth the Word" (*Protulit enim Deus sermonem*), but Tertullian understands it as the outgrowth remaining united with its source.

That it is so is indicated by his explanations. Tertullian uses the following analogies to explain this unity between the Father and the Son: "just as the root put forth the tree, and the fountain the river, and the sun the ray." These are the prolations of the substances from which they proceed, but they are not severed from the source. Thus the Son and the Father are two things but indivisible (*duae species sunt sed indiuisae*). In summing up this speculation, Tertullian abruptly introduces, without explanation, the third individual in unity with the other two:

Everything which proceeds (*protulit*) from something else must needs be second to that from which it proceeds, without being on that

account separated (*separatum*). Where, however, there is a second there must be two; and where there is a third, there must be three. Now the Spirit (*spiritus*) is the third from God and the Son; just as the fruit (*fructus*) of the tree is third from the root (*a radice*), or as the stream out of the river (*rivus*) is third from the fountain (*a fonte*), or as the apex (*apex*) of the ray (*ex radio*) is third from the sun (*a sole*). Nothing, however, is alien from that original source whence it derives its own properties (*proprietas*). In like manner the Trinity (*trinitas*) flowing down from the Father through intertwined and connected steps, does not at all disturb (*obstrepit*) the Monarchy (*monarchiae*), whilst it at the same time guards the state of the economy (*oikonomiae statum protegit*).¹⁹⁴

Tertullian's illustrations taken from the analogies to the natural world are used as a *sui generis* proof for his assertions about the Trinity. From this analogy Tertullian derived his assertion about the origin of the third entity from the second. We do not find this concept in the Apologists, they rather tacitly assumed its origin as being analogical to the origin of the second entity.

Tertullian professes the rule of faith (*regula fidei*): the three are inseparable; each is one – the Father, the Son and the Spirit (as having the same substance, i.e., *pneuma* or spirit); yet they are distinct from each other. So to describe the mode of their existence Tertullian opposes the mode of existence as a separated individual to that of distinction with the unity: the Son differs from the Father not by diversity (*diuersitate*), but by distribution (*distributione*), not by division (*diuisione*), but by distinction (*distinctione*). This is supposed to be so because it relates to the economy (*oikonomia*) or the internal structure of the divine being: the Father is the whole substance (*tota substantia*), the Son is a derivation and portion of the whole (*deriuatio totius et portio*). The proof is supposed to come from the statement of John 14:28 in which the superior status of the Father is mentioned. But Tertullian

interprets it in quantitative terms of the quantity of substance. Another quote supposedly supporting Tertullian's contention is to come from Psalm 8:6 where the expression refers to the human being as being lower in status to the angels. In the same passage there also is man described characteristically and simply as "the Son of man," a typical description of Jesus by himself. Since the Son was sent by the Father, Tertullian reasoned, the Son must be distinct from the Father, but again Tertullian argues that John 14:16 is supposed to indicate also the person of the Paraclete as the separate disposition (*dispositionem*) not a division (*diuisionem*). But in this quote Jesus states that he will pray to the Father and the Father will send another comforter (*allium aduocatum*), and there is no indication of any "disposition" here; John indicates only the spirit of truth (*spiritum ueritatis*) as the effect or influence of God. Tertullian interprets this expression as pointing to a distinct individual from the Father, distinct as the Son is distinct. Thus, the Son has the second degree (*secundum gradum*) and the Spirit has the third degree (*tertium gradum*) order of structure (*oikonomiam*). Again Tertullian gives a fancy argument in support of this contention: it must be so because the Father and the Son have different names.

Supposed Scriptural Testimony for the Existence of the Son¹⁹⁵

Moreover, to be a father one needs have a son and vice-versa. From such an argument Tertullian derives the necessity of the Father to have the Son. And as if in order to refute the argument of irrationality of the concept of God having a son, Tertullian quotes as arguments a few statements from various scriptures with the meaning that everything is possible with God (Job 42:2; Matthew 19:26; Luke 18:27; 1 Corinthians 1:26-28). We should not ask, according to Tertullian, what God could do, but rather "what God really has done," "For with God, to be willing is to be able, and to be unwilling is to be unable (*Dei enim posse uelle est et non posse nolle*); all that he has willed, however, he has both been able to accomplish, and has displayed his ability. Since, therefore, if God had wished to make himself a Son, he had it in his

power to do so; and since, if he had it in his power, he affected his purpose (*ergo – quia si uoluit semetipsum sibi filium facere, potuit et quia si potuit, fecit*).”

Now what remains to be proven for Tertullian is that God actually did so. He proceeds to demonstrate from selected statements from the scripture and interpreted in his peculiar way that God made “his word a Son to himself (*nos probamus illum sibi Filium fecisse sermonem suum*).” The Son is distinct from the Father but is not separate (*distincte, inquam non diuise*) and, according to Tertullian, “All the scriptures attest the clear existence of, and distinction in the [Persons of] Trinity, and indeed furnish us with the Rule of faith.” In addition to the already discussed quotes from Psalm 44 (45):2; Psalm 2:7 and Psalm 109 (110):3, Tertullian refers to the prophecy of Isaiah 42:1 which refers to the Jewish King, the servant of God who will receive the spirit from God (i.e., God’s guidance and instruction, in the Hebrew way) and who “will teach the true way to the nations.”¹⁹⁶ In the text of Isaiah 49:6, God promises to raise up the tribes of Jacob and restore the survivors of Israel (after defeat) and make them the light for the nations, “that his salvation may reach the end of the earth.” This was clearly a political promise to the Jews who were first to be restored in their idealized kingdom and then to become the rulers of the world. Isaiah 61:1 refers, even in the distorted Latin translation used by Tertullian, to the Jewish King or head of state who is God’s anointed according to the Jewish tradition, and who has a mandate to “proclaim good news,” i.e., the release from captivity, consolation, and vindication by God of Israel’s mourners after their disasters. In Psalm 70 (71):18 the Son is supposed to speak of himself “Forsake me not until I have declared the might of Thine arm [i.e., God’s arm] to all the generation that is to come.” If so, this is the prophecy that was not fulfilled. But this prophecy refers to David, the Jewish King. In Psalm 3:2 God declares that he selected the people of Israel to account for all their iniquities.

According to Tertullian, all the psalms which prophesy the person of the “anointed” (*christus = christos*) represent the Son, and the pneumatic Christ as

speaking with the Father represents Christ as speaking to God. Also, the Holy Spirit is represented in the psalms as the third Person when he is supposedly speaking of the Father and the Son: “The Lord said unto my Lord, sit Thou on my right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool” (Psalm 109 (110):1). In this Psalm, the author speaks about his lord, the King David (second lord) to whom God (the first Lord) offers privileges and support in conquering the enemies. Tertullian evidently takes the author of the Psalm as the Holy Spirit, but is not consistent; moreover, how can the Son be the Lord of the Holy Spirit? The same suggestion is made for Isaiah 45:1. But here clearly God speaks to King Cyrus, who was considered God’s anointed, that is in Hebrew *messiah* and in Greek *christos*. Isaiah 53:1-2 refers to the idealized Jewish messiah, God’s anointed who will grow from obscurity and suffering to glory and upon whom God will visit the guilt of all Jews. This text was used in creating the figure of Jesus in the Gospels and now Tertullian refers back to it to prove the existence of the Son.

Tertullian summarizes his speculation claiming that all these quotes indicate the existence of the Trinity:

For there is the Spirit himself who speaks, and the Father to whom he speaks, and the Son of whom he speaks. In the same manner, the other passages also establish each one of several persons in his special character – addressed as if they in some cases are to the Father or to the Son in respect to the Son, or in other cases to the Son or to the Father concerning the Father, and again in other instances to the [Holy] Spirit.¹⁹⁷

Further evidence for the existence of the Trinity Tertullian attempts to provide by other scriptural quotes. God for example, being one, speaks in plural phrases as in Genesis 1:26; 3:22. Tertullian gives this explanation:

Nay, it was because he [God] had already his Son close to his side, as a second Person, his own Word, and a third Person also, the Spirit in

the Word, that he purposely adopted the plural phrase, ‘Let us make;’ and, ‘in our image;’ and, ‘become as one of us.’

This Son was one day to put on a human nature (*induiturus humanitatem*) and the Spirit was to sanctify man (*sanctificaturus*). Thus the text of Genesis 1:27 Tertullian interprets as referring to man made in the image of the Son-Christ, the perfect man, who was to become a man.

Another argument for the Trinity comes, according to Tertullian, from what God did before the world came into existence. He quotes familiar statements from the Genesis, “And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light.” (Genesis 1:3). Now in Tertullian’s interpretation, produced by a peculiar juxtaposition of a quote from John 1:9, it is supposed to mean that the Word appeared immediately and that it is supposed to be “that true light, which lighteth man on his coming into the world.” So, the Light of Genesis is supposed to be the Word, the Son. Also, making reference to John 1:1 which states (in most translations) that “The Word was God” (*Deus erat sermo*) and John 1:3 that states that everything that was made was made through it, Tertullian attempts to explain that subsequent acts of God’s creation were done in two steps by two individuals – in one step one individual commands the things to be made, and in another the other individual executes the order and creates (God did this or that) (*habes duos, alium dicentem ut fiat, alium facientem*). The evidence for this is supposed to come from the fact that the first God issues commands like “God said: ‘Let there be firmament’” and so on, and the second God does things. God would not issue a command if he were alone, therefore there are two divine individuals. And again the distinction between these two is not on the basis of their substance but on the basis of their personality (i.e., function) (*personae, non substantiae nomine, ad distinctionem non ad diuisionem*).

But although I must everywhere hold one only substance in three coherent and inseparable [Persons], yet I am bound to acknowledge, from the necessity of the case, that he who issued a command is

different from him who executes it. For, indeed, he would not be issuing a command if he were all the while doing the work himself.

Putting aside the question that the text of Genesis is a poetical and metaphorical one, there are statements which are not consistent in their formulations with the speculation of Tertullian. E.g., Genesis 1:1; 2:4-17; 2:21-22 clearly state what Yahweh himself did without issuing a command.

Many passages according to Tertullian illustrate the plurality of persons in God and the unity of substance. Psalm 44 (45):7-8 Tertullian erroneously interprets as if the scribe referred to the Christ, anointed God, by God (*unctum Deum a Deo*), whereas the text clearly refers to the righteous king who is the anointed (*messiah, christos*) of God. Another text of Isaiah 45:14-15, used by Tertullian is supposed to speak of Christ and the Holy Spirit, whereas it refers to the king and Israel, and promises that he will be victorious because only he and his followers worship the true God, that is, the God of Israel, who in addition, was hidden (probably with the meaning “not revealed to other nations”). The text even in the wrong translation refers to the God of Israel and not to two or three divine individuals.

Again in the Tertullian interpretation of John 1:1, there were two divine individuals: one who was God and the other who was with him, the Word. In Psalm 109 (110):1 and Isaiah 53:1, Tertullian claims that both these individuals are called Lord (i.e., God) whereas the texts refer to the Lord God and the lord King. In Genesis 19:24, the term lord is repeated twice which Tertullian again takes as meaning that the first term lord refers to the Christ, the Son. Then Tertullian apologizes for the kind of Christians who follow the Paraclete and believe that the scripture positively declared two Gods and two Lords, and, with the introduction of the Holy Spirit, even three. This was done in accordance with the divine economy so that when Christ came he might be acknowledged both as God and as Lord and to avoid having the Father come down to earth and sacrifice himself. At the same time, the scripture declares that there is one God and one Lord, thus the Three must be restored to unity

in contradistinction to the polytheism of the Gentiles. And, in order to distinguish between the two, the Father and the Son, Tertullian says that, when both are invoked, he will call the Father “God” and Jesus “Lord,” and when Christ alone is mentioned he will call him “God.” It is interesting that Tertullian, for justifying this statement invokes the analogy of the sun and the sun ray:

For I should give the name “sun” even to a sunbeam, considered in itself; but if I were mentioning the sun from which the ray emanates, I certainly should at once withdraw the name “sun” from the mere beam. For although I make not two suns, still I shall reckon both the sun and its ray to be as much two things (*duas res*) and two forms (*duas species*) of one undivided substance (*unius et indivisae substantiae*), as God and his Word (*sermonem*), as the Father and the Son.

Another argument used by Tertullian to prove the existence of the Son is from the invisibility of God the Father but the visibility of the Son. God, according to Exodus 33:20, is invisible, but many saw God according to the faculties of man (*secundum hominum capacitatem*): Abraham, Jacob, the prophets (Isaiah, Ezekiel) and did not die. Therefore, they had to see another being that is the Son who can be seen because of the derivation of his mode of existence, just as we cannot look at the sun in the heaven to contemplate it in its full substance, and only endure a ray with our eyes. (*Filium agnoscamus pro modulo derivationis, sicut nec solem nobis contemplari licet, quantum ad ipsam substantiae summam quae est in caelis. Radium autem eius toleramus oculis pro temperatura portionis quae in terram inde porrigitur*).¹⁹⁸ But the Son himself, being a God and spirit, is invisible, nevertheless appeared as visible to the prophets and patriarchs before his incarnation in a vision, in an image, in a glass, and as an enigma and spoke to them (Genesis 32:20; Exodus 33:9,11,14,19-28; Numbers 12:6, 8; 1 Corinthians 13:12). Tertullian calls the invisible Father “his face” based on a wrong translation and reading of John 14:28

and Lamentations 4:20 (*Spiritus personae eius Christus Dominus*), that the Father must be greater than the Son, which is an erroneous interpretation of the Hebrew text referring to the king of Judah (probably the last king of Judah, Zedekiah, anointed of Yahweh [*christus Domini*] and who was captured in 587 B.C.E. by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon). Whenever he sees a term “anointed” (*christus*), Tertullian applies it to the pneumatic being, Christ, the Son, or the Word. When the texts are read with Tertullian's meaning of the term, they lead to nonsense.

Next Tertullian contrasts the Son's visibility with the Father's invisibility in the New Testament. Again, as the basis for the contrast Tertullian takes the quote from Exodus 33:20 which implies that man cannot see God as he would die. Such a theme is repeated in John 1:18 and 1 Timothy 6:16. The apostles, however, saw God, therefore they saw the Son (1 Corinthians 1:9; 1 John 1:1; 4:12; John 1:14, 18). Tertullian claims that John in Romans 9:5 “Shows us also that the Son of God, which is the Word of God, is visible, because he who became flesh was called Christ” (*Ostendit [Johannes] et ipse uisibilem Deum Filium, id est sermonem Dei, quia qui caro factus est Christus dictus est*). Time was when the Son was visible in mystery and an enigma. He became more visible in his incarnation and he is God because he is God from God (*Dei Deum*). The last statement is a paradigm of Greek philosophy (*similis simili gaudet*). Following the same line of thought Tertullian lists characteristics ascribed to the Father: he is immortal, dwells in invisible and unapproachable light. He contrasts them with those of the Son: mortality, visibility, accessibility by means of the light which was accessible without harm, loss of reason and mind (1 Timothy 1:17; 6:16; Acts 9:8; Matthew 17:5-6). But such speculation is not consistent with Tertullian's further description of the Son as having two natures – divine and human.¹⁹⁹ From such comparisons Tertullian concludes that there are two: one, the Son, who was always seen from the beginning and became visible in the end, and the other, the Father, who was not visible from the beginning and was not seen in the end. But in the final analysis the Son has always worked by the authority and will

of the Father because, according to John 5:19, “the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do.” Further, Tertullian explains that the term “do” means “in his mind and thought. For the Father acts by mind and thought; whilst the Son, who is in the Father’s mind and thought, gives effect and form to what he sees. Thus all things were made by the Son, and without him was not anything made.”

Next, Tertullian following the approach of Justin and other Apologists, reviews all the manifestations of the Son of God as recorded, according to him, in the Old Testament and considers them as a practice or rehearsal for the subsequent incarnation. As a basis for this contention Tertullian gives the quote from John 3:35, which indicates that God handed to the Son not only the order of the creation of the world, but also of everything else already done by God (John 1:1; Matthew 28:18). Next follows the review, the same as that given by Justin of the Son’s manifestations and actions. This was done

in order to level for us the way of the faith, that we might the more readily believe that the Son of God had come down into the world, if we knew that in times past also something similar had been done.²⁰⁰

But Tertullian states that in the final analysis all things were done by the Father through the agency of the Son (*et ita unum Deum, it est Patrem, semper egisse quae per Filium gesta sunt*).²⁰¹

In the following chapters Tertullian undertakes the task of proving that Praxeas is wrong identifying the Father with the Son. Tertullian claims that they are two distinct persons but not separated since the scripture says *Ego Deus et alius praeter me non est* (Isaiah 45:5). So in the Gospel of John Jesus answers to Philip *Ego et Pater unum sumus* (John 10:30), and *Qui me viderit, uidit et Patrem* (John 14:9), and also, *Ego in Patre et Pater in me* (John 14:10-11; 10:38). These were the key quotes of Jesus on which Monarchians based their argument. Tertullian accuses the Monarchians of selecting these few testimonies and ignoring the rest of the scripture, so he proposes to examine them in chapters XXI-XXV in the light of the

other statements in the Gospel of John.

One of Tertullian's arguments follows from the preamble to the Gospel of John (1:1-3): *In principio erat sermo et sermo erat apud Deum et Deus erat sermo; hic erat in principio apud Deum; omnia per ipsum facta sunt et sine ipso factum est nihil*. Tertullian interprets this passage as showing what Jesus was before he became flesh and that originally there were two, namely, the Word of God and God, but the Word was also God and, according to Tertullian, regarded as the Son of God, not as the Father. Moreover, the Word was there in the beginning because it was spoken by God and there was no world formed yet. According to Tertullian, this *sermo* is not identical with God, but is differentiated by dispensation (i.e., arrangement, or distribution of God's powers) and not by separation. Thus, the one who “became flesh” (and it was the *sermo* who became flesh) is not the same as the one from whom the Word came. And glory was awarded to him analogically as to the only-begotten of the Father and not as to the Father (*Huius gloria uisa est tanquam unici a Patre, non tanquam Patris*) because nobody saw God and only his Son divulged the Father’s innermost thoughts. Further proof of the distinction comes from the affirmation of Jesus as the Son of God given by John the Baptizer (John 1:29-34) and Nathanael (John 1:49-51). Peter (Matthew 16:16-17) affirmed that Jesus is the anointed (messiah = christos = Christ), the Son of God on earth (but it could be only in the Hebrew meaning). Then Tertullian quotes passages from the scripture in which the Son, i.e. Jesus, is differentiated from the Father as evidence for the existence of two divine entities (John 2:16; 3:16-18; 3:35-36; 4:25; 4:34; 5:17; 5:18; 5:20; 5:43; 6:29; 6:32-44; 6:69; 7:15-16; 7:28; 7:33; 8:16; 8:18; 8:26; 8:42; 8:48-49; 8:54-56; 11:27; 12:28; 12:44-45; 13:1-3; Matthew 17:5). Jesus preaches what he “heard” from the one who has sent him (John 8:26-29; 8:38; 12:49) and that he has certain powers given to him by his Father, but none of his own, even the power of judging during the approaching general resurrection and trial, just as the Jewish messiah was supposed to do (John 5:19-27; 5:35-37; 10:24-25). Jesus claims that he is a man (John 8:40)

though sent by God. On the one hand, Tertullian takes literally the expression *Ego enim ex Deo exiui et ueni* (John 8:42) as meaning that the Son of God (in Tertullian nomenclature, Christ) is coming out of God “like the ray's procession from the sun and the river's from the fountain, and the tree's from the seed.” On the other hand, he interprets it as meaning that they are not separated. To Tertullian, Jesus is the Son of man according to his flesh, also the Son of God according to his Spirit (*quia Filius hominis est per carnem scilicet, sicut et Filius Dei per Spiritum eius*).²⁰² Though, to Tertullian,²⁰³ God is in a “bottomless abyss, but exists everywhere by his power and authority,” so does his Son who is indivisible from the Father. But in his economy or dispensation the Father wanted to have the Son on earth being himself in heaven.²⁰⁴ And he made his Son a little lower than the angels²⁰⁵ by sending him to earth though he will take him back to heaven and glory. Moreover, Tertullian believes that it was the Son who was seen and heard in the past scriptural testimonies and not the Father. “It was therefore always the Son under the designation of the Almighty and the Most High, and King, and Lord.”

Now coming back to the crucial statement of Jesus “I and my Father are one” (John 10:30), Tertullian explains first that the pronouncement of Jesus clearly involves two individuals, “*ego*” and “*Pater*.” Second, the verb “*sumus*” indicates the plural form that is inapplicable to one person. Lastly, the term “*unum sumus*” and not “*unus sumus*” is used. *Unum* is used here which is a neutral singular word and does not point to singularity in number but to unity, likeness, conjunction, affection of the Father who loves the Son, submission of the Son who obeys the Father's will. *Unum sumus* signifies equality and unity. Jews hearing such blasphemy wanted to stone Jesus but he reminds them of the many good works he had performed which derive from the Father. The Jews replied that they did not want to stone him for deeds but for blasphemy. Thus to prevent their thinking of Jesus as deserving the stoning as if he had claimed to be himself God, Jesus appeals to the authority of the scripture. For if the scripture addresses the leaders of the Jews as “I said, you are gods,”²⁰⁶ and the

statement is metaphorical, so much less one can say about him who was sanctified and sent into the world by the Father (i.e., as anointed by God), that he blasphemes because he said “I am the son of God.” And as evidence of his truthfulness Jesus points to his works which indicate that he is in the Father and the Father is in him (John 10:31-39). Thus Tertullian explains that precisely through the works the Father is in the Son and the Son in the Father, and thus in this way we must understand their unity. Still Tertullian believes that though they were of one power (nature) (*in una uirtute*) they should be believed to be two, otherwise one could not believe in the Son. Moreover, Tertullian believes that Jesus (the Son) was described in the Old Testament as the anointed (*christos* = messiah) of God, but in the New Testament he is the Son of God and thus anciently predicted. He is also declared as such and glorified by the Father himself from heaven in the statement “This is my beloved Son”²⁰⁷ and as such believed by his disciples and rejected by the other Jews. And then Tertullian gives other quotes which indicate the origin of Jesus from the Father and his mission on earth to show the way to the Father (John 5:25-26; 6:44; 14:6; 14:7; 14:10; 14:11; Matthew 11:27).

All this indicates, according to Tertullian that, through the agency of the Son, the Father could be seen in his works and recognized though he himself is invisible as the Law attested:

So he [Philip] is reproved for desiring to see the Father, as if he were a visible Being, as is taught that he only becomes visible in the Son from his mighty works, and not in the manifestation of His person.²⁰⁸

But at the same time Jesus sets the conjunction of the two persons (*duarum personarum coniunctionem*) in order that one might not see the Father as “separately visible.” The Father is manifested through the works of Jesus but “not indeed to the sight of man, but to his intelligence.”²⁰⁹

The Third Person in the Trinity

In the following chapter²¹⁰ Tertullian attempts to analyze what the Gospels say about the third entity, the Paraclete or the Holy Spirit. There is a statement (John 14:16) in which Jesus promises to ask the Father, after his ascension, to send to earth another Comforter (*Paracletus*). Tertullian insinuates that the Paraclete is “another” entity different from the Father as is the Son. But since Jesus said of the Paraclete “He shall receive of mine” (John 16:14) just as he himself received from the Father, the connection of the Father in the Son and the Son in the Paraclete produces three individuals who are distinct from one another. By analogy to John 10:30, these three are one and not one person; moreover by analogy to the second person and by extension of its characteristics, their unity is the unity of substance and not singularity of number. And again Tertullian quotes the scripture to indicate that the Father is distinct from the Son (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34; Luke 23:46) even after the resurrection since he will ascend to his Father and God, and the Father and God of his disciples (John 20:17), thus demonstrating that “Jesus is the Christ (the Anointed), the Son of God.” The Gospels, however, use the term Christ as the Greek equivalent of the “messiah” or the “anointed,” the earthly Son of God, though he may be elevated to a higher dignity, and not the celestial pneumatic being as Tertullian understands the term.

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit was not developed in the second century. The theological statements of the Spirit in the second century did not use the term hypostasis or person; but the term Holy Spirit was most certainly considered a third entity of the triad in the popular religion of the Christian Gentiles. The concept was an “enfant terrible” of the Christian faith. For Christian theorists this term was spoiling the harmony of the duality and only, as Novatian states, the authority of faith (i.e., from the testimony of scripture) compelled them to believe in the Holy Spirit as the third individual. But at the same time Novatian seems to understand the Holy Spirit not as a substantitive being but as an influence or effect of God’s action. Thus he claims that the Spirit dwelt in Christ.²¹¹ In such an understanding we find

remnants of the Hebrew concept of the *Ruach* as the effect and function of God who is considered the Father. The trinitarian concept at its root can be considered a representation of the functional description of the divinity.²¹² Tertullian himself is very equivocal about the third person of the Trinity describing him also as the “*Spiritus in sermone.*”²¹³ Nevertheless, Tertullian was the first to call the Holy Spirit God explicitly in a theological treatise, but it seems that he only repeated what was probably religious folklore in the Greek environment.

Tertullian, under the influence of the Logos speculation, was the first to conceive the Spirit as a prolation from the Son as the Son is from the Father, and therefore subordinate to the Son as the Son is to the Father. This is the most characteristic trait of his doctrine. Still Tertullian preserves the conception of the Father as the ultimate source in his assertion that the Spirit, being the third degree in the Godhead, proceeds “from no other source than from the Father through the Son.”²¹⁴ The Father and the Son are represented by the root and the stem, the fountain and the river, the sun and its ray; so the Spirit, being “third from God and the Son,” is as the fruit of the tree, which is third from the root, or as the stream from the river, which is third from the fountain or as the apex from the ray, which is third from the sun.²¹⁵ All flows from the Father through conjoined grades – the immediate connection is of the Father in the Son and the Son in the Paraclete.²¹⁶ It may be said that the Son receives the Spirit from the Father yet himself sends him forth: “The third name in the Godhead and the third Grade in the divine Majesty, the Declarer of the One Monarchy of God and yet, at the same time, the Interpreter of the Economy.”²¹⁷

There is not much Tertullian or any other Christian Apologist can say about the Holy Spirit. Since the name of the Paraclete or the Holy Spirit is mentioned in the scripture, Tertullian automatically assumes it to be an individual celestial pneumatic being analogical to the Word interpreted in a literal Greek sense as the Son of God. Thus the Paraclete or the Holy Spirit is treated as the third individual in the Trinity,

all three having the same substance, *sui generis* material – i.e., the “spirit” (Gr. *pneuma*, Lat. *spiritus*).

The Second Generation of the Word as the Son of God from Birth Narrations

Next Tertullian analyzes the verbal formulations of the announcement of Jesus’ birth in order to prove that the Father and the Son are distinct entities.²¹⁸ In Luke 1:35 the announcement in the Latin version quoted by Tertullian says: “*Spiritus Dei* (in the Greek version and in the Vulgate it is the *Pneuma hagion* and *Spiritus Sanctus*, respectively = the Holy Spirit) *superueniet in te et uirtus Altissimi obumbrabit te; propterea quod nascetur ex te sanctum uocabitur Filius Dei.*” “The Spirit of God shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also the Holy Thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.”²¹⁹ Tertullian argues that by saying that it was the “Spirit of God” and not simply God who came upon Mary, the author wanted to emphasize that it was only a portion of the whole Godhead which entered her and became “the Son of God.” But, at the same time, the Spirit of God must be the same as the Word (*Sermo*) because John 1:14 said: “*Sermo caro factus est*” (“The Word was made flesh”). For Tertullian the Spirit (*Spiritus*) is the substance of God and as such it must be the substance of the Word because the Word is the operation of the Spirit, and the two are one and the same. (*Nam et Spiritus substantia est sermonis et sermo operatio Spiritus et duo unum sunt*).²²⁰ But how Tertullian equated the operation (*Sermo*) with the substantive being (*substantiua res*) is not explained. This identity does not appear anywhere in the scripture, and we can only speculate that Tertullian followed the Greek paradigm that every operation or function must have its substantive agent. In the Hebrew mentality, *Davar*, the Word, was not a substantive being, but a power of God, thus his attribute. Only in the philosophy of Philo of Alexandria, we find an indication, though hesitant, of such a switch. Moreover, Tertullian himself insists that

the “power of the Highest” (*uirtus Altissimi*) cannot be equated with the actually existing thing (*substantiua res*). Likewise, the Wisdom of God and Providence cannot be equated with God because they are not substances but attributes and, as such, accidents of the particular substance.²²¹ Further, Tertullian argues, and again in agreement with the Greek logical paradigm, that that which proceeds from a personal subject may be in quality exactly as the subject from whom it proceeds and to whom it belongs. Thus the Spirit and the Word are God, but they are not actually the very same as the source. The Word is so far God as it is of the same substance as God himself and as an actually existing being (*substantiua res*) and a portion of the Godhead. After a lengthy and convoluted speculation, Tertullian concludes that whatever it was that had been conferred on the virgin, the Spirit of God, the Word, and the Power – (*His itaque rebus, quodcumque sunt, Spiritus Dei et sermone et uirtute collatis in uirginem*), that which was born of her is the Son of God, the pneumatic Christ.²²² And as such, Jesus was attested to in many places in the scripture (Luke 2:49; 4:34; 9:20-21; 10:11; 10:22; 12:8-9; 22:29; 23:46; 24:29-31; Mark 1:24; 11:31; 15:34; Matthew 4:3; 10:32-35; 11:25; 11:27; 16:16-17; 26:53; 28:19).

So we may conclude that that which entered Mary by the power of God (the Most High) was the Spirit of God, i.e., a portion of the substance of God; and Tertullian identifies it with the Word (*Sermo*) because it is said in the Gospel of John that “the Word became flesh.” What was born of Mary, Jesus, is the Son of God as it was announced by the angel. Jesus as the Son of God has several powers and duties to perform: “He will confess those who confess him and deny those who deny him, before his Father;” “He is ignorant of the last day and hour, which is known to the Father only;” “He awards the kingdom to his disciples” (by the appointment of his Father); “He has the power to ask ... legions of angels from the Father for his help;” “He exclaims that God has forsaken him;” “He commands his spirit into the hands of his Father;” “After his resurrection he promises in a pledge ... that he will send them

the promise of his Father;” “He commands them [the disciples] to baptize in the name of Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, not in a unipersonal God” (*et nouissime mandans ut tinguerent in Patrem et Filium et Spiritum sanctum, non in unum*).²²³

Two Natures in the Son: the Son of God and the Son of Man

After claiming to have established that there is distinction between the Father and the Son without destroying their union by making an analogy to the union of the sun and the ray, or of the fountain and the river, Tertullian now attempts to establish that there is a distinction between the two natures united in the Son. According to the Monarchians, however, the difference between the Father and the Son is such that the Father is the Spirit, that is Christ, that is God; and the Son is the flesh, that is man, that is Jesus. Tertullian claims to have refuted this by stating that the Word of God is the Spirit of God also called the Power of the Highest that proceeded from God. Now he states that the Power is a substantive thing, contradicting what he said earlier.

To explain the nature of Jesus, Tertullian goes back to the announcement made by the angel in Luke 1:35. The holy thing that will be born of Mary should be called Jesus. The Monarchians argue that it was the flesh, that is the man Jesus, who was born, therefore, he must be the Son. Tertullian argues, contrary to the biblical text, that the announcement was spoken concerning the Spirit of God:

For it was certainly of the Holy Spirit that the virgin conceived; and that which she conceived she brought forth. That, therefore, had to be born which was conceived and was to be brought forth; that is to say, the Spirit.

In Matthew 1:23, by mistaken reference to Isaiah 7:14, that he who was to be born was to be called Emmanuel, which is interpreted as meaning “God with us,” Tertullian puts together two announcements, one meaning he who was born is the

Son of God, the other “God with us;” taking them literally, in the Greek sense as meaning that the thing born is physically the Son of God and therefore the divine Being who was born in the flesh. The flesh alone could not be the Son of God because the flesh could not be God. Moreover, this was supposed to be predicted in Psalm 86 (87):5 which has nothing to do with the idea of “God becoming a man” but refers to all nations which will be one day united under one cult of Yahweh and the rule of Jerusalem.

This process of the generation of the Son of God was exactly what the Hellenes were saying about the generation of the sons and daughters of Zeus. These were Gods in human flesh. Mary conceived by the Spirit and therefore that which was born was the Spirit, too, but born in human flesh. According to the Greek rule expressed by John 3:6 “That which is born in the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit.”

Tertullian then asks the question, which God was born in it, i.e., in the flesh? And he answers – the Word and the Spirit which became incarnate by the will of the Father (again with reference to John 1:1-2; 14, though the wording here is “the Word became flesh,” but used obviously in a metaphorical sense). Through a lengthy discussion, Tertullian explains the mode in which the Word could exist in the flesh without transfiguration into flesh, because “The Word is God and ‘the Word of the Lord remains for ever’ (Isaiah 40:8) – even by holding on unchangeably in his own form.” Thus God cannot change in substance (undergo transfiguration), and the only possibility left was that the Word became clothed in flesh. Tertullian, making reference to the already mentioned Psalm 86 (87):5 (God became man) and to Romans 1:3-4 (the predicted one was to be the Son of God according to the Spirit and the seed of David according to the flesh), claims that Jesus is of both natures, of both substances remaining in opposition, God and Man. “We see plainly the twofold state, which is not confounded, but conjoined in one person – Jesus, God and Man” (*Uidemus duplicem statum, non confusum sed coniunctum in una persona -- Deum et*

hominem Iesum).²²⁴ Moreover, Tertullian insists that the property of each substance is so preserved that

The Spirit on the one hand did all things in Jesus suitable to itself, such as miracles, and mighty deeds, and wonders; and the flesh, on the other hand, exhibited the affections which belong to it. It was hungry under the devil's temptation, thirsty with the Samaritan woman, it wept over Lazarus, was troubled even unto death, and at last actually died (*Salua est utriusque proprietas substantiae, ut et Spiritus res suas egerit in illo, id est uirtutes et opera et signa, et caro passiones suas functa sint, esuriens sub diabolo, sitiens sub Samaritide, flens Lazarum, anxia usque ad mortem, denique et mortua [est]*) (Matthew 4:2-3; John 4:6-7; Matthew 26:38).²²⁵

The basis for this interpretation is the Stoic theory of mixing physical bodies in which the type of mixing called blending preserved the capacity for separation of the mixed substances again from one another. In such a blending the components preserve their own specific qualities, natures, in the mixture and are not replaced by a third substance.²²⁶ The Spirit, Logos, could not be transformed into flesh or the third substance, since then it would have ceased to be God: "We see a twofold state, not confused but joined in one person, God and man, Jesus."²²⁷ Just as in the Godhead Tertullian saw three persons united by one substance, in his Christology the one person had two substances.

Thus Tertullian summarizes his speculation: Jesus consists of two substances – of flesh as a man and of Spirit as God. And that part which is Spirit, the angel designated as the Son of God reserving for the flesh the appellation the Son of Man (1 Timothy 2:5).²²⁸

The Name Christ: Tertullian's Contradictions

Next Tertullian analyzes the name "Christ."²²⁹ This term is a name not a

surname and it means anointed (*unctus*) and it is not a proper name but an accessory to a name. Jesus is called Christ, i.e., anointed from the mystery of his anointing (*ab unctionis sacramento*)²³⁰ which is attested by Peter in Acts 2:36 and by other statements (Acts 4:27; 1 John 1:3; 2:22; 3:23; 4:2; 5:1; Romans 1:1-4; Galatians 1:1) and by statements in the Old Testament referring to the messiah (the anointed one) (Amos 4:13; Psalm 2:2; Isaiah 45:1). “Jesus” is the proper name which was given by the angel, “Christ” (the Anointed) is the predicable name deriving from the fact of anointing (*accidens quod ab unctione conuenit*),²³¹ therefore, Christ (the Anointed) must be the Son. Thus the Son of God was anointed by God his Father and is designated by two names: “Jesus” and “Christ” (the Anointed one). According to Tertullian, Paul speaks everywhere of “God the Father and our lord Jesus Christ (the Anointed)” (*Paulus ubique Deum Patrem ponit et Dominum nostrum Iesum Christum*).²³² But Tertullian interprets Paul as using the term in the meaning of a pneumatic being derived from God. Thus blind must be the one who perceives in the name of Christ another God if he ascribes to the Father the name Christ since Jesus said “I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God” (John 20:17).

So, according to Tertullian, it was Christ (the Anointed) who died on the cross (1 Corinthians 15:5; 15:3; John 6:60). But he immediately notices a contradiction: how could a Son of God in the Greek sense die? Therefore he adds that there are two substances in the Christ (Anointed) Jesus – the human and the divine, one mortal and the other one immortal. So it is manifest that when Paul declared that the Christ, Son of God died, it is “in the sense in which he was flesh and Man and the Son of Man, not as being the Spirit and the Word and the Son of God” (*id est unctus, id quod unctum est mortuum ostendit, id est carnem*). So, it was the man who died and not the Spirit, the pneumatic Son of God. The nature that died was the one that was anointed, i.e., the flesh. But here Tertullian contradicts himself again because he earlier stated that the one who was anointed was the Son.

Through this type of twisted speculation Tertullian claims to avoid the double blasphemy of the followers of Praxeas (they not only alleged that the Father died but also that he was crucified). Death by hanging was considered a curse (Deut. 21:23) and such a death is compatible to the Son according to Paul (Galatians 3:13), so he died as human nature. Similarly, Tertullian argues that the Father could not suffer as God or even “share in the suffering” (*compatitur*)²³³ of the Son (as the Monarchians claimed). Moreover, even the Son is incapable of suffering under the conditions of his existence as God (*impassibilis etiam Filius ex ea conditione qua Deus est*).²³⁴ Tertullian’s argument is that the Father is separate from the Son but not as God, using again the analogy of the river and the fountain. But this time in his analogy the mud that may soil the river does not reach the fountain, and even if the water suffers injury, it is only the water in the river and not in the fountain. The conclusion which Tertullian draws from this is that the Spirit of God, whatever suffering it might have been capable of in the Son, it could not have suffered as the Father, and the Spirit of God suffered nothing as the Spirit of God (*nihil Spiritum Dei passum suo nomine*), since all the suffering was with the Son. It was quite another matter for the Father to suffer with the Son in the flesh.²³⁵ This is supposed to be an analogy to human suffering for God – humans are unable to suffer for God “unless the Spirit of God is in humans” and thus God bestows on humans the capacity of suffering.

The Son’s Death on the Cross as the Son of Man

Tertullian finally refers to the quote from Matthew 27:46 claiming that the text referred to the voice of flesh and soul, thus of man, and not of the Word and Spirit, i.e., God. This pronouncement was uttered to prove the impassibility of God who forsook his Son insofar as he handed over his human substance to the suffering of death. And this was proven according to Tertullian by Paul and by Isaiah (Romans 8:32; Isaiah 57:6). But the Father did not forsake his Son in all other respects since into his Father’s hands the Son commended his spirit (Luke 23:46). We are led to

understand that if the Spirit remained in the flesh, the body could not die. Thus the pneumatic Son's death amounts to being forsaken in its human nature (*Ita relinquit a Patre mori fuit Filio*)²³⁶ and the Son "died" and was resurrected according to the scripture (1 Corinthians 15:3). It was the Son who "ascends to the higher parts of heaven and who descends into the inner parts of the earth"²³⁷ with all the pictorial description repeated after the scripture (Ephesians 4:9; John 3:13; Mark 16:19; Acts 7:55; Psalm 109 (110):1; Luke 21:27; Acts 1:11). In the meantime he sent forth the gift which he received from the Father, i.e., the third name in the divinity and the third grade in the divine majesty who is at the same time interpreter of the divine economy and the guide leading all those who accept the word of the new prophecy into the truth of the Christian mystery.²³⁸

Tertullian claims that the doctrine of Praxeas refuses to acknowledge the Son and the Spirit in addition to the Father. This is the distinction between the Jews and Christians and a basis for the new covenant which is revealed by God so that men could know now the unity of God in a new manner and openly in his proper names and persons.²³⁹

Summary of Tertullian's Doctrine of the Trinity

Tertullian was the first who coined the Latin term *trinitas* for the description of the three divine entities in his doctrine of the Trinity.²⁴⁰ He translated the Greek term *triad* which was used for the first time in describing the Christian triad by Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, ca 180 C.E. In one place the word was used by Valentinus to describe the triple nature of man.²⁴¹ Theophilus describes the three days before the creation of the luminaries as "types of the Triad (*τριάς*), of God, and His Word, and His wisdom."²⁴² Before Tertullian, Justin Martyr developed the Logos Christology and described the Christian Triad in terms of rank or order (*τάξις*) of its members.

The term triad must have been in common use in philosophy and religion for

the definition of principles in the world and for the worship of Gods.²⁴³ Greek philosophy abounds in the concept of triads or three entities. The term was also used to describe various abstractions e.g., “flesh, souls, spirit;” “the sacred Triad faith, hope, love.”²⁴⁴ It goes back to Pythagoras and can be found in many cultures as representing groupings of three divinities. In its early version the doctrine of the Trinity was described in terms of subordination to God the Father, but it was condemned by the Council of Constantinople in 381. If we wish to differentiate between groupings of three entities without any special connotation of the unity we use today a term “triad.”

But Tertullian’s innovation was that he developed the concept of a triune God applied to the Christian myth and changed the meaning of the original term *tri,aj*, though only in Latin. The question arises, however, whether Tertullian developed this idea of a triune divinity by himself or was inspired by other sources. Tertullian shows in his writings enormous erudition and knowledge of cultures and literatures of his time, a familiarity with Egyptian religion, and mystery religions, Greek as well as Egyptian. He mentions in *De Corona* (7), *De Pallio* (3), and in *Adversus Marcionem* (1.3) the story of Osiris and Isis. In his *Apology* (6.8) he mentions the triad of Sarapis, Isis, and Harpocrates. In *De Anima* (15.5) he alludes to the Egyptian hermetic writings. So it is only natural and logical to infer that he was influenced by the surrounding culture with which he was intimately acquainted. He found useful the Egyptian concept of the trinity for interpretation of the Christian biblical mythology and, at the same time, he explained it in metaphysical terms using the Middle Platonic Logos doctrine and the Stoic logical categories. His theory is based on the assumption of unity and unchangeability of the substance i.e., the spirit as the substance of God and the relative distinctiveness of the three members of the divinity.

We shall repeat briefly the major postulates of Tertullian:

1. Tertullian fully used the Logos Christology in a conscious effort to integrate Christianity and classical Greek culture. God is a transcendent being and it is impossible for him to enter into a direct relation with the world of time and space.
2. The Logos is as the Prolation of God which took place only for and with the world as a necessary mediator to perform a work which God could not perform. Thus the Logos assumed its “own form” when God said “Let there be light.”
3. Tertullian ascribed to light a metaphysical and ontological meaning in accordance with Greek theology of the second century.
4. The Logos is only a “portion” (*portio*) of God, in the same way as is the ray only a “portion” of the sun. The difference between them is in measure not of mode. The Logos is a produced and a reduced divinity, with its substance spirit or *pneuma*, brought to a level that could become creator and principle of the world.
5. The prolation of the Logos was a voluntary and temporary act of will of God. He is thus subordinate to and less than the Father subject to the Father’s will and, after accomplishing his mission he returns to the divine substance.
6. Tertullian was very explicit as to the temporary origin of the Logos Son. His argumentation came from the analysis of the terms “God” and “Lord,” and of “Father” and “Judge.” But later Tertullian distinguished between the uttered Logos, Sermo, and the unuttered Logos or Ratio which was an integral part of the divinity: “for he [God] had with him that which he possessed in himself, that is to say his own Reason. For God is rational and Reason was first in him; and so all things were from himself.”²⁴⁵ But certainly God’s Reason was not an individual being as the prolated Son. The

prolation of the Logos Son was a temporary mechanism to accomplish work by a transcendent God.

7. Tertullian postulated the unity of God by using the Egyptian concept, the “tri-unity.” God is one, but has the following internal structure, described in Tertullian's terminology as “dispensation” or “economy.” He has a physical pneumatic Son (*Filius*) his Word (*Sermo*), who proceeded from himself. Through this Son all things are made and the world maintained. The Son was sent by the Father into the virgin and was born as a man and God, as Son of Man and as Son of God, and is called Jesus the Anointed (Christ). He was resurrected by the Father, taken into heaven (*in caelo*) and he will come to judge all men, dead and alive, before the institution of God’s kingdom on earth. In the meantime the Father in heaven sent the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete.
8. Before Tertullian there was a tradition of the unity of the Godhead as a concept derived from the Hebrew tradition, and a tradition of the triad, of his appearance and function, as formulated by the Apologists and based on Philonic hypostatization of the divine powers. The innovation introduced by Tertullian was the ascription of the relative unity to the triadic entities found in the Christian Logos theory as the unity of substance. Starting from the baptismal formula, Tertullian distinguished three persons and prolations with specific names in one God who is the common substance as a mode of existence of God and his economy, that is, his internal organization. Tertullian never defined what he meant by the term “person,” we must understand this word as a depiction of a distinct divine individual with a distinct quality and function. Substance is the unifying element in the divinity while person is the

differentiating characteristic in the life of God. If so, then there is no real division in the Godhead, only a purely relative modal distinction. But then Tertullian is in contradiction when he claims a reality of the Word, and of the Holy Spirit by extension, as a *substantiva res* and a rational substance. Thus it seems to be a verbal device to reconcile a popular triadic interpretation of the terms found in the New Testament and in the baptismal formula with the requirement of the oneness of God.

Another term used for “person” is “hypostasis” which originally meant a sediment, foundation, substructure, individual substance, individual existence or reality.²⁴⁶ In philosophical meaning it represents contrast between substances, the real things, and the reflection as in the mirror, or between reality and illusion. From about 350 C.E. in the Christian world it meant “individual reality,” “individual,” and “person.” There was much confusion in the usage of the word since it was often wrongly translated as “substance.” In the English usage the term means “personality,” “personal existence,” and is distinguished from both “nature” and “substance.” From the noun the verb was formed by early Christian and Gnostic writers, “hypostatize” meaning making into or regarding as a self-existent substance or person, thus personalization or individualization.

9. The task of Tertullian, therefore, was to develop a formula by which the complete deity of Jesus and the reality of his identity as the Logos or the Mediator is distinct from the source-deity yet without creating two Gods. In Logos theory the distinction was introduced between the transcendent God and the derivative God, the absolute and the relative, and special problems arise when we

consider now the question of eternity or temporality of this distinction. The new trinitarian formulation evidently was not a popular or accepted belief during the time of Tertullian since he emphasized that the simple may have problems understanding this trinitarian assumption. Instead, they accept a triadic division of the unity of God, whereas, according to Tertullian, the triadic doctrine is a misunderstanding of God's economy (*oikonomia*) or dispensation/disposition (*dispensatio* or *dispositio*).

10. Tertullian was a profoundly Stoic philosopher who developed his understanding of the trinitarian God from the analysis of four general Stoic logical categories. His theory is based on the assumption of unity and unchangeability of the substance and the relative distinctiveness of the three members of the divinity, i.e., the Spirit as the substance of God. His concept of substance and the Spirit as the material substance of God is unquestionably Stoic and used to describe the nature of God.²⁴⁷ The source of these assumptions is found in the four categories of being as formulated by the Stoics: substrates or substances of everything that exists (ὑποκείμενα), qualities (ποιὰ), the modes of existence or dispositions (πῶς ἔχοντα), and the relative modes or dispositions of existence (πρὸς τί πῶς ἔχοντα).²⁴⁸
11. Tertullian, using such speculations, transposed the logical relationship between objects on the metaphysical existence of the divine Father and his Son, and also the third entity – the Holy Spirit. Thus the divine Father and the divine Son have their existence conditioned by their disposition only. They are not identical. Moreover, the Father makes a Son and the Son makes a

Father by logical relationship, i.e., relative disposition.

12. Tertullian used a similar analysis for the term monarchy and deduced that it does not preclude the monarch from having a son or from ministering his own monarchy by a few agents. Even then the monarchy is not divided and does not cease to be one. Such an idea of the unity of the monarchy projected on the divine monarchy where the divine essence is one and is governed by the many Sons of God, was a common concept among the Greeks and non-Greeks as well.
13. The unity of God (monarchy of the king) hinges on the unity of substance (closeness of the king's family or administrators) which is the basis for "internal dispensation" or "economy," that is, the internal organization of God. Transposing this analogy to the situation of the Deity, the Son derives his substance from the substance of the Father and does nothing without the Father's will, since he received his power from the Father. In this way the divine monarchy (i.e., unity) is preserved. The same applies to the "third degree," because the third pneumatic being, the Holy Spirit (*Spiritus*) proceeded from the Father through the Son (without explanation how and why).
14. Tertullian himself was very equivocal about the third person of the Trinity describing him also as the "*Spiritus in sermone.*"²⁴⁹ Nevertheless, Tertullian was the first to call the Holy Spirit God explicitly in a theological treatise, but it seems that he only repeated what was probably religious folklore in the Greek environment. Tertullian, under the influence of the Logos speculation, was the first to conceive the Spirit as a prolation from the Son as the Son is from the Father, and therefore subordinate to

the Son as the Son is to the Father. This is the most characteristic trait of his doctrine. Still Tertullian preserved the conception of the Father as the ultimate source in his assertion that the Spirit, being the third degree in the Godhead, proceeds “from no other source than from the Father through the Son.”²⁵⁰ The Father and the Son are represented by the root and the stem, the fountain and the river, the sun and its ray; so the Spirit, being “third from God and the Son,” is as the fruit of the tree, which is third from the root, or as the stream from the river, which is third from the fountain or as the apex from the ray, which is third from the sun.²⁵¹ It may be said that the Son receives the Spirit from the Father yet himself sends him forth: “The third name in the Godhead and the third Grade in the divine Majesty, the Declarer of the One Monarchy of God and yet, at the same time, the Interpreter of the Economy.”²⁵²

15. Tertullian by analysis of the verbal formulations of the announcement of Jesus’ birth argues that by saying that it was the “Spirit of God” and not simply God who came upon Mary, the author wanted to emphasize that it was only a portion of the whole Godhead which entered her and became “the Son of God.” But, at the same time, the Spirit of God must be the same as the Word for the Spirit (*Spiritus*) is the substance of God and as such it must be the substance of the Word because the Word is the operation of the Spirit, and the two are one and the same. But how Tertullian equated the operation (*Sermo*) with the substantive being (*substantiua res*) is not explained. Thus the Spirit and the Word are God, but they are not actually the very same as the source. The Word is God so far as it is of the same substance as God himself and as an actually existing being (*substantiua res*) and a portion of

the Godhead.

16. After claiming to have established that there is a distinction between the Father and the Son without destroying their union by making an analogy to the union of the sun and the ray, or of the fountain and the river, Tertullian next attempted to establish that there is a distinction between the two natures united in the Son. Tertullian explained the mode in which the Word could exist in the flesh without transfiguration into flesh, because “The Word is God and ‘the Word of the Lord remains for ever’ (Isaiah 40:8) – even by holding on unchangeably to his own form.” Thus God cannot change in substance (undergo transfiguration), and the only possibility left was that the Word became clothed in flesh. Jesus is of both natures, of both substances remaining in opposition, God and Man. Moreover, Tertullian insisted that the property of each substance is so preserved that “The Spirit on one hand did all things in Jesus suitable to itself, such as miracles, and mighty deeds, and wonders; the flesh, on the other hand, exhibited the affections which belong to it.”²⁵³ Just as in the Godhead Tertullian saw three persons united by one substance, in his Christology the one person had two substances.

In previous speculations of church Fathers such as Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Theophilus of Antioch, and Athenagoras, the Son and Holy Spirit were assigned subordinate roles in the Triad. The same can be said about Clement of Alexandria and Origen who are not subjects of the present study.²⁵⁴ These early church Fathers followed the Greek Platonic and Middle Platonic speculations either directly or through Philo of Alexandria. Later, in the third century, Plotinus (204-270 C.E.) developed his own abstract doctrine of a metaphysical trinity,²⁵⁵ but this was already after the formative years of the Christian doctrine. Moreover, the members of the

Plotinian trinity do not have the character of anthropomorphic “persons” and they do not represent the Tertullian sense of the triunity, namely, *una substantia, tres personae*, consubstantiality of individual separateness.

Notes and Bibliography

1. W. H. C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), pp. 285-293; 398-403.
2. James Franklin Bethune-Baker, *An Introduction to the Early History of Christian Doctrine to the Time of the Council of Chalcedon* (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd, 1933). Eric Osborn, *Tertullian the First Theologian of the West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). c. I.
3. Novatian, *Treatise Concerning the Trinity*. In *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. Revised by Alexander Coxe (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994). Vol. VI, pp. 611-634.
4. Quoted by Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, *Studies in Tertullian and Augustine* (Westport CT: Greenwood Press Publishers, 1970). p. 5.
5. Quinti Septimi Florentis Tertulliani, *Opera Pars I. Opera Catholica. Pars II. Opera Montanistica*. In *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* (Turnholti: Typographi Brepols Editores Pontifici, MCMLIV). English version in *Ante-Nicene Fathers, op. cit.*, Vol. III, IV, *Ad Nationes* XIV.1-2; *De Patientia*. I.1; *De Pudicitia* I; XXI.10.
6. *De Virginibus velandis* XVII.5. Tertullian gives his name at the end of the tractate as Septimius Tertullianus.
7. Apuleius of Madauros, *The Isis-Book (Metamorphoses, Book XI)*. Edited with an introduction, translation, and commentary by J. Gwynn Griffiths (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1975).
8. *The Transformations of Lucius Otherwise Known as the Golden Ass*. A new translation by Robert Graves from Apuleius (New York: The Noonday Press, 1951. Third printing 1998). *Sancti Aurelii Augustini Hipponensis Episcopi Opera Omnia*. In J.-P. Migne, ed., *Cursus Patrologiae, Series Latina*, (PL), (Paris: 1861-62). Vol. XXXII-XLVII. *De Civitate Dei* 4:2; 8:12; 15-22; 9:3. English version in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Philip Schaff, ed., (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995), Vol. 1-8. Augustine, *Writings of St. Augustine. Letters*. Vol. I-IV, in *The Fathers of the Church*, translated by Sister Wilfrid Parsons (New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1951, 1953). *Epist.* CXXXVIII.19.
9. Timothy David Barnes, *Tertullian. Historical and Literary Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 55.
10. Barnes, *Tertullian, op. cit.*
11. Eusebius of Caesarea, *The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine* (abbreviated as *H.E.*) translated with an introduction by G. A. Williamson (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1984). Also in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, second series, Philip Schaff and H. Wace, eds., *op. cit.*, Vol. 1.II.2.
12. Barnes, *op. cit.*, p. 5, Appendix 5.
13. Barnes, *op. cit.*, pp. 211-232. Robert D. Sider, *Ancient Rhetoric and the Art of Tertullian* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971). p. 1.
14. Eusebius, *H.E.* II.2.4; II.25.4; III.20.7; III.33.3; V.5.5.
15. *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, Editio stereotypa sexta. Volumen secundum, *Codex Iustinianus*. Recognovit Paulus Krueger (Berolini: Apud Weidmannos, 1895). *The Digest of Justinian*. Latin Text edited by Theodor Mommsen with the aid of Paul Krueger. English translation edited by Alan Watson. Vol. 1-4 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985). p. LVII (7. The Confirmation of the

Digest).

16. Justinian, *Institutes*. Translated with an introduction by Peter Birks and Grant McLeod with Latin text of Paul Krueger (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1987).
17. *Corpus Iuris Civilis* II, 1889, 342.
18. *Ad uxorem* I.1.1; II.1.1.
19. Lactantius, *Divine Institutions*. V. 4; I.21. In *Ante Nicene Fathers*, *op. cit.*, Vol. 7.
20. *Apologeticum* IV.3.
21. H. Block, "The Pagan Revival in the West at the End of the Fourth Century," c. VIII in *The Conflict between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century*, ed. A. Momigliano (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), pp. 193-218.
22. Eusebius, *H.E.* V.5.
23. *Apologeticum* I.1.
24. Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones* V.1.21. In *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, *op. cit.*, Vol. 7.
25. JRS vol. LVIII, 1968.32.
26. *Apologeticum* II.1.
27. *Apologeticum* IV.3. "It is not lawful for you [i.e., Christians] to exist."
28. Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones* V.9; V.11.
29. Quadratus (who presented his *Apology* to the Emperor Hadrian, 117-138 CE, probably during the emperor's stay in Athens in 126) known only from Eusebius, *H.E.* IV.3.1-3 and Jerome, *De Viris Illustribus* c. 19. Aristides, philosopher of Athens, (fl. also during the reign of Hadrian) *H.E.* IV.3.3. whose text is preserved in three versions: Greek, Syrian and partly in Armenian. Greek text in Migne, PG XCVI, 859-1240. English in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, *op. cit.*, Vol. 9 Ed. by Allan Menzies, pp. 263-283. Melito, bishop of Sardis, (fl. during the reign of Marcus Aurelius 161-180 C.E.) *H.E.* IV.26.1. Miltiades, from the same period, *H.E.* IV.17.5. The texts of the *Apologies* written by Melito and Miltiades are not preserved, we know about them only from Eusebius, and we have a fragment of Melito quoted by Eusebius, *H.E.* IV.26.1.
30. Jerome, *De Viris Illustribus*, c. 53. As quoted by Barnes, *op. cit.*
31. Jerome, *De Viris Illustribus*, c. 12.
32. Barlow, Claude W., ed. *Epistolae Senecae ad Paulum et Pauli ad Senecam "quae vocantur"* (Rome: American Academy in Rome.1938).
33. Jerome, *De Viris Illustribus*, c. 34. Eusebius, *H.E.* V. 23.3; 24.1; III. 31.2.
34. Jerome, *De Viris Illustribus*, c. 48.
35. Eusebius, *H.E.* V.21.2
36. *De Exhortatione castitatis* 7.3 and *De Monogamia* XII.2.
37. *Ad uxorem* I.1.1.
38. *Adversus Marcionem* IV; *De Praescriptione Haereticorum* I-IV; XXX; *Adversus Valentinianos* I-XXXIX.
39. Barnes, *op. cit.*, p. 13, p. 15.
40. Augustine, *De Haeresibus*. In J.-P. Migne, PL, *op. cit.*, Vol. XLII.86; and the anonymous "Praedestinatus" who copies him, in Migne, PL Vol. LIII. 616.
41. W.H.C. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the early Church, a Study of Conflict from the Maccabees to Donatus* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965). p. 366.
42. Augustine, *De Haeresibus ad quodvultdeum liber unus*. In J.-P. Migne, *op. cit.*, Vol. XLII., I.86, p. 46-47; Praedestinatus, sive Praedestinatorum haeresis: libri tres. In J.-P. Migne, *op. cit.*, Vol. LIII, LXXXVI, p. 616-617. He states that Tertullian was a "presbyter carthaginianus" and that he "nihil tamen in fide mutavit."
43. Eusebius, *H.E.* V.5.3.
44. W.H.C. Frend, *Montanism: Research and Problems in Archaeology and History in the Study*

of *Early Christianity* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1988), pp. 521-537. Epiphanius, *The Panarion*, selected passages translated by Philip R. Amidon (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), XLIX. Anti Marjanen, "Montanism: Egalitarian Ecstatic 'New Prophecy.'" In *A Companion to Second-Century Christian "Heretics,"* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2005), p. 192.

45. Eusebius, *H.E.*, *op. cit.*, V.16-19.
46. *Revelation* 21:1; *De Fuga in Persecutione*. IV; *De Anima* LV.5.
47. Pierre de Labriolle, *Les sources pour l'histoire du Montanisme* (Paris: Société d'Édition Les Belles Lettres, 1913).
48. Eusebius, *H.E.* V.16.3
49. Eusebius, *H.E.* V.16.11-12.
50. Eusebius, *H.E.*, V.3.4, V.4.1-2.
51. *Adversus Praxean* I.4. Pseudo-Chrysostom, *Sermo*, in J.-P. Migne, PG, *op. cit.*, LIX.747. Hermius Sozomenus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, in J.-P. Migne, PG, *op. cit.*, Vol. LXVII. In *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, second series, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2. VII.18.12.
52. *Passion of Perpetua*. In *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, *op. cit.*, Vol. III. pp. 697-706.
53. *Adversus Praxean* I.4-5; Pseudo-Tertullian, *Adversus Omnes Haereses* VII.4.
54. Jerome, *De Viris Illustribus*, c. 53.
55. Marian Hillar, *The Case of Michael Servetus (1511-1553) -- The Turning Point in the Struggle for Freedom of Conscience* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1997). pp. 55-57.
56. Jerome, *De Viris Illustribus*, c. 53.
57. *De Pudicitia* I.10.
58. C. Mohrmann, *Études sur le latin des Chrétiens* III. (Roma: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1961-65), p. 38; Pierre de Labriolle, *La crise montaniste* (Paris: Société d'Édition Les Belles Lettres, 1913), p. 354.
59. *De Jejunio* I.1.
60. Christians expected the Paraclete in the *Gospel of John* 14.16; 16.13 &ff.
61. *De Jejunio* I.3.
62. Nothing more is known about this bishop. Eusebius, *H.E.* V. 3.4, V. 4.1-2, V. 19.1-4. Christine Trevett, *Montanism: Gender, Authority and the New Prophecy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
63. Labriolle, *op. cit.*, p. 238.
64. Anti Marjanen, *op. cit.*, 194.
65. W.H.C. Frend, "Town and Country in Early Christianity." In *Town and Country in the Early Christian Centuries*. (London: Variorum Reprints, 1980). c. I.
66. W.H.C. Frend, "The Winning of the Countryside." In *Town and Country*, *op. cit.*, c. II.
67. Matt. 23:14. Eusebius, *H.E.*, V.16.12.
68. Bart D. Ehrman, *Lost Christianities. The Battles for Scripture, and the Faith We Never Knew*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 150.
69. Trevett, *op. cit.*, p. 98.
70. Trevett, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-66.
71. Eusebius, *H.E.* V.16.21-22.
72. Eusebius, *H.E.* V.17.1
73. Apollonius was tried by the Senate in Rome during the reign of Commodus and decapitated. Eusebius, *H.E.* V. 18.4; 21:2.
74. It was recently discovered that Tymon was a town located near the modern village of Susuzören and Pepuza near the modern village of Karayakuplu in Turkey. Marjan, *op. cit.*, p. 191.
75. Eusebius, *H.E.* V.18.1-14.
76. Eusebius, *H.E.*, V. 18. 2-3.

-
77. Trevett, *op. cit.*, pp. 151-197.
78. Eusebius, *H.E.*, V.16.16, V.18.13, V.19.3.
79. Epiphanius, *Panarion*, *op. cit.*, 49.2.2, 49.2.5. William Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions and Testimonia: Epigraphic Sources Illustrating the History of Montanism*, (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997). Gal. 3:28.
80. Ep. 75.10.
81. Eusebius, *H.E.*, V.18.2. V.18.7.
82. *De Fuga in Persecutione* 14.3.
83. *Adversus Praxean* I.7 & ff. This differentiation between ψυχικός and πνευματικός comes from Paul *I Corinthians* 2:14; 15:44-46.
84. Osborn, *op. cit.*, p. 251.
85. *De Pudicitia* XXI.17. W.H.C. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church*, *op. cit.*, p.366. P. de Labriolle, *La crise montaniste* (Paris, 1913), p. 357. T.D. Barnes, *JTS NS XX*, 1969, 113.
86. *De Pudicitia* XXI.
87. Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* III.II.9.
88. *De Jejunio* XIII.
89. Audollent, Auguste, *Carthage Romaine* (Paris: Albert Fontemoing, Editeur 1901), p. 435. Babelou, E., *Carthage*, 1896, p.175; W.H.C. Frend *Donatist Church* (1952) p. 87. W.H.C. Frend, *The Archaeology of Early Christianity* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1996). T. D. Barnes, *Tertullian. op. cit.*
90. W.H.C. Frend, "Town and Country in the early Christian Centuries." In *Town and Country in the Early Christian Centuries*, *op. cit.*, c. XVIII. "The Early Christian Church in Carthage," *ibidem*, pp. 21-40. c. XVII. "Jews and Christians in the Third Century Carthage," *ibidem*, pp. 185-194. W.H.C. Frend, *Archaeology and History in the Study of early Christianity*. (London: Variorum Reprints, 1980). "Early Christianity and Society. A Jewish Legacy in the pre-Constantine Era." pp. 53-71. W.H.C. Frend, *Religion Popular and Unpopular in the Early Christian Centuries* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1976). c. IV. "A Note on Tertullian and the Jews."
91. Paul Monceaux, *Histoire littéraire de l'Afrique chrétienne* (Paris: 1901) p. 7-9. Marcel Simon, *Le judaïsme berbère dans l'Afrique ancienne*. In *Recherches d'histoire judéo-chrétienne* (Paris: Mouton, 1962). pp. 30-87.
92. J. Ferron, *Inscriptions juives de Carthage*. Cahiers de Byrsa 1, 1951, pp. 175-206.
93. *Adversus Judaeos* I.
94. *Apologeticum* XVIII.
95. W.H.C. Frend, in *Town and Country*, *op. cit.*, c. XVII.
96. *Apologeticum* III.5; *Adversus Marcionem* IV.8
97. Epiphanius, *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis* Book I (sects 1-46), translated by Frank Williams (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1987). XXIX.7.4.
98. *Apologeticum* IX.13.
99. Cyprian, *De Operibus et Eleemosynis* 15.
100. *De Jejunio* XIV; Augustine, *Epistula* 54.2-3.
101. A council summoned by Agrippinus in 250 C.E. which declared that those baptized by a cleric not in communion with the church should be rebaptized. Cyprian, *Epistula* 71.4; 73.3. Augustine, *De Unico Baptismo* 13.22. Cyprian, *Epistula* 72; 75.1. Council of Carthage of 311 summoned by Securus of Tigisis for the election of a bishop of Carthage.
102. W.H.C. Frend, in *Town and Country*, *op. cit.*, c. XVI, c. XVII.
103. W.H.C. Frend, in *Town and Country*, *op. cit.*, c. XVII. p. 192.
104. *Adversus Judaeos* I.1. *De Jejunio* XVI. *De Spectaculis* XXV; XXX.5. *De Monogamia* VII.1.

-
- W. Harburg, JTS NS XXIII. 2 pp. 455-459.
105. *Adversus Judaeos* I; II; III; XIII.11.
106. *Adversus Judaeos* VII-XII.
107. Hippolytus *Refutatio Omn. Haeres.* IX.7. In *Ante-Nicene Fathers, op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp. 9-153.
108. *Scorpiace* V.7.
109. *Scorpiace* II.1.
110. *Adversus Marcionem* IV. 8.
111. *Apologeticum* XXXIX.1.
112. *De Spectaculis* XIV.2.
113. *De Idolatria* I.1; X.1; X.7; XIII.1; XVIII.1; XIX.1.
114. *Ad Nationes* I.9,12; II.13; *De Testimonio Animae* II.7; Eusebius *H.E.* IV.3.
115. Cyprian, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers, op. cit.*, Vol. *On the Unity of the Catholic Church* VI.; *Epistula* LXXIII.2.
116. Cyprian, *Epistula* LXVII.
117. W.H.C. Frend, *The Donatist Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952).
118. Cyprian, *Epistula* LIV.5.
119. *De Spectaculis* XXX.1.
120. Herbert Musurillo, ed. *The Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs*. Introduction, texts and translation by Herbert Musurillo (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972). Also in *Ante-Nicene Fathers, op. cit.*, Vol. III. W.H.C. Frend, *The North African Cult of Martyrs from Apocalyptic to Hero-Worship*. In *Archaeology and History in the Study of Early Christianity* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1988). pp. 154-167.
121. *The Martyrdom (Passion) of Perpetua and Felicitas*. In *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. III. W.H.C. Frend, In *Archaeology and History, op. cit.*, pp.154-167.
122. *Acts* 2.17. *Joel* 3.1.
123. *Passion* II.3, 4.
124. *Passion* IV.
125. Augustine. In *Post-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. XIV. *De natura et origine animae* II.14; III.12; IV.26,27.
126. Augustine, *De natura et origine animae op. cit.*, I.12.
127. *Passion* VI.4.
128. Athenagoras, *Legatio* II.1; Tatian, *Oratio ad Graecos* IV; *Ad Nationes* I; *Apologeticum* I.1,12. *Ad Scapulam* I.2; V.1,2.
129. Justin Martyr, *I Apology* 8; 57; *II Apology* 4.
130. *Passion of Perpetua* VI.1,4.
131. Migne PG (Paris, 157-1866) *op. cit.*, Vol. XVIII. 467. Tim Vivian, *St. Peter of Alexandria. Bishop and Martyr* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988).
132. *Scorpiace* II.1; III.5.
133. *De Fuga in Persecutione* IV; V.
134. *Ad Scapulam* V; *Apologeticum* L.3; *De Spectaculis* I.
135. *De Pudicitia* I. *Passion of Perpetua* IV; *The Death of Peregrine* In *The Works of Lucian of Samosata*. Complete with exceptions specified in the preface. Translated by H. W. Fowler and F. G. Fowler. Vol. 1-4 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1903, 1949). Vol. 4, pp. 79-95.
136. Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* XI.3; *Apologeticum* L.1,15.
137. *I Maccabees* I.44-50.
138. *II Maccabees* VI.1-VII.42.
139. *IV Maccabees* XII.16
140. Flavius Josephus, *Against Apion* I.8. In *Complete Works* translated by William Whiston,

-
- forward by William Sanford LaSor (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1981).
141. W.H.C. Frend, *Persecutions: Some Links between Judaism and Early Church*. In *Religion Popular and Unpopular in the Early Christian Centuries*. c. I (London: Variorum Reprints, 1976).
 142. H.E. I.1-2. Ignatius, *Ad Romanos* II. In *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, *op. cit.*, Vol.
 143. Florentino García Martínez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated. The Qumran Texts in English*. Second edition Wilfred G.E. Watson, translator (Leiden, New York: E.J. Brill: 1996). *The Community Rule*, 1QS OIX.9-11. J.A.T. Robinson, HTR 50, 175-190, 1957.
 144. W.L. Knox, *St Paul and the Church of the Gentiles* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1939, 1961). A.N. Wilson, *Paul. The Mind of the Apostle* (New York, London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997).
 145. Eusebius, *H.E.* IV.24.1.
 146. Thomassen, The Structure of the Transcendent World in the Tripartite Tractate. *Vigiliae Christianae*, Vol. 34, No.4, pp. 358-375, 1980.
 147. Kurt Rudolph, *Gnosis. The Nature and History of Gnosticism*. Translation edited by Robert McLachlan Wilson (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1987).
 148. Sider, *op. cit.*, p. 128.
 149. *Apologeticum* c. XXI.
 150. *Apologeticum* c. XVII.
 151. *Adversus Praxean* c. VI.
 152. *Adversus Praxean* c. XII.
 153. Hans Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy*. Nouvelle édition par Michel Tardieu (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1978).
 154. *Adversus Praxean* c. IX.
 155. *Adversus Praxean* cc. IV, XXII, XXIII.
 156. *Adversus Praxean* c. XIV.
 157. *Adversus Hermogenem* c. III.
 158. *Adversus Praxean* c. V.
 159. Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, *Tertullian and the Beginning of the Doctrine of the Trinity in Studies in Tertullian and Augustine* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press Publishers, 1970). pp. 3-109.
 160. Hippolytus *Against the heresy of Noetus* c.1.
 161. *Adversus Praxean*, I.4.
 162. Pseudo-Tertullian, *Adversus omnes haereses* c. VIII.
 163. Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium haeresum* IX.7.1; X.27.1.
 164. Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium haeresium* X.27.3.
 165. *Adversus Praxean* c. II. *De Praescriptione* c. XIII.
 166. *Adversus Praxean* c. II.2.
 167. *Adversus Praxean* c. II.4.
 168. This view was accepted in all antiquity and its essence was that the divinity is an intelligent igneous or aerial agent either permeating nature and matter or

-
- transcendent to it and impassible. *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*, (abbreviated as SVF), Vol I-III). Collegit Ioannes Arnim, Stugardiae: in Aedibus B.G. Teubneri, 1964). II. 310, 306, 320. Hans Lewy, *op. cit.*
169. *Adversus Marcionem* cc. II.9; III.6; IV.33; V.8; *Adversus Praxean* XIV, XXVI; *De Oratione* I; *Apologeticum* XXVIII. G.C. Stead, Divine Substance in Tertullian *J. Theolog. Studies*, Vol. 14, 46-66, 1963.
170. SVF II. 329, 330, 333-335, 369, 371, 373. John M. Rist, *Stoic Philosophy* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969). pp. 152-172.
171. SVF II. 134-151, 301, 318.
172. SVF II.369,375,378,399,400.
173. SVF II.379.
174. SVF II. 403.
175. Maximus of Tyre, quoted in Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Assyrians*. Translated from the Greek by Thomas Taylor (London: Bertram Dobell and Reeves and Turner, MDCCCXCV). p. XIV; Iamblichus (260-330 C.E.), cc. XIX, XX.
176. *Adversus Praxean* c. III.5.
177. *Adversus Praxean* c. IV.4
178. *Adversus Praxean* c. V. 1.
179. George Bull, *Defensio Fidei Nicaenae*. In *The works of George Bull, Lord Bishop of St. David's*. Collected and revised by The Rev. Edward Burton. To which is prefixed *The Life of Bishop Bull* by Rev. Robert Nelson (Oxford: at the University Press, 1846). Vol. 5, Part (Tome) 1 and 2. T. 2. III.10.1-24.234-250. pp. 635-683.
180. *Adversus Hermogenem* c. III.
181. *Adversus Hermogenem* c. XVIII.
182. Epiphanius, *Panarion* XXX.13.7-8.
183. *Adversus Praxean* c. VII.5.
184. *Adversus Praxean* VII.8.
185. Bull *Defensio Fidei Nicaenae op. cit.*, T.2, III. 8.7.2.222 p. 602.
186. Bull *Defensio Fidei Nicaenae op. cit.*, T. 2 III.10.9.234, p. 635-637.
187. *Adversus Hermogenem* c. XVIII.
188. Bull *Defensio Fidei Nicaenae op. cit.*, T.2. III.10.5.236-237. p. 643.
189. *Adversus Hermogenem* c. XVIII.
190. *Adversus Praxean* c. XIX.3.
191. *Adversus Praxean* c. XXVI.6-7.
192. Peter Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus. Christians at Rome in the First Centuries*, translated by Michael Steinhauser, edited by Marshall D. Johnson (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003).

-
193. *Matthew* 11:27; *John* 14:31; 6:38; *I Corinthian* 2:11.8
194. *Adversus Praxean*, VIII.
195. *Adversus Praxean* cc. IX-XXV.
196. *Isaiah* 42:1 in *Sacred Writings*. Vol 1 *Judaism: The Tanakh*. The New Jewish Publications Society Translation (New York: Book-of-the-Month Club, 1985, 1992).
197. *Adversus Praxean* c. XI.10.
198. *Adversus Praxean* c. XIV.3.
199. *Adversus Praxean* cc. XI.12; XXVII.11,14.
200. *Adversus Praxean* c. XVI.3.
201. *Adversus Praxean* c. XVI.7.
202. *Adversus Praxean* c. XI.12.
203. *Psalms* 138 (139):8.
204. *Psalms* 102 (103) :19. *Isaiah* 66:1.
205. *Psalms* 8:5-6. Hebrew texts says "God," but LXX "angels."
206. In *Psalms* 81(82), 6 the judges of Israel are addressed: "I had taken you for the divine beings, sons of the Most High, all of you."
207. *Matthew* 17:5; *John* 12:28.
208. *Adversus Praxean* c. XXIV.5.
209. *Adversus Praxean* c. XXIV.8.
210. *Adversus Praxean* c. XXV.
211. Novatian, *De Trinitate* c. XXIX.
212. Janes W. McClendon Some Reflection on the Future of Trinitarianism. In *Review and Expositor*, Vol. 63, No. 2, pp. 149-156, 1966.
213. *Adversus Praxean* c. XII.3.
214. *Adversus Praxean* Ibid. c. IV.
215. *Adversus Praxean* Ibid. c. VIII.
216. *Adversus Praxean* Ibid. c. XXV.
217. *Adversus Praxean* Ibid.c. XXX.
218. *Adversus Praxean* Ibid. c. XXVI.
219. *Adversus Praxean* Ibid. c. XXVI.2.
220. *Adversus Praxean* Ibid. c. XXVI.4.
221. *Adversus Praxean* Ibid. c. XXVI.7.
222. *Adversus Praxean* Ibid. c. XXVI.7.
223. *Adversus Praxean* Ibid. c. XXVI.9.
224. *Adversus Praxean* Ibid. c. XXVII.11.
225. *Adversus Praxean* Ibid. c. XXVII.11.
226. *S.V.F.* II.473.
227. *Adversus Praxean* c. XXVII.14.
228. Ibid. c. XXVII.14.
229. Ibid. c. XXVIII.
230. Ibid. c. XXVIII.1.

-
231. Ibid. c. XXVIII.7.
 232. Ibid. c. XXVIII.6.
 233. Ibid. c. XXIX.5.
 234. Ibid. c. XXIX.6.
 235. Ibid. c. XXIX.6-7.
 236. Ibid. c. XXX.4.
 237. Ibid. c. XXX.4.
 238. Ibid. c. XXX.5.
 239. Ibid. c. XXXI.1-3.
 240. Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean*, III.1.
 241. Tertullian, *De praescriptione haeres.* 7
 242. Theophilus of Antioch, *Ad Autolyicum*, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, *op. cit.*, 2,15.
 243. Aristotle in his *De Caelo* says: "For, as the Pythagoreans say, the world and all that is in it is determined by the number three, since the beginning, middle and end give the number of an 'all,' and the number they give is the triad. And so, having taken these three from nature as (so to speak) laws of it, we make further use of the number three in the worship of the Gods." *De Caelo* in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, edited and with introduction by Richard McKeon, (New York: Random House, 1941), I, 13-14.
 244. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis*, in *Ante Nicene Fathers*, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV. 7.
 245. *Adversus Praxean* c. V.
 246. Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, *Greek - English Lexicon*, revised and augmented by Henry Stuart Jones and Roderick Mc Kenzie (Oxford: at Clarendon Press, 1983). *The Hypostasis of the Archons*, introduced by Roger A. Bullard. Translated by Bentley Layton, in J. M. Robinson, ed., *The Nag Hammadi Library* (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988), p. 162.
 247. *Adversus Marcionem* cc. II.9; III.6; IV.33; V.8; *Adversus Praxean* XIV, XXVI; *De Oratione* I; *Apologeticum* XXVIII. G.C. Stead, Divine Substance in Tertullian *J. Theolog. Studies*, Vol. 14, 46-66, 1963.
 248. SVF, II. 329, 330, 333-335, 369, 371, 373. John M. Rist, *Stoic Philosophy* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969). pp. 152-172.
 249. *Adversus Praxean* c. XII.3.
 250. *Adversus Praxean* Ibid. c. IV.
 251. *Adversus Praxean* Ibid. c. VIII.
 252. *Adversus Praxean* Ibid.c. XXX.
 253. *Adversus Praxean* Ibid. c. XXVII.11.
 254. Origen, *On First Principles*. Translation and introduction by G.W. Butterworth (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1973). Clement of Alexandria, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. II, *op. cit.*
 255. Plotino, *Enneadi*, traduzione con testo Greco di Giuseppe Fagin, presentazione di Giovanni Reale, revisione di Roberto Radice (Milano: Rusconi, 1996).