

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

A STUDY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF TERTULLIAN'S USE AND INTERPRETATION OF  
SCRIPTURE, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO HIS INVOLVEMENT IN THE NEW PROPHECY

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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS THESIS FOR THE WRITINGS OF TERTULLIAN

<u>Ad Mart.</u>	<u>Ad Martyras</u>
<u>Ad Nat.</u>	<u>Ad Nationes</u>
<u>Ad Scap.</u>	<u>Ad Scapulam</u>
<u>Ad Uxor.</u>	<u>Ad Uxorem</u>
<u>Adu. Hermog.</u>	<u>Aduersus Hermogenem</u>
<u>Adu. Iud.</u>	<u>Aduersus Iudaeos</u>
<u>Adu. Marc.</u>	<u>Aduersus Marcionem</u>
<u>Adu. Prax.</u>	<u>Aduersus Praxean</u>
<u>Adu. Val.</u>	<u>Aduersus Valentinianos</u>
<u>Apol.</u>	<u>Apologeticum</u>
<u>De An.</u>	<u>De Anima</u>
<u>De Bapt.</u>	<u>De Baptismo</u>
<u>De Carne</u>	<u>De Carne Christi</u>
<u>De Cor.</u>	<u>De Corona</u>
<u>De Cult. Fem.</u>	<u>De Cultu Feminarum</u>
<u>De Exh. Cast.</u>	<u>De Exhortatione Castitatis</u>
<u>De Fuga</u>	<u>De Fuga in Persecutione</u>
<u>De Idol.</u>	<u>De Idololatria</u>
<u>De Iei.</u>	<u>De Ieiunio Aduersus Psychicos</u>
<u>De Monog.</u>	<u>De Monogamia</u>
<u>De Orat.</u>	<u>De Oratione</u>
<u>De Paen.</u>	<u>De Paenitentia</u>
<u>De Pall.</u>	<u>De Pallio</u>
<u>De Pat.</u>	<u>De Patientia</u>
<u>De Praesc. Haer.</u>	<u>De Praescriptione Haereticorum</u>
<u>De Pud.</u>	<u>De Pudicitia</u>
<u>De Resurr.</u>	<u>De Resurrectione Mortuorum</u>
<u>De Spect.</u>	<u>De Spectaculis</u>

De Test. An.De Testimonio AnimaeDe Virg. Vel.De Virginibus VelandisScorp.ScorpiaceA NOTE ON OTHER ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS THESIS

I have used standard abbreviations for the writings of the other Church writers which I have quoted in the thesis. The only abbreviation I have used for journals is JTS. N.S. which stands for Journal of Theological Studies, New Supplement.

ADDITIONAL NOTE

In the Latin texts cited throughout the thesis, I have underlined any references or allusions to Scripture, which may not be indicated by the editors.

PREFACE

The original aim of this thesis was to be a consideration of the North African writer's use and interpretation of Scriptural texts in which a change in exegesis could be detected after he became involved in the New Prophecy. From this analysis, I hoped to draw some useful conclusions. However, I soon realised that the task in hand was not such a simple one as at first appeared, for a number of reasons.

First of all, investigation into the origins and nature of the movement led me to realise that adherence to any movement which is centred on the activity of the Spirit cannot be easily rationalised and compartmentalised. It must often be preceded by a period of questioning in which old values and beliefs are re-assessed. Tertullian's adherence to the movement must be seen, not as a specific event, but as a gradual progression. No clear-cut division can be drawn at which a definite change in his use and interpretation of Scripture can be detected. His ideas were constantly being formed, modified, and even reversed, as his sympathies towards the movement grew.

Secondly, a separation of key texts in order to note a change in their usage is not, in itself, a valid approach. Only by a consideration of such texts in relation to specific theological and practical issues can a development in Tertullian's thought be legitimately and convincingly traced. Allowance must be made also for the fact that the New Prophecy which Tertullian made his own may have differed in both form and content from that which had existed originally in the East, several decades earlier.

A third point to be noticed is that Tertullian's use of Scripture is governed by a variety of exegetical principles and influences. These must be considered also. In this connection, it must be emphasised that Tertullian was a man of his own age and place. His education in rhetoric, law, and philosophy cannot fail to have influenced his outlook.

Fourthly, Tertullian's dependence on Scripture must be weighed against the other supports which he uses to confirm his argumentation. His sympathy towards the New Prophecy would certainly offer help, and possibly hindrance, to this task.

Finally, in order to make a valid assessment of the development in his thought in relation to Scripture, it is impossible to study his writings in isolation. Only a careful comparison with the writings of his predecessors and contemporaries will provide an assessment of his originality.

It is therefore the revised aim of this thesis to take into consideration the above points, and to draw up a detailed analysis of the resulting information. The thesis takes the form of a close examination of Tertullian's use of Scripture in the context of various dogmatic and practical issues, which were to become of increasing importance in his later life. A comparison of these texts will reveal some interesting developments, and will allow an assessment of his originality to be made.

The literature on Tertullian's interpretation of Scripture is limited to several works, which, in the main do not pay great attention to the development of his thought in this matter.<sup>1</sup> Where the development is considered, it is frequently fragmentary. I hope that this thesis will go beyond any work hitherto produced.

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1. The main works are A d'Alès, La Théologie de Tertullien. pp. 242ff.; E. Flesseman-van Leer, Tradition and Scripture in the Early Church; Paris: 1933. pp. 171ff.; J.-C. Fredouille, Tertullien et la conversion de la culture antique. pp. 429ff.; R.P.C. Hanson, "Notes on Tertullian's Interpretation of Scripture," JTS.N. S., 12 ( 1961 ). pp. 273ff.; H. Karpp., Schrift und Geist bei Tertullian.; T.P. O'Malley, Tertullian and the Bible: Language - imagery - exegesis; Nijmegen: 1967; F. de Pauw, "La justification des traditions non écrites chez Tertullien," Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses, 19 ( 1942 ). pp. 5ff.; G. Zimmermann, Die hermeneutischen Prinzipien Tertullians; Würzburg: 1937.

## INTRODUCTION

### A. THE ORIGINS AND NATURE OF EARLY PHRYGIAN "MONTANISM"

Any attempt to describe the origins and nature of what later became called the Montanist movement <sup>1</sup> is plagued with difficulties. First of all, the movement seems to incorporate into itself so many different aspects that it may be interpreted in a number of different ways. <sup>2</sup> Secondly, the movement spans several centuries, and it would be a mistake, I think, to assume that features which exist in the later form of the movement must necessarily have been there at the beginning. <sup>3</sup> Thirdly, the paucity of information about the origins of the movement makes historical accuracy difficult. The sources are fragmentary, often contradictory, certainly coloured in their treatment. <sup>4</sup> The lack of interest which the Church showed in the preservation of heretical information, together with a practical, rather than a written refutation of the heresy, has resulted in the shrouding of the origins of the movement in mystery and legend. <sup>5</sup>

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1. The name "Montanist" was first used in the fourth century. See the references given by W. Schepelern, Der Montanismus und die phrygischen Kulte: Eine religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung: Tübingen:1929.p.165,n.5.
  2. Commentators have looked for the causes of the movement in several areas. Of these, here are a few examples:-  
J.W.C. Wand, A History of the Early Church to A.D.500: London:1937.p.57, sees the movement as a reaction against the coldness and worldliness of the second century Church; H.H. Milman, The History of Christianity: Vol.2: London: 1863.pp.161ff., sees it as an example of wild Christian mysticism; T.M. Lindsay, The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries: London:1902.p.236, sees it as a confrontation between prophetic and local ministries. It may well be that it springs from a desire on the part of many second century Christians to come to terms with the promise of the Parousia. The eschatological overtones of the movement would fit in well with this promise.
  3. Not only did the movement span several centuries, but it also spread to different countries. It seems unlikely that the nature of the original Phrygian movement did not undergo some modifications.
  4. The sources of the history of the movement have been collected by P.de Labriolle in Les Sources de l'Histoire du Montanisme: Paris:1913 ( hereafter referred to as Les Sources ). The majority of these writings must not be regarded as describing the movement's original character, since they often reflect later Catholic views.
  5. The Church's first reaction to the movement seems to have been oral disputation and exorcism, and the desire to avoid heretics would have been prevalent. Eusebius, H.E.,5,16,16f., mentions an attempted exorcism of Maximilla, and the anonymous writer whom Eusebius cites is said to have taken part in oral controversy.( See H.E.,5,16,2.)



The main information that can be obtained about the rise of the movement is that provided by Eusebius who cites the account of an anonymous writer that a recent Phrygian convert called Montanus became obsessed, fell into frenzy, and into convulsions, and in his ecstasy began to speak strangely and to prophesy. This phenomenon received a divided reaction. Some witnesses regarded it as evidence of false prophecy. Others accepted it as divine revelation. Two women, Priscilla and Maximilla, soon joined Montanus and exhibited the same kind of behaviour, for which they clearly saw the Holy Spirit as responsible.<sup>6</sup>

There seems little doubt about the validity of the majority of this information, although the account of the deaths of Montanus and Maximilla, given later, may be less reliable, in that they are said to have committed suicide.<sup>7</sup> This may form too nice a comparison with the death of Judas Iscariot.

The date of the origin of the movement is not easily clarified. Eusebius suggests 172 A.D.,<sup>8</sup> whilst Epiphanius sets it " about the nineteenth year of Antoninus Pius " <sup>9</sup> ( about 156 - 157 A.D. ). The anonymous writer whom Eusebius cites mocks the falsehood of Maximilla's prediction of wars and tumults: " But surely this falsehood now is evident. For it is more than thirteen years today since the woman died, and there has been in the world neither local nor universal war, but rather by the mercy of God continuing peace even for Christians. " <sup>10</sup> The most likely period of peace would seem to be the reign of Commodus ( 180 - 192 A.D. ), and in this case Maximilla would have died about 180 A.D., and the anonymous work would have been written about 193 A.D. Whether one accepts the dating of the origins of the movement as about 156 A.D. or about 172 A.D. depends,

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6. See H.E., 5, 16, 6ff..

7. See ibid., 5, 16, 13.

8. See Chron., 2.

9. See Pan., 48, 1.

10. See H.E., 5, 16, 18f..

among other things, on how much reliability one attributes to Eusebius and his sources and to Epiphanius, and perhaps how long one estimates the movement would have taken to get underway. Probably, the date of 172 A.D. is the more likely of the two.

The nature of the movement at its outset is difficult to determine. If the evidence of the Church writers were taken without careful consideration, it would seem that the movement was permeated, in the main, by wholesale laxity, low standards of behaviour and hypocrisy,<sup>11</sup> and the impression might be gained that such characteristics had always existed among the adherents of the movement. However, the obvious prejudice of the writers and the dates at which they were writing warn against such subjective conclusions. It would seem more accurate to emphasise that the movement, at the very beginning, may not have exhibited such great extravagances as those mentioned by Apollonius, and later by Epiphanius<sup>12</sup> and Jerome.<sup>13</sup> It has been posited that there were two distinct forms of Montanism; that with the death of Maximilla the original pure form of the movement disintegrated, to be replaced on a lower level a few years later.<sup>14</sup> Even if this hypothesis is not taken up with complete conviction, the possibility is thrown into relief that the standards of the later movement were not necessarily those imposed by the early leaders. To the eschatologically-minded people of

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11. See, for example, Eusebius, H.E., 5, 18, 2ff., where the evidence given by Apollonius is cited. He mentions gluttony, the encouragement to annul marriage, the receiving of money, the embellishment provided by gold, silver and fine articles of clothing, the deceitfulness of the martyrs associated with the movement, gambling, money-lending etc..

12. See Pan., 48, 9, where the Montanist rejection of second marriage is discussed.

13. See Ep., 41 ad Marc., 3, where Jerome accuses the movement of Sabellianism, which stated that the Trinity was limited to one Person.

14. This suggestion has been put forward by D.L. Powell, "Tertullianists and Cataphrygians." He states that the description given by the anonymous writer in Eusebius, H.E., 5, 16, 1ff. represents the early form of the movement in its purity, and that the later account of Apollonius ( H.E., 5, 18, 1ff. ) refers to a later form whose features were far inferior to those of the original.

the second century, low moral standards would have seemed completely opposed to the concept of the return of the Paraclete. Thus, I suggest, the adherents of the movement would not readily accept the paradox, had the movement originally exhibited such lax behaviour. Indeed, the anonymous writer speaks of the numerous martyrs associated with the movement <sup>15</sup> - a phenomenon which accords with rigorism rather than laxity. Tertullian, to whom we now turn, would never have been attracted by a movement with low standards of conduct.

#### B. THE LIFE OF TERTULLIAN

The only extant account of the life of Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus is the brief one given by Jerome. <sup>16</sup> I translate as follows:-

"Tertullian, the first Latin writer after Victor and Apollonius, <sup>17</sup> was a priest <sup>18</sup> and came from the province of Africa and the city of Carthage. He was the son of a proconsular centurion. <sup>19</sup> He was a man of sharp and vehement temperament, and flourished in the reigns of Severus and Antoninus Caracalla, <sup>20</sup> and he wrote many works which, because they are generally well-known, I shall omit to mention. I myself saw a certain Paul, an old man of Concordia, a town in Italy. He told me that when he was young he had seen at Rome a man who had been

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15. See H.E., 5, 16, 20.

16. De Vir. Illust., 53.

17. The Latin is:-

Tertullianus ..... nunc demum primus post Victorem et Apollonium Latinorum ponitur.

18. Tertullian uses the word presbyter.

19. The phrase used is centurio proconsularis.

20. Septimius Severus reigned from about 193 - 211 A.D., and Antoninus Caracalla from about 211 - 217 A.D..

the secretary of the old and blessed Cyprian, and that this secretary had told him that Cyprian would never let a day pass by without reading Tertullian, and that he often said to him, 'Give me the master'. He was clearly referring to Tertullian.

"Tertullian remained a priest of the Church until middle age, after which time, because of the envy and abuses of the clergy of the Roman Church, he lapsed into Montanist doctrine and mentions the New Prophecy in many of his works. Special reference may be made to works which he composed against the Church: De Pudicitia, De Persecutione, De Ieiuniis, De Monogamia, De Ecstasi ( six books, with a seventh against Apollonius ). It is said that he lived to a very old age, and that he composed many treatises which are no longer extant. "

The reliability of Jerome's account has been questioned in a number of particulars. T.D. Barnes has reduced Jerome's sources of this section to Jerome's own reading of Tertullian's writings, except for the story heard from Paul of Concordia.<sup>21</sup> If the conclusion of Barnes is to be accepted, all the information which Jerome gives may have no historical foundation. Much of the truth of the information is thrown into jeopardy. The statement that Tertullian lapsed into Montanism may be mere conjecture on the part of Jerome from a consideration of the long series of Tertullian's works,<sup>22</sup> and so too may the reference to old age, although it may rest on oral tradition. The reason Jerome gives for Tertullian's lapse into Montanism<sup>23</sup> may be merely a desire on Jerome's part to see in Tertullian's life an analogy with his own quarrel with the Roman Church.<sup>24</sup> It must be stressed that Barnes' views are not proven.

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21. See Tertullian: A Historical and Literary Study: Oxford:1971.p.10, and see also pp.234ff..

22. See *ibid.*, p.10.

23. *Invidia .... et contumeliis clericorum Romanae ecclesiae.*

24. This view is found in S. von Sychowski, Hieronimus als Litterarhistoriker: Münster:1894.p.142, and in C. Mohrmann, Études sur le Latin des Chrétiens, 3: Rome:1965.pp.387f.. Mohrmann says:-

"Dans cette information de saint Jérôme, qui n'est pas confirmé par d'autres données, on voit reflétée la rancune de saint Jérôme lui-même à l'égard du clergé de Rome."

That Tertullian was a priest has been accepted by many scholars, and rejected by a few. The question remains in balance.<sup>25</sup> As regards Tertullian's upbringing, and Jerome's designation of him as the son of a centurio proconsularis, numerous explanations of the term have been put forward,<sup>26</sup> and the term has even been explained away altogether.<sup>27</sup>

Any further details of Tertullian's life are not available from extant external sources. The writings of our author do not themselves contain explicit autobiographical statements in any great detail, but the occasional passing remark may shed some light to the question. That he was born of pagan parents seems conclusive from Apol., 18, 4<sup>28</sup> and De Paen., 1, 1,<sup>29</sup> although how his conversion to Christianity took place is uncertain. It was certainly not as a

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25. The reliability of Jerome's statement that Tertullian was a priest was never questioned more acutely than when H. Koch published a number of articles in which he concluded that Tertullian had never been a member of the clergy. However, in spite of Koch's work, the issue still remains open. For a fuller discussion, see H. Koch's articles in Historisches Jahrbuch der Görresgesellschaft, 28 ( 1907 ).pp.95ff.; Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte, 35 ( 1914 ).pp.1ff.; Theologische Studien und Kritiken, 103 ( 1931 ).pp.108ff.; P.de Labriolle, " Tertullien était-il prêtre?" Bulletin d'ancienne littérature et d'archéologie chrétienne, 3 ( 1913 ).pp.161ff.; H. von Campenhausen, Kirchliches Amt und geistliche Vollmacht in den ersten Jahrhunderten: Tübingen: 1953.p.250ff..
26. For example, see P.de Labriolle, History and Literature of Christianity from Tertullian to Boethius, trans. H. Wilson: London:1924.p.60f.:-  
"The term 'proconsular centurion' may mean either that his father was a centurion of the town cohort stationed at Carthage, or an official personage bearing the title of centurion, not officially, but one in use by common parlance." Also, J. Kaye, The Ecclesiastical History of the Second and Third Centuries, illustrated from the writings of Tertullian: London:1826.p.5,note:-  
"A proconsular centurion appears to have been a species of officer who was constantly in attendance upon the proconsul to receive his commands." Cf. A. Beck, Römisches Recht bei Tertullian und Cyprian: Halle:1930.p.13.
27. For example, by T.D. Barnes, Tertullian: A Historical and Literary Study.pp.13ff., who argues that Jerome's statement is the result of a misreading of a phrase in Tertullian's Apol., 9.
28. Haec et nos risimus aliquando. De uestris sumus: fiunt, non nascuntur Christiani. Tertullian is addressing the pagans.
29. Paenitentiam hoc genus homines quod et ipsi retro fuimus, caeci sine domini lumine, natura tenus norunt passionem animi quandam esse quae obueniat de offensa sententiae prioris.

result of study of philosophy,<sup>30</sup> nor, most probably, as a result of study of the Scriptures.<sup>31</sup> It may be that Tertullian was impressed by the courage and faith of the Christian martyrs.<sup>32</sup> His education would have given him a

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30. Tertullian on many occasions asserts the discord which exists between the Christian faith and the various philosophical systems. So, in the famous passage in De Praesc. Haer., 7, 9ff., he says:-

Quid ergo Athenis et Hierosolymis ? quid academiae et ecclesiae ? quid haereticis et christianis ? Nostra institutio de porticu Solomonis est qui et ipse tradiderat Dominum in simplicitate cordis esse quaerendum. Viderint qui Stoicum et Platonicum et dialecticum christianismum protulerunt.

In spite of Tertullian's constant assertions that philosophy is the mother of heresy and has been responsible for much abuse of Scripture ( see, for example, Ad Nat., 2, 2, 5f.; Apol., 47, 5; De Praesc. Haer., 7, 3; Adv. Hermog., 8, 3 ), he does admit that occasionally philosophy has gleaned some insight into the truth ( see, for example, Ad Nat., 2, 2, 5f.; Apol., 47, 2; De Test. An., 5, 6; De An., 2, 1f.; De Pat., 1, 7 ). Tertullian's own acceptance of the Stoic system lies at the basis of much of his thought and expression, and his dependence on Stoicism has frequently been analysed. For a fuller discussion on this matter, see C. de Lisle Shortt, The Influence of Philosophy on the Mind of Tertullian: London: 1933; H. B. Timothy, The Early Christian Apologists and Greek Philosophy, exemplified by Irenaeus, Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria: Assen: 1973; R. E. Roberts, The Theology of Tertullian: London: 1924. pp. 63ff.; J. H. Waszink, Tertulliani De Anima: Amsterdam: 1947; A. Labhardt, "Tertullien et la philosophie ou la recherche d'une position pure" Museum Helveticum, 7 ( 1950 ). pp. 159ff.; N. C. Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture: London: 1944; J.-C. Fredouille, Tertullien et la Conversion de la Culture Antique: Paris: 1972. especially, pp. 337ff.; M. Spanneut, Le Stoicisme des Pères de l'Église de Clément de Rome a Clément d'Alexandrie: Paris: 1957; G. L. Ellspermann, The Attitude of the Early Christian Latin Writers toward Pagan Literature and Learning: Washington: 1949. pp. 23ff..

31. Tertullian seems to regard the Scriptures as a supplement to and support of faith, rather than as a means by which one is led to an awareness of God for the first time. See later, p. 25.

32. Many passages in Tertullian's writings reflect the high regard he had for Christian martyrs. See especially, Ad Mart., passim; De Spect., 1, 5f.; 29, 3; De Praesc. Haer., 29, 3; De An., 55, 4f.. The latter passage contains a reference to the martyrdom of Perpetua and her companions, which is discussed later in this thesis, pp. 43 and 81.

knowledge of Roman and Greek literature, <sup>33</sup> rhetoric, <sup>34</sup> and philosophy, <sup>35</sup> and it is possible that he took up a career in law. <sup>36</sup> He wrote in Greek and Latin, <sup>37</sup> and he tells us that he had journeyed to Rome. <sup>38</sup>

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33. Tertullian's familiarity with classical authors is shown by numerous citations and allusions. Occasionally, he may have only had an indirect knowledge of these authors, but, in the majority of cases, there seems little reason to doubt that he knew the sources which he uses. These sources include Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Homer, Herodotus, Juvenal, Pliny, Seneca, Tacitus, Varro, Vergil, and Zeno. See the Index Scriptorum in Corpus Christianorum: Series Latina: Tertulliani Opera: Pars II.pp.1495f..
34. R.D. Sider, Ancient Rhetoric and the Art of Tertullian: Oxford:1971, has shown the influence of Tertullian's rhetorical background on his works. See also, J.-C. Fredouille, Tertullien et la Conversion de la Culture Antique.pp.206ff.; F.H. Colson, "Two Examples of Literary and Rhetorical Criticism in the Fathers," JTS, 25 ( 1924 ).pp.364ff.; H. Hoppe, Syntax und Stil des Tertullian: Leipzig: 1903.p.146ff..
35. For the relation of Tertullian to philosophy, see the bibliography given in n.30 to this introduction. Cf. also, n.33.
36. Eusebius, H.E.,2,2,4, mentions that Tertullian who had an accurate knowledge of Roman law was a man especially famous among those most distinguished at Rome. This might suggest that Tertullian had practised law at Rome before he was converted to Christianity. This might also explain why Tertullian went to Rome ( see De Cult. Fem.,1,7,2 ). In the Digest and Codex of Justinian, there are fragments of two works of a lawyer called Tertullianus who lived towards the end of the second century. The references are to be found in the Digest,28,5,3,2; 29,2,30,6; 38,17,2,44; and 49,17,4; and in the Codex, 5,70,7,1a. The two works mentioned are eight books of Quaestiones and a single book, De Castrensi Peculio. A. Beck, Römisches Recht bei Tertullian und Cyprian.pp.13ff., identified the two persons. T.D. Barnes, Tertullian: A Historical and Literary Study.pp,22ff., opposes this identification. See also, the article in Pauly-Wissowa, Real Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft: Stuttgart:1934. s.v."Tertullianus,2," by A. Steinwenter.
37. In De Cor.,6,3 and De Virg. Vel.,1,1, Tertullian refers to or hints at works written in Greek. In Adu. Prax.,3,2, he says:-  
At ego, si quid utriusque linguae praecerpsi ..... He is referring to Latin and Greek.
38. See De Cult. Fem.,1,7,2, where Tertullian says:-  
...uidimus Romae.  
There is the possibility that Tertullian may have travelled to Greece, although this is dependent on the interpretation given to two passages:-  
a) In De Iei.,13,8, he is discussing councils of Christians held in Greece:-  
Si et ista sollemnia, quibus tunc praesens patrocinatus est sermo, nos quoque in diuersis prouinciis fungimur in spiritu inuicem repraesentati, lex est sacramenti.  
Sermo could be taken as referring to Tertullian's personal speech, or to the divine word. The words nos..in spiritu certainly suggest physical absence.  
b) In De Exh. Cast.,13,2, talking about pagan celibacy, Tertullian says:-  
Nouimus uirgines:Vestae, et Iunonis apud Achaiae oppidum, et Apollinis apud Delphos, et Mineruae et Dianae quibusdam locis.  
The assumption that Tertullian has travelled to these towns hinges on the interpretation of nouimus as "we (or "I") know personally". The word could mean merely "we know as a fact" or "we have heard".

As a newly converted Christian, Tertullian took it upon himself to write extensively in the defence of his Church and her doctrine.<sup>39</sup> His passionate temperament is visible in the earliest works, and it is this aspect of his character which may be seen as instrumental in forcing his controversy with the Church at Cathage. The sympathy with which he embraces the New Prophecy reflects the extremity of his temperament.<sup>40</sup>

The date and manner of his death are uncertain. The only evidence is that of Jerome above, and a conjecture on the dating of his latest extant work, after which he appears to be silent.<sup>41</sup>

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39. The majority of Tertullian's writings are either appeals to the pagans to accept Christianity, or are concerned with the maintenance of and justification for correct belief and practice.
40. For a discussion about the extreme aspects of Tertullian's character, see B. Nisters, Tertullian: Seine Persönlichkeit und sein Schicksal: Münster: 1950; P. Monceaux, Histoire Littéraire de l'Afrique Chrétienne: Vol.1: Paris: 1901.pp.186ff; 399; 437f. ( hereafter referred to as Histoire Littéraire ). For the relationship of Tertullian to the New Prophecy, see A.d'Alès, La Théologie de Tertullien: Paris: 1905.pp.441ff.; A. Ehrhard, Die Kirche der Märtyrer: München: 1932.pp.247ff.; P.de Labriolle, La Crise Montaniste: Paris: 1913.pp.294ff. ( hereafter referred to as La Crise ); J.Berton, Tertullien: le schismatique. Les problèmes de la Vie Chrétienne et de l'Authorité: Paris: 1928:pp.73ff.; C.E. Freppel, Tertullien: Paris: 1864. especially Vol.1,pp.307ff.; P. Guilloux: "L'Evolution religieuse de Tertullian," Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique, 19 ( 1923 ).pp.5ff.; H.Karpp: Schrift und Geist bei Tertullian: Verlag: 1955; P. Monceaux, Histoire Littéraire: Vol.1.pp.399ff.; R.E. Roberts, The Theology of Tertullian.pp.39ff.; W. Schepelern, Der Montanismus und die phrygischen Kulte: Tübingen: 1929.passim; H.B. Swete: The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church: London: 1912.pp.79ff.; J.de Soyres, Montanism and the Primitive Church: Cambridge:1878. passim; R.A. Knox, Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion: Oxford:1950.
41. It is agreed that De Pud., if not Tertullian's latest writing, is one of his latest. The date of De Pud. has been posited as about 220 A.D., on the grounds that the bishop whom Tertullian attacks in it ( see De Pud., 1,6ff. ) is the bishop of Rome, Callistus. This identification was made by P. Monceaux, Histoire Littéraire.pp.200 and 207; A. Harnack, Die Chronologie der altchristlichen Litteratur bis Eusebius; Vol.2: Leipzig:1904.pp.260 and 286; and by other commentators. That the bishop whom Tertullian is attacking is the bishop of Carthage has been suggested. For this view, see T.D. Barnes, Tertullian: A Historical and Literary Study.p.247. De Pud. is taken as one of Tertullian's latest works because of the extremity of the arguments in it. It has been suggested that Tertullian may have formed his own group ( see W.H.C. Frend, "Their word to our day: 9: Tertullian," Expository Times, 81 ( 1969-70 ).pp.136ff.). Certainly Praedestinatus, 1,91, mentions a group of Tertullianists.



### C. TERTULLIAN AND THE NEW PROPHECY

The relationship between Tertullian and the New Prophecy is a fascinating one on a number of counts.

Firstly, the significance of Tertullian's involvement in the movement has often been emphasised.<sup>42</sup> It is important, therefore, to assess the part played by Tertullian in the defence and formulation of the doctrine of the New Prophecy. This task is by no means easy, since the writings of the early movement are lost, allowing no comparisons to be made between these and the works of Tertullian in which he speaks on behalf of the movement. However, in this thesis, I hope to bring into relief the originality which Tertullian shows in his use and interpretation of the Scriptures in his argumentation for the prophetic cause. There can be no doubt about the brilliance and power of Tertullian's mind, and it would seem highly unlikely that such talent would not contribute to at least a minor development in the thought of the movement. If this conclusion can be proven, it becomes more difficult to separate the movement's doctrine from Tertullian's own additions or interpretations.

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42. A. Hilgenfeld, Die Glossolalie in der alten Kirche: Leipzig:1850.p.128, calls Tertullian "den bedeutendsten theologischen Repräsentanten des Montanismus". A. Ehrhard, Die Kirche der Märtyrer.p.255, says, "Abschliessend wird man daher sagen dürfen, dass Tertullian sich in Wirklichkeit nicht in den Dienst des Montanismus stellte, sondern umgekehrt den Montanismus in seinen Dienst zog." Tertullian may have learned of the movement from the collection of oracles that were clearly in evidence in the Church ( see later,p. 32). He was well informed on matters of the East ( for example, he knows the practices of various churches; see De Virg. Vel.,2 ). No doubt, once Tertullian's interest was aroused in the movement, he would make further enquiries. I hope to show that Tertullian plays an important role in the development of a Scriptural rationale for a justification of the movement and its principles.

Secondly, and closely associated with the first point, is the problem of what the New Prophecy was like which Tertullian made his own. It seems strange to admit that a man of Tertullian's calibre and rigidity <sup>43</sup> would be influenced by a movement whose external features reflected moral laxity. It is more likely that the New Prophecy which he adopted did not exhibit such extreme characteristics and that he saw in the movement elements which fitted in precisely with his own views on martyrdom, eschatology, asceticism, and authority. <sup>44</sup> It would then be this basic nucleus of features on which Tertullian would build his own system, and impress his own peculiar stamp.

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43. Tertullian's learning and austere outlook to life make themselves evident on many occasions. His knowledge of literature, including the Scriptures, rhetoric, philosophy, law, etc. cannot be questioned. For a discussion on some of these points, see earlier in this introduction, p.8. A few examples of his austere outlook to life will suffice here. In De Spect., he exhorts Christians to avoid the pleasures of the world, including shows and games, and to flee all contact with pagan customs; in Ad Uxor., 1,5,1ff., his attitude to children is that they are an unnecessary encumbrance; in De Paen., 6,21, baptism is to be desired by catechumens, and should not be administered hastily, lest it be abused. J. Tixeront, Mélanges de patrologie et d'histoire des dogmes: Paris: 1921. p.122, talks of Tertullian's presentation of "le côté austère de la loi chrétienne". G.L. Ellspermann, The Attitude of the Early Christian Latin Writers toward Pagan Literature and Learning. p.24, says that it was Tertullian's "intemperate, proud zeal and stern, misguided asceticism which caused him to join the rigoristic movement."
44. The similarities between Tertullian's early views and those which he shared with the New Prophecy, at a later date, have constantly been emphasised. For example, C. Guignebert, Tertullien: Étude de ses Sentiments a l'égard de l'Empire: Paris: 1901, says in his introduction, p.viii, "Tertullien a toujours été virtuellement montaniste". For similar statements, see A.d'Alès, La Théologie de Tertullien. p.445; J. Berton, Tertullien: le schismatique. p.73; A. Ehrhard, Die Kirche der Märtyrer. p.247; C.E. Freppel, Tertullien: Vol.2. p.114 says that the sect did not oppose any doctrine. The words of P. Monceaux, Histoire Littéraire: Vol.2. p.438, may be cited in this context: "Il était déjà plus qu'a demi-montaniste, quand il écrivit la plupart de ses traités doctrinaux; et cependant ces traités, sauf quelques réservés de détail, ont presque toujours été considérés comme orthodoxes."

Thirdly, the way in which Tertullian's interest in the movement accelerates and leads him into an extreme position reflects the tenacity of his character.-- Even a superficial reading of his writings reveals immediately how he takes up the banner of the movement, almost casually at first, <sup>45</sup> and how gradually he becomes more and more aggressive, until finally his adamant insistence on the principles of the movement leads him to contradict many of his earlier statements, and to oppose earlier exegesis of numerous texts. One concern of this thesis is to analyse such contradictions in his use of Scripture.

The question of whether Tertullian actually broke with the Catholic Church at Carthage of which he had been a staunch supporter ever since his conversion is not easily answered. Jerome's account of Tertullian certainly implies a strong difference of opinion between Tertullian and the clergy, <sup>46</sup> but this is

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45. The earliest allusions to the New Prophecy in Tertullian's writings are merely in support of the argument of the moment. He does not bring them in for the sake of controversy. So, for example, in Adu. Marc., 1, 29, 4, he says the authority of the Paraclete confirms the Christian principle of monogamy; in Adu. Marc., 3, 24, 4, he states that the New Prophecy accords with the predictions of Ezekiel and John regarding the appearance of the New Jerusalem. It would ruin Tertullian's case against Marcion if he were to distinguish between various sections of the Church, and their different beliefs. Hence, any reference to the New Prophecy must be incidental. Cf. also, Adu. Marc., 4, 22, 4f.; 5, 8, 11f.; 5, 15, 5f.; 5, 16, 4; Adu. Val., 5, 1.
46. Jerome suggests that Tertullian's controversy with the Church passed over into the realms of abuse. Certainly, Tertullian's own writings witness to such abusive argumentation with the Catholics, but this does not necessarily imply that he was criticising the Church from outside. Indeed, it may be argued that Tertullian's frustration at the Catholic reluctance to accept his views would be more acute, if he were trying to reform the Church from within.

not to say that he separated himself completely from the Church. Nor is it to assume that if such a break did in fact occur, that Tertullian threw off completely the vestiges of the Church which he had always treasured. Indeed, it would seem that a formal schism did not take place. <sup>46</sup>

#### D. THE WRITINGS OF TERTULLIAN

The works of Tertullian reflect the various phases of his life within the Church, and in controversy with the Church. There are now thirty-one extant works: <sup>47</sup>

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46. That Tertullian actually separated himself from the Church has been accepted without question by most commentators. So, E. Evans, Tertullian: Aduersus Marcionem: Oxford:1972, can speak in his introduction to Vol.1, p.xviii, of a "formal breach with the Church". W.H.C. Frend, "Their word to our day: 9: Tertullian." p.137, speaks of Tertullian's "exit from the official church". J. Berton labels his work Tertullien: le schismatique. Recently, D.L. Powell, "Tertullianists and Cataphrygians," has suggested that the followers of the New Prophecy at Carthage did not originally form a schismatic group, but an ecclesia in ecclesia. It has been stated that Tertullian's involvement in the New Prophecy led him in no way to renounce his earlier ideas, for example, on the regula, Scripture, the apostolicity of the churches, and Christian piety. For such a view, see P. de Labriolle, La Crise. pp.463ff..
47. For a list of these extant works, see the section of this introduction entitled "The Writings of Tertullian", pp. 17f..

several others have been lost. <sup>49</sup> Any attempt to place these extant works into subject categories becomes extremely arbitrary and superficial, since a work may, by the nature of its aims and content, fit into more than one division. <sup>50</sup> It will be sufficient here to note that Tertullian's writings range from the apologetic to controversial, from philosophical to doctrinal and moral. However, wherever an important passage from one of Tertullian's writings is analysed in the text of this thesis, the subject with which it is dealing will be mentioned, in order that the passage may be placed in its context.

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49. The lost works of Tertullian include:-

De Paradiso, mentioned in De An., 55,5 and Adu. Marc., 5,12,8;

De Spe Fidelium, mentioned in Adu. Marc., 3,24,2, and by Jerome, De Vir. Illust., 18, and Comm. in Hiezech., 11,36;

De Ecstasi, mentioned by Jerome, De Vir. Illust., 40 and 53; cf. Adu. Marc., 4,22,4;

De Censu Animae, alluded to in De An., 1,1; 3,4; 11,1; 22,1; 24,10;

De Fato, mentioned in De An., 20,5;

De Vestibus Aaron, mentioned by Jerome, Ep., 64,23;

Ad Amicum Philosophicum and De Virginitate, mentioned by Jerome, Ep., 22,22 and Adu. Lou., 1,13;

De Trinitate, mentioned by Jerome, De Vir. Illust., 70. It may be that this refers to Adu. Prax.;

In Apol., 19,8, Tertullian mentions his intention to write on the subject of a chronology of sacred and profane history. Whether he actually did so is uncertain.

The index of Codex Agobardinus mentions three other works:-

De Superstitione Saeculi; De Animae Summissione; De Carne et Anima. These treatises are not extant in the manuscript.

Tertullian also wrote in Greek a treatise on the baptism of heretics ( cf. De Bapt., 15,2 ), and his original drafts of De Virg. Vel. and De Spect.

were written in Greek ( cf. De Virg. Vel., 1,1 and De Cor., 6,3 ).

50. For example, in Adu. Marc., Tertullian deals with a large number of subjects in passing.

The task of assigning specific dates to Tertullian's works is an impossible one, and the listing of the works in chronological order is not much easier. Chronological lists drawn up by commentators have been far from harmonious.<sup>51</sup> These variations result from the scarcity of explicit references by Tertullian to contemporary events and personalities,<sup>52</sup> and the differing interpretations

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51. A number of attempts have been made to reconstruct a chronology of Tertullian's works. For example, E. Noeldechen, "Die Abfassungszeit der Schriften Tertullians," Texte und Untersuchungen, 5, 2 ( 1888 ). pp. 1ff.; P. Monceaux, "Chronologie des oeuvres de Tertullien," Revue de philologie de littérature et d'histoire anciennes, 22 ( 1898 ). pp. 77ff.; A. Harnack, Die Chronologie der altchristlichen Litteratur: Vol. 2. pp. 256ff.; R. E. Roberts, The Theology of Tertullian, pp. 79ff.; T. D. Barnes, Tertullian: A Historical and Literary Study, pp. 30ff. The lists which have been drawn up differ considerably according to each author's assessment of the criteria, method of approach, research and conjectures. A precis of several chronological lists may be found in R. Braun, Deus Christianorum: Paris: 1962. pp. 563ff..
52. Allusions to historical events and personalities occur in Ad Mart., 6, 2; Ad Nat., 1, 17, 4; Apol., 35, 9; 35, 11; 37, 4; De An., 55, 4; Scorp., 6, 2f.; De Resurr., 42, 8; De Pall., 2, 7; Adu. Marc., 1, 15, 1; De Cor., 1, 1 and Ad Scap., 3, 3. However, commentators are not always in agreement as to which event or personality these allusions refer. Other allusions may be of doubtful value. For example, the assertion in De Monog., 3, 8, that the work was written 160 years after Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, depends on Tertullian's dating of this epistle; and the allusion in De Paen., 12, 2f. to a volcanic eruption need not refer to a contemporary one.

placed by commentators upon the criteria of Tertullian's style, doctrine, and references to earlier works he has written. <sup>53</sup> The problem is aggravated even more by the fact that some works seem to elude such criticism altogether. <sup>54</sup> Hence the dates and order of some of Tertullian's writings are still uncertain.

Fortunately, all that is necessary for the purposes of this thesis is a broad framework in which it is possible to trace the development of Tertullian's thought as he becomes more and more sympathetic towards the New Prophecy. <sup>55</sup> Admittedly, such an approach has its limitations, <sup>56</sup> but by placing the writings into very general categories with which scarcely anyone would wish to argue, a satisfactory framework for this thesis may be achieved. I find it impossible to agree with the comment of R.E. Roberts:-

" Strange though it may seem at first, thought, the problem of placing the whole series of writing in a definite order is really less difficult, and more satisfactory in its results, than is the problem of deciding merely which writings are pre-Montanistic and which were written after Tertullian became a Montanist. " <sup>57</sup>

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53. References to earlier works are found in De Pud., 1.10; De Iei., 1.4; De Cultu Fem., 1.8, 4; De Idol., 13.1; De Cor., 6.3; Adu. Marc., 5.10, 1; De Resurr., 2, 13; 2, 5; 17, 2; 45, 4; De An., 21, 6; Adu. Val., 16, 3; Scorp., 4, 3; Adu. Hermog., 1, 1; Adu. Prax., 2, 2f.; De Carne, 2, 6; 12, 5; De Test. An., 5, 6.
54. The writings which seem to cause most uncertainty are De Idol., De Pall., and Adu. Iud..
55. T.D. Barnes, Tertullian: A Historical and Literary Study. pp. 43f., has drawn up a list of eight ideas or expressions distinctive of the beliefs prevalent in the movement. These include explicit references to the leaders of the movement, and to spiritual gifts, utterances, and the ecstatic state; the emphasis on the Holy Spirit as the Paraclete and comparisons, often abusive, between Catholics and followers of the New Prophecy.
56. The amount to which Tertullian would emphasise the above points would vary according to his audience, and according to his subject.
57. The Theology of Tertullian. p. 80.

I would suggest that within the categories of works written before and after Tertullian became involved with the New Prophecy , a development may be seen, allowing for a certain degree of chronological sequence to be determined. Several works are clearly more deeply influenced by Tertullian's interest in the movement than others. These works - Adu. Prax., De Iei., De Monog., and De Pud. - are clearly the latest in Tertullian's writings.

Hence, it is possible to draw up groups of writings, without drawing up a definitive chronological order. I omit from these groups De Pall. and De Idol., as there seems to be most uncertainty about their relation to the other works. In this thesis, I have avoided using them to support any argument I may wish to make.

The following are the groups into which I categorise Tertullian's works:-

GROUP ONE

WORKS WRITTEN BEFORE TERTULLIAN WAS INFLUENCED BY THE NEW PROPHECY  
( listed in alphabetical order )

1. Works Addressed to the Pagans

Ad Nat.

Apol.

De Test. An.

2. Works Addressed to Christians

Ad Mart.

Ad Uxor.

De Bapt.

De Cult. Fem.

De Orat.

De Paen.

De Pat.

De Spect.



3. Works Addressed to Heretical Groups

Adu. Hermog.

De Praesc. Haer.

( Adu. Iud. may be assumed to belong to this period. )

GROUP TWO

WORKS WRITTEN WHEN TERTULLIAN WAS INFLUENCED BY THE NEW PROPHECY

1. Works Containing Slight Traces of the Influence of the New Prophecy

( listed in alphabetical order, except for De Resurr. which is a continuation of De Carne )

Adu. Marc. ( the different books date from different times )

Adu. Val.

De An.

De Carne

De Resurr.

De Cor.

Scorp.

( The dating of Ad Scap. is reasonably certain<sup>58</sup> and should perhaps be placed in this period of Tertullian's writings, although it does not contain any specific references, as far as I can discover, to the New Prophecy. )

2. Works in which the Traces of the New Prophecy Become Greater

( not listed in alphabetical order, since the vehemence with which Tertullian defends his views and opposes the Catholics reflects the order of these works )

De Exh. Cast.

De Fuga

De Virg. Vel.

Adu. Prax.

De Iei.

De Monog.

De Pud.

58. In Ad Scap., 3,3, Tertullian mentions an eclipse of the sun. This has been dated to 14th August, 212 A.D. by F.K. Ginzel, Spezieller Kanon der Sonnen- und Mondfinsternisse: Berlin:1899.p.206.

Since it is the aim of this thesis to compare Tertullian 's attitudes before and after his involvement in the New Prophecy, the precise chronological order of the works in these groups is relatively unimportant, except for the last group where there is more certainty of order anyway.

PART ONE

REVELATION

CHAPTER ONE

TERTULLIAN'S CONCEPT OF REVELATION.

The aim of this thesis is to consider the effect of Tertullian's involvement in the New Prophecy on his attitudes to Scripture. However, it is impossible to discuss his views on Scripture without considering his concept of revelation, since the two are closely associated.

For Tertullian, the Christian faith is based upon the self-revelation of God. God has made himself known to men in a variety of ways.

A. THE WITNESS OF NATURE

The first way in which God has revealed himself is through Nature. The marvellous works visible in creation and providence witness to the existence and character of God. Everyone should therefore have some knowledge of God. Tertullian condemns Marcion's theory of two gods on the grounds that the only way in which Marcion's second god can be known is by the gospel:-

*Creatori autem etiam naturalis agnitio debetur, ex operibus intellegendo et exinde in plenioram notitiam requirendo.*<sup>1</sup>

Since God is known from his works, and since the knowledge of God is written in the world, there is evidence available to every man of God's existence and power.<sup>2</sup> God can be known if only men are prepared to see.<sup>3</sup> Discussing a pagan rumour that a dead body made way for another body to be placed next to it in a grave, Tertullian says:-

*Si et apud ethnicos tale quid traditur, ubique deus potestatis suae signa proponit, suis in solacium, extraneis in testimonium.*<sup>4</sup>

This statement gives some idea of Tertullian's belief that Nature

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1. Adu. Marc., 5, 16, 3.

2. See Adu. Marc., 2, 3, 1; De Resurr., 2, 8; Adu. Marc., 2, 17, 1.

3. See Apol., 40, 10.

4. De An., 51, 7.

even teaches men about doctrinal issues. This hint of Nature's witness to the resurrection of the dead is confirmed elsewhere by a series of analogies.<sup>5</sup> The immortality of the soul is also seen from Nature.<sup>6</sup> There can be no uncertainty about the validity of Nature's witness to God's power and existence. Nature cannot lie:-

.... neque deus neque natura mentitur.<sup>7</sup>

Nature also confirms common practice, and even Christian practice:-

Maiores efficitur ratio Christianarum observationum, cum illas etiam natura defendit, quae prima omnium disciplina est.<sup>8</sup>

Tertullian appeals frequently to the natural law. He talks of a common law throughout the world engraven on natural tables,<sup>9</sup> and he does not excuse those who do not know the Christian law from God's punishment since everyone has the natural law to follow:-

quia et hi (etsi) legem ignorant, at natura faciunt quae sunt legis...<sup>10</sup>

In many ways natural law corresponds to Christian discipline,<sup>11</sup> although on occasions, it does not go far enough, and resort has to be made to some other criterion:-

Scriptura legem condit, natura contestatur, disciplina exigit.... Dei est scriptura, Dei est natura, Dei est disciplina. Quicquid contrarium est istis, Dei non est.... Si de natura dubitatur, disciplina quid magis Deo ratum sit ostendit.<sup>12</sup>

Tertullian's respect for Nature derives from his Stoic background.<sup>13</sup>

Nature is an authoritative witness to God's act of revelation; Nature

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5. See De Resurr., 12.

6. See De Resurr., 3, 1.

7. De Test. An., 6, 1; cf. Apol., 7, 13f..

8. De Cor., 5, 1.

9. See De Cor., 6, 1.

10. Adu. Marc., 5, 13, 4.

11. See De Cor., 7, 1f..

12. De Virg. Vel., 16, 1f..

13. For an assessment of Tertullian's relationship to Stoicism, see the bibliography given in the Introduction of this thesis, n.30.

provides a nucleus of law on which Christianity has built. To be in disharmony with Nature is to be in disharmony with God. Tertullian can say that God has given as much evidence in Nature as in his spoken word.<sup>14</sup> This evidence is available to every man, to whom God has endowed the wherewithal to understand its significance. So in De An.,2,1, Tertullian states:-

.....sed et natura pleraque suggeruntur quasi de publico sensu, quo animam deus dotare dignatus est.

The reference to the ability of the soul to understand the significance of God's revelation in Nature leads us to the second way in which God may be known.

#### B. THE WITNESS OF THE SOUL.

In Apol.,17, Tertullian produces an argument for the self-revelation of God, to which he returns in later writings,<sup>15</sup> and to which he devotes a treatise in its own right.<sup>16</sup> This is the argument that the soul possesses a consciousness of God which, by involuntary utterances, it reveals from time to time. Once released from the bondage of the body and the influences which may have an adverse effect on it, the soul

cum tamen resipiscit, ut ex crapula, ut ex somno, ut ex aliqua ualetudine, et sanitatem suam patitur, Deum nominat hoc solo nomine, quia proprio Dei ueri. "Deus magnus, Deus bonus", et "quod Deus dederit" omnium uox est.<sup>17</sup>

The soul could have learnt this consciousness of God only from God himself, for the soul was in existence before books and writing.<sup>18</sup> Thus the soul can be regarded as naturally Christian.<sup>19</sup>

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14. See De Resurr.,14,1.

15. See De Test. An.,passim; also De Carne,12,4f..

16. I.e. De Test. An..

17. Apol.,17,5.

18. See De Test. An.,5; Apol.,17.

19. See Apol.,17,6.

These testimonies of the soul cannot be dismissed lightly. They are of great authority, especially as they are so closely linked to the witness of Nature. A passage in De Test. An. summarises this relationship most clearly, and asserts the resulting importance which must be attached to the witness which Nature and the soul provide in the question of God's revelation:-

Haec testimonia animae quanto uera tanto simplicia, quanto simplicia tanto uulgaria, quanto uulgaria tanto communia, quanto communia tanto naturalia, quanto naturalia tanto diuina. Non puto cuiquam friuola et ridicula uidere posse, si recogitet naturae maiestatem, ex qua censetur auctoritas animae. <sup>20</sup>

Closely associated with the soul's understanding of God's revelation is the concept of "Reason". Tertullian constantly emphasises the role played by Reason in man's relationship with God. <sup>21</sup> Indeed, the soul contains a rational part which comes from God, and Reason provides the basis for the understanding of God's will:-

Quippe res dei ratio quia deus omnium conditor nihil non ratione prouidit; disposuit ordinauit, nihil ( enim ) non ratione tractari intellegique uoluit. <sup>22</sup>

Thus there is a relationship between Nature and Reason in the realm of faith. The one supplements the other:-

Nam etsi credunt plerique in illum (sc. deum ), non statim ratione credunt, non habentes dei pignus, opera eius deo digna. <sup>23</sup>

Reason too has its part to play in the understanding and establishment of law and discipline. <sup>24</sup>

Nature and the soul, together with the underlying principle of Reason, provide the wherewithal for all men to come to some understanding of God.

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20. De Test. An., 5, 1.

21. See De An., 16.

22. De Paen., 1, 1.

23. Adu. Marc., 1, 12, 1.

24. See De Cor., 4, 1 and 4, 5.

However, Tertullian is very careful to say that Christians possess a more detailed knowledge of God's character and activity. The Christian man has a more intimate acquaintance with God, for he knows him as a friend from close quarters, not from afar. To the Christian a special revelation has been given. <sup>25</sup>

### C. THE WITNESS OF THE SCRIPTURES.

The revelation which God has given to the Christians is contained in the activity of his Word, who, after communicating with the patriarchs and the prophets, was made flesh. During his life, he gave to the disciples whom he had chosen the authority to transmit his preaching throughout the world. This the apostles did, founding churches which in turn founded others. Thus, in many instances, Tertullian links tradition with the original message of the apostles who received it from Christ, and Christ from God, and with the message proclaimed by the Church. This tradition includes both oral and written teaching, and so the Scriptures are an integral part of it. Indeed, the Scriptures are a record of God's revelation, and are a means by which the apostles, and later the Church, have passed on the faith. <sup>26</sup>

It is this emphasis on the instruction which God has provided which characterises Tertullian's argumentation regarding revelation. Nature, the soul, and Reason provide only a partial understanding of God's character and power. The Christian, possessing God's personal instruction, can understand more fully than the Pagan who has only natural revelation.

Thus Tertullian can posit the witness of Nature and that of God's instruction as the vital keys to the understanding of God's self-revelation:-

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25. See De Spect., 2, 5.

26. See De Praesc. Haer., 13; 20; 32; and 37f.. For a fuller treatment of Tertullian's understanding of the relationship between Scripture and Tradition, see especially E. Flesseman-Van Leer, Tradition and Scripture in the Early Church: Assen: 1953. pp. 145ff.; D. van den Eynde, Les Normes de l'Enseignement Chrétien: Paris: 1933. pp. 105ff..



Nos definimus deum primo natura cognoscendum, dehinc doctrina recognoscendum, natura ex operibus, doctrina ex praedicationibus. 27

Since this statement is written by Tertullian in his work attacking Marcion, the words ex praedicationibus are to be taken as a specific reference to the prophecies of the Old Testament which Marcion sought to disparage. A similar thought is to be found in De Resurr., 12, 8, where Tertullian states that God first sent Nature as a teacher, meaning to later send prophecy as a supplementary instructor. Further examples can be adduced in which Nature and Scripture are associated with the revelation of divine matters. Scripture witnesses to the value of the authority of Nature:-

Sententiam dei natura pronuntiat: Terra es et in terram ibis... 28

In his Apol., Tertullian sets out the three bases of the knowledge which may be obtained of God - Nature, the testimony of the soul, and Scripture. The precise role of Scripture is stated as follows:-

Sed quo plenius et impressius tam ipsum quam dispositiones eius et voluntates adiremus, adiecit instrumentum litteraturae, si qui uelit de Deo inquirere, et inquisito inuenire, et inuento credere, et credito deseruire. 29

Thus Scripture provides the specific details about God to which Nature and the soul point generally. Tertullian has argued that the witnesses of Nature and of the soul are valid because they date from the very beginning of time. He also emphasises the antiquity of Scripture, as well as its divinity. Scripture is older than anything to which the non-Christians can appeal from their own writings or religion. 30 As for the divinity of Scripture, this is obvious from the fact that events which have been predicted in it are taking place:-

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27. Adu. Marc., 1, 18, 2.

28. De Resurr., 18, 6. The text is Gen. 3:19.

29. Apol., 18, 1.

30. See Apol., 47, 1ff..

Idoneum, opinor, testimonium diuinitatis ueritas diuinationis. 31

To the pagans, an appeal to the antiquity and fulfilment of the Scriptures is as far as Tertullian goes to prove their status. However, to his Christian readers, another argument can be added - that of the divine inspiration of Scripture. On many occasions he refers to the activity of the Holy Spirit in the inspiration and interpretation of Scripture. 32 On other occasions, he speaks of God's relationship to the Scriptures. 33 Sometimes, he mentions Christ's activity in the inspiration of Scripture. 34 Frequently, his terminology for Scripture draws out its divine associations. 35 Thus the divinity of Scripture is safeguarded; so too is its authority. The same source of inspiration is to be seen in each section of Scripture. One apostle agrees with another. There can be no disharmony since Scripture is one. 36

Because there is this basic unity between the various parts of the Bible, Tertullian can have no sympathy with Marcion's attempts to separate the Old and New Testaments. Nowhere does Tertullian's insistence upon the continuity of the two Testaments find a more detailed place than in his work against Marcion. Much of Tertullian's argumentation in this work is designed to show that the New Testament, and in particular Luke and the Pauline epistles, can only be intelligible if they are interpreted against the backcloth of the Old Testament. The way in which this relationship is described is a complex one, since Tertullian is not always consistent in the ideas he propounds, nor in the terminology he uses.

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31. Apol., 20, 3.

32. See Ad. Uxor., 2, 2, 4; De Cult. Fem., 1, 3, 3; Adu. Hermog., 22, 1; Adv. Marc., 5, 7, 1; De Resurr., 24, 8 etc.. Tertullian naturally stresses this relationship in his later writings when he defends the New Prophecy.

33. See Apol., 18, 1; De Pat., 3, 4; 7, 2; De Praesc. Haer., 39, 7; Adu. Hermog., 33, 1; De Resurr., 12, 7 etc..

34. See Adu. Marc., 3, 5, 3; De Resurr., 22, 3.

35. Tertullian uses such terms as *commentarii diuini* ( De Test. An., 6, 1 ); *litterae diuinae* ( Apol., 39, 3 ); *scripturae dei* ( Adu. Hermog., 33, 1 ); *sententiae sanctae* ( De An., 21, 5 ).

36. See De Orat., 22, 1; De Pud., 19, 3.

He will concede to Marcion that the law has been abolished with the coming of Christ, <sup>37</sup> and yet he emphasises the agreement which exists between the two Testaments. <sup>38</sup> He will not admit that there has been a separatio: he prefers to think of an adimpletio, or an amplitudo, or a reformatio. <sup>39</sup> Christ's modifications to and confirmation of former situations are to be seen as a stage in God's plan, the progress of God's scheme in history. <sup>40</sup> An original law was given in the garden of Eden, which sufficed until the time of Moses. All the precepts of the Mosaic law were contained in germ in this original law. The coming of Christ fulfilled and perfected this law of Moses, marking a return to the original state. <sup>41</sup> There is to be no more change. Any changes which Christ brought about had been predicted in the Old Testament, thus making the New Testament superior to the Old. <sup>42</sup> Christ's coming is to be seen predicted by prophecy and by typology. <sup>43</sup> Thus the continuity of the two dispensations is safeguarded. <sup>44</sup>

#### D. THE WITNESS OF THE NEW PROPHECY

Tertullian's emphasis on the permanence and sufficiency of Scripture, especially the New Testament, takes on a new significance in his later writings. In Adu. Marc., 5, 11, 5 he states:-

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37. For example, see Adu. Marc., 5, 2, 1; 5, 13, 1; 5, 19, 9.

38. See Adu. Marc., 4, 9, 4; 4, 12; 4, 18 etc..

39. See Adu. Marc., 4, 11, 11.

40. See Adu. Marc., 4, 17, 2; cf. De Exh. Cast., 5; De Monog., 5.

41. See De Monog., 14, 3f.; cf. 5, 2f..

42. See Adu. Marc., 4, 1, 6.

43. See Adu. Marc., passim.

44. Much of this argumentation is found in Adu. Iud., since the basic issue of the relevance and authority of the New Testament is at stake in this work also. For further discussion on many of these points, mentioned in this section, see later. pp. 265 ff..

Si ideo, ut claritatem maiorem defenderet noui testamenti, quod manet in gloria, quam ueteris, quod euacuari habebat, hoc et meae conuenit fidei praeponenti euangelium legi.

The utmost respect which Tertullian has for the New Testament is shown most clearly in this passage. However, an important development is to be seen in his later view. Having accepted the New Prophecy, he can no longer admit the sufficiency of the New Testament in all its details, since the New Prophecy claimed to have received revelations which in some particulars superseded Scripture. Thus, whilst Tertullian can appeal to natural imagery to describe the relationship of the two Testaments, in his argumentation with Marcion, he can appeal to the same imagery to defend his later view. The passage in Adu. Marc., 4, 11, 11 reads as follows:-

Et tamen, si concedimus separationem istam, per reformationem, per amplitudinem, per profectum. Sicut fructus separatur a semine, cum sit fructus ex semine, sic et euangelium separatur a lege, dum prouehitur ex lege, aliud ab illa, sed non alienum, diuersum, sed non contrarium.

There can be no doubt that, in this passage, Tertullian visualises the New Testament as the ultimate fulfilment of the Old. The gospel fulfils the law. The imagery of the fruit and the seed confirms this. The fruit is the end product of the seed. It is the whole reason for the planting of the seed in the first place. Nothing is to be expected after the fruit has appeared. So it is with the gospel. It marks the end of the growing process. It is the sole reason for the existence of the law.

The contrast between this passage and one in which a similar imagery appears in De Virg. Vel., 1, 5ff. is most noticeable:-

Aspice ipsam creaturam paulatim ad fructum promoueri. Granum est primo, et de grano frutex oritur, et de frutice arbuscula enititur; deinde rami et frondes inualescunt et totum arboris nomen expanditur, inde germinis tumor et flos de germine soluitur, et de flore fructus aperitur. Is quoque, rudis aliquamdiu et informis, paulatim aetatem suam dirigens eruditur in mansuetudinem saporis. Sic et iustitia ( nam idem Deus iustitiae et creaturae ) primo fuit in rudimentis, natura Deum metuens; dehinc per legem et prophetas promouit in infantiam, dehinc per euangelium efferbuit in iuuentutem, nunc per Paracletum componitur in maturitatem.

Once again in the analogy between the stages of revelation and the process of natural growth, the fruit is seen as the ultimate end of the process - and the fruit, in its maturity, is obviously seen as representative of the new revelation which, it is claimed, has been received in the New Prophecy. The change in Tertullian's concept of the revelatory process has resulted in his conviction that no longer is the New Testament the final stage of God's self-revelation and that the Paraclete has gone further, in some ways, than the New Testament ever did. In fact, whereas Tertullian argues earlier in his work against Marcion that the Old Testament was the preparation for the New, he now argues that both Testaments are a preparation for the ultimate revelation of the Paraclete. It is not that Tertullian wishes to abolish the witness of Scripture - merely that he wishes to show that the strict measures demanded by the Paraclete have been previously evident or fore-shadowed. Again, in his arguments with his Catholic opponents, Tertullian places great emphasis on the original state of affairs at the beginning of the world's history. So Tertullian can appeal to Adam as a witness to the validity of monogamy and fasting.<sup>45</sup> The teaching of the Paraclete is consistent with the return to the state of Paradise which existed at the beginning of time. The teaching which the Paraclete imparts to his followers is, in part, bound up with Scripture, in the sense that some of it is the result of a far more specialised appreciation of Scripture. Hence, Tertullian can say that the Spirit explains difficult passages:-

.... idcirco iam omnes retro ambiguitates et quantas uolunt parabolas aperta atque perspicua totius sacramenti praedicatione discussit per nouam prophetiam de paraclito inundantem.<sup>46</sup>

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45. See De Monog., 4f; De Iei., 3; cf. De Exh. Cast., 3, 1ff.

46. De Resurr., 63, 9.

A similar thought is expressed in De Virg. Vel.,1,5, where the role of the Paraclete is described:-

Quae est ergo Paracleti administratio, nisi haec, quod disciplina dirigitur, quod scripturae reuelantur, quod intellectus reformatur, quod ad meliora proficitur ?

T.P. O'Malley has made the point that Tertullian insists on the action of the Spirit in the understanding of Scripture, only after he becomes involved in the New Prophecy.<sup>47</sup> The above cited passage from De Resurr. is adduced as evidence for this view. This statement needs further elucidation. It is true that only in his later life does Tertullian explicitly mention the Spirit's ability to give insight into the often difficult meanings of Scripture. However, throughout his literary career, he always emphasises the role of the Spirit in the inspiration of Scripture, and in this context he often adds that the Spirit's aim has been to make Scripture easy to understand. So in Adu. Hermog.,22,4, he says:-

.... si tantam curam instructioni nostrae insumpsit spiritus sanctus...

Again, in Ad Uxor.,2,2,4, the Spirit's care in the writing of Scripture removes all doubt about interpretation:-

Hic certe nihil retractandum est; nam ( de quo retractari potuisset, spiritus cecinit ) ne quod ait cui uelit nubat male uteremur, adiecit: <sup>48</sup> tantum in domino, id est in nomine domini, quod est indubitate Christiano.

These two passages date from the time before Tertullian's involvement in the New Prophecy, and as such, witness to the continual emphasis which he lays on the relationship of the Spirit to the understanding of Scripture. Of course, it may be said that his acceptance of the New Prophecy leads him to work out more thoroughly the Spirit's ability to understand more difficult passages of Scripture, and one is given the impression that his

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47. Tertullian and the Bible: Language - imagery - exegesis.p.123.

48. Cf. De Carne,23,6. The text is 1 Cor.7:39.

emphasis on the Spirit's role as interpreter increases as it becomes more important for him to justify his interpretations in the face of opposition, especially from the Catholics.

Besides being bound up with the interpretation of Scripture, the teaching of the Paraclete in the New Prophecy goes beyond Scripture. It is to an assessment of these additional revelations that we now turn.

CHAPTER TWO

THE REVELATIONS OF THE NEW PROPHECY, AND THEIR AUTHORITY

A, ORACLES

There can be little doubt that oracles uttered by the leaders of the movement were written down for future reference.<sup>1</sup> A number of these oracles are to be found in Tertullian's writings, and it would seem that he has in front of him a written collection of these oracles which he would consult from time to time.<sup>2</sup> A study of the oracles which he cites, or to which he alludes, will be useful in an assessment of the esteem in which he held them, and of their value in relation to that of Scripture.

1. De Resurr., 11, 1f.

The earliest citation in Tertullian's writings of an oracle attributed to the New Prophecy occurs in this passage in which Tertullian is concerned to refute those who deny the resurrection of the flesh:-

Hucusque de praeconio carnis aduersus inimicos et nihilominus amicissimos eius. Nemo enim tam carnaliter uiuit quam qui negant carnis resurrectionem: negantes enim et poenam despiciunt et disciplinam. De quibus luculenter et paraclitus per prophetidem Priscam: Carnes sunt, et carnem oderunt.

The oracle Carnes sunt, et carnem oderunt is attributed to the Paraclete speaking through the prophetess, Prisca ( Priscilla). E. Evans has suggested

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1. See Eusebius, H.E., 5, 18, 1, where Eusebius states that Apollonius composed a refutation to prove word for word that their prophecies were false. The fact that Apollonius refuted these prophecies κατὰ λέξιν implies that he was working with written material. Possibly, as P. de Labriolle. La Crise. p.35, suggests, Asterius Urbanus was the editor of a collection of such oracles. See also, G.N. Bonwetsch, Die Geschichte des Montanismus: Erlangen:1881.p.16. Extant oracles of the New Prophecy have been collected by P. de Labriolle. Les Sources; A. d'Alès, La Theologie de Tertullien. p.452; G.N. Bonwetsch, Die Geschichte des Montanismus. pp.197ff..
  2. P. de Labriolle, La Crise. pp.52f.. stresses the importance of the words Sic et alibi in De Fuga, 9, 4 for such a conclusion.



that this oracle could have been added after the work had been completed. This may be so, although there is no reason to suppose that it was added at a much later date, since its inclusion seems casual rather than emphasised. The oracle of the Paraclete is adduced merely as a comment upon those who deny the resurrection. No time nor effort is spent in justifying its authority. It is not used as the ultimate authority on the matter. The oracle is included so as not to offend those who do not uphold Tertullian's acceptance of the New Prophecy. This casual inclusion of prophetic oracles is soon to change.

## 2. De Fuga, 9, 4f

Discussing the Christians' attitude to flight in times of persecution, Tertullian appeals to the Spirit:-

Spiritum uero si consulas, quid magis sermone illo Spiritus probat? Namque omnes paene ad martyrium exhortantur, non ad fugam, ut et illius commemoremur: "Publicaris" inquit, "bonum tibi est; qui enim non publicatur in hominibus, publicatur in Domino. Ne confundaris; iustitia te producit in medium. Quid confunderis laudem ferens? Potestas fit, cum conspiceris ab hominibus". Sic et alibi: "Nolite in lectulis nec in aborsibus et febribus mollibus optare exire, sed in martyriis, uti glorificetur qui est passus pro uobis".<sup>4</sup>

Sed omissis quidam diuinis exhortationibus illum magis Graecum uersiculum saecularis sententiae sibi adhibent: "Qui fugiebat, rursus (sibi) proeliabitur".

This passage contains two oracles, both attributed to the Spirit. The Spirit is the Paraclete of the New Prophecy. Tertullian in De Fuga, 6ff. has been examining the example and teaching of Christ and of the Apostles, to prove that a Christian is not permitted to flee in persecution. Having appealed to numerous texts,<sup>5</sup> he turns to the Spirit. The counsel of the Spirit agrees completely with Scripture. This agreement seems emphasised by the words quid magis sermone illo Spiritus probat?

3. Tertullian's Treatise on the Resurrection; London: 1960, p. 339.

4. This oracle is found in abbreviated form in De An., 55, 5.

5. Among the texts Tertullian uses are:- Matt. 5:10f.; Matt. 10:22, 28, 32f., 38; 1 Thess. 5:14; Eph. 4:27; Eph. 5:16; 1 Jn. 3:16; 1 Jn. 4:18.

Labriolle admits two interpretations of these words, depending on whether the second Spiritus is to be regarded as nominative or genitive. He offers the following translations:-

a) (Et si maintenant l'on consulte l'Esprit) est-il paroles que l'Esprit approuve davantage?

b) (Et si maintenant l'on consulte l'Esprit) est-il rien qu'il approuve plus hautement que ces affirmations de l'Esprit? Labriolle adds that this translation would allude to the text of 1 Jn.4:18 which Tertullian has used a little earlier. Labriolle seems to prefer the first translation.<sup>6</sup>

However, I would suggest that there is a third possibility, which is more preferable.

c) And if one consults the Spirit, of what more than that idea does the Spirit approve? illo sermone would then be an illusion to 1 Jn.4:18 in which fear is condemned. Spiritus in the second clause would thus be taken as nominative. To understand Spiritus as genitive creates a problem, in that a lack of continuity seems to occur between the inspiration of the Scriptures and that of the New Prophecy. To translate by ..... "If one consults the Spirit, there is nothing that he approves of more highly than the statements of the Spirit" seems to suggest that there are two Spirits responsible for revelation- one in the Scriptures, the other in the oracles of the New Prophecy. Tertullian's whole argument is that Scripture and the New Prophecy are revelations of the same Spirit. Thus, the second Spiritus in such a translation is really superfluous.

Tertullian's emphasis on the continuity of revelation is essential here. For him, the Paraclete's revelation in the New Prophecy

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6. See La Crise.p.51.

is to be seen as confirming the teaching of the Scriptures. Indeed, Tertullian seems to appeal to the Paraclete as the final stage of his argument that Christians must not flee persecution. Having appealed to Christ and to the apostles, his ultimate source of support is the revelation of the Paraclete, expressed in the oracles he cites. For the follower of the New Prophecy, no argument would be really complete without the full blessing of the Paraclete. Tertullian produces these oracles as his coup de grace.

The authority given to the words of the Paraclete is evident from the subsequent phrase sed omissis.....diuinis exhortationibus.... It would seem correct to suppose that by these exhortationes, Tertullian is referring not only to the words of the oracles, but also to the texts and examples he has quoted from Scripture. If this is true, Tertullian regards all these exhortationes as divine, and of equal value and authority. Scripture and the teaching of the Paraclete are in complete harmony: the one supports and confirms the other. <sup>7</sup>

### 3. De Exh. Cast., 10,5

Discussing the advantages of continence, Tertullian appeals in this part of the chapter to Paul, and then to Prisca:-

Ita enim et apostolus dicit, quod sapere secundum carnem mors sit, secundum spiritum uero sapere uita aeterna sit in Christo Iesu domino nostro.<sup>8</sup> Item per sanctam prophetidem Priscam ita euangelizatur, quod "sanctus minister sanctimoniam nouerit ministrare". Purificantia enim cum cor dat, ait, et uisiones uident et ponentes faciem deorsum etiam uoces audiunt salutare, tam manifestas quam et occultas.<sup>9</sup>

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7. C. Bigg, The Origins of Christianity:Oxford:1909. p.194 makes the suggestion that it was a natural consequence that the followers of the New Prophecy did not regard the Bible as complete. Certainly Tertullian realises that when Scriptural evidence is lacking or ambiguous, the words of the Paraclete in the New Prophecy may be adduced.

8. Rom.8:5f.

9. For an exposition of the meaning of this oracle, see P. de Labriolle, La Crise.pp.77ff..

My concern in this chapter of the thesis is with the authority which Tertullian gives to the oracles he cites. In this passage is to be found the clearest indication of the high esteem in which he holds the oracles which he believed to have been uttered by the Paraclete. Following his appeal to Rom.8:5f., he goes on:-

Item per sanctam prophetidem Priscam ita euangelizatur..... The word item seems to suggest a continuation in Tertullian's understanding of the authority of the words he has just cited and of those he is about to cite. The words of Paul and the words of Prisca must be regarded as of equal status. They agree with each other. Their authority is the same. Moreover, the words per sanctam prophetidem Priscam reveal the high regard Tertullian has for the prophetess. It will be noticeable that since he wrote De Resurr., 11, 1f., Tertullian's emphasis on Prisca's authority has become more marked. Earlier he had referred to the Paraclete's words as having been revealed per prophetidem Priscam. Now, in De Exh. Cast., he thinks of her as sancta. She is to be thought of in the same way as Paul. Furthermore, the choice of the word euangelizatur suggests the role played by the prophetess in the spreading of the Gospel!<sup>10</sup> Thus, a development in the regard which Tertullian has for the prophetess and for her oracles can be clearly seen.

#### 4. Adv. Prax., 8, 5

Protulit enim Deus sermonem, quemadmodum etiam Paracletus docet, sicut radix fruticem et fons fluuium et sol radium.

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10. P. de Labriolle, La Crise.p.82, says, "Le choix du verbe implique donc ici que, dans l'estimation de Tertullien, les paroles de Prisca ont une haute portée religieuse, analogue a celle que la foi conférerait a celles des apôtres eux-memes, annonceurs de l'Évangile."

It has been pointed out that, since Tertullian does not use the words dicit or dixit, this is not to be regarded as an oracle in the true sense, but is rather a summary of the Paraclete's teaching on the relationship between the Father and the Son.<sup>11</sup> All that needs to be noted here is that the reference to the teaching of the Paraclete is casually introduced, in such a way that no offence could be taken by those who did not accept the New Prophecy.

5. De Pud., 21, 7

Tertullian's argument is that capital sins are not to be forgiven by the Church. He anticipates his opponents' reply that the Church does in fact possess the power to forgive sins, by appealing to the Paraclete:-

"Sed habet," inquis, "potestatem ecclesia delicta donandi." Hoc ego magis et agnosco et dispono, qui ipsum Paracletum in prophetis nouis habeo dicentem: "Potest ecclesia donare delictum, sed non faciam, ne et alia delinquant."

The words of the Paraclete recorded here allow the Church the power to forgive sins. This power is accepted both by Tertullian and his opponents. The authority of the oracle is therefore not in question, since it completely confirms the "orthodox" view. Tertullian can say that he accepts the traditional view all the more because he has the teaching of the Paraclete at hand. The Paraclete does not deny, but restricts traditional teaching. The Church has the power to forgive sins, but moral considerations lead the Paraclete to withhold such activity. Forgiveness would result in further sinning.<sup>12</sup>

Thus there are two aspects of authority in the words of the Paraclete. He does not introduce novel teaching. He brings into relief

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11. See P. de Labriolle, La Crise. p. 56.

12. This subject is treated in a later chapter, p. 171 ff..

a stricter code of conduct than that already advocated. Thus, the authority of the Paraclete's words must not be separated from Tertullian's understanding of the new revelation that had been granted in the New Prophecy, and of the new code of discipline that was expected of its followers.

#### SUMMARY

A number of points may be observed in a consideration of Tertullian's understanding of the authority of the oracles he cites.

Firstly, only one of them (in De Exh. Cast.,10) is not introduced by a reference to either the Paraclete or the Spirit. Such an introduction is, in itself, an assertion of the authority of the statement which follows. In the one exception, however, this authority is still maintained since the oracle is attributed to the sancta Prisca, and is placed immediately after a citation from Paul whom Tertullian regarded as being inspired by the Spirit.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, the special word euangelizatur is used of the oracle and this emphasises the authority of the statement.

Secondly, in De Resurr.,11 and Adv. Prax.,8, the oracles cited are introduced casually. This is no doubt due to the controversial nature of the treatises. The discussion on the nature of the resurrection and on the Trinity would benefit little from a digression on the authority of the oracles of the New Prophecy. Indeed, Tertullian's aim in both works is to put forward a view-point common to all true Christians, and he would therefore be reluctant to create a distinction between those who accepted and those who did not accept the New Prophecy. Hence, the oracles are meant to cause no offence to his readers, whether Christians or heretics.

Thirdly, in De Fuga,9, a transition seems to become evident in Tertullian's understanding of and emphasis on the authority of the Paraclete's words. He stresses the ultimate exhortations of the Spirit, and places these words on the same level as Scripture. The treatise is addressed to a Catholic brother, Fabius,<sup>14</sup> and this factor seems to determine Tertullian's treatment of the Paraclete's authority. He emphasises the legitimacy of

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13. See De Exh. Cast.,4,6, where Tertullian says:- *Proprie enim apostoli Spiritum sanctum habent.....etc..*

14. See De Fuga,1,1.

an appeal to the Paraclete's teaching, although not as violently as in De Exh. Cast. and De Pud. where Tertullian is directing an attack on the Catholics themselves, rather than defending their position or giving them advice. In these latter instances, his desire is to give the oracles he cites the same standing as Scripture. — and indeed, an even greater standing, since the oracles go even further than Scripture.

Fourthly, it must be noted that, even in his latest citations of the oracles, Tertullian has no desire to break the continuity of the New Prophecy with Scripture. The two derive from the same source. The oracles confirm Scripture, rather than contradict it. If there is any disagreement, this is because the oracles go beyond Scripture. Tertullian is at pains to show that the oracles do not deny, but merely elaborate elements which are to be found in the Bible.

## B. VISIONS

On three occasions after he becomes involved in the New Prophecy Tertullian refers to revelations granted to women. They are interesting for an assessment of Tertullian's understanding of authority.

### 1. De An., 9, 4ff.

Discussing the existence of spiritual gifts amongst the followers of the New Prophecy, Tertullian gives the example of one woman of their number:-

Est hodie soror apud nos revelationum charismata sortita, quas in ecclesia inter dominica sollemnia per ecstasin in spiritu patitur; conuersatur cum angelis, aliquando etiam cum domino, et uidet et audit sacramenta et quorundam corda dinoscit et medicinas desiderantibus sumit. Iam uero prout scripturae leguntur aut psalmi canuntur aut allocutiones proferuntur aut petitiones delegantur, ita inde materiae uisionibus subministrantur. Forte nescio quid de anima disserueramus, cum ea soror in spiritu esset. Post transacta sollemnia / dismissa plebe, quo usu solet nobis renuntiare quae uiderit (nam et diligentissime digernerit, ut etiam probentur), "inter alia", inquit, "ostensa est mihi anima corporaliter, et spiritus uidebatur, sed non inanis

et uacuae qualitatis, immo quae etiam teneri repromitteret, tenera et lucida et aeri coloris, et forma per omnia humana. Hoc uisio. "Et deus testis et apostolus charismatum in ecclesia futurorum idoneus sponsor;

This passage has been the subject of much discussion and analysis.

I do not intend to repeat every argument.<sup>15</sup> My concern here is with Tertullian's views on the authority of the woman's vision. There can be little doubt that the woman is a member of Tertullian's group which has accepted the New Prophecy and its revived emphasis on the activity of the Spirit. Tertullian goes to great pains to prove the trustworthiness of the woman's vision.

a) He says that she receives her revelations per ecstasin in spiritu. The activity of the Spirit is therefore emphasised, and the passivity of the woman (cf. patitur) confirms this.

b) The woman's experiences take place in the confines of the Church and are precipitated by some particular aspect of the service, whether it be the reading of the Scriptures, the singing of psalms, the offering of prayer, or the sermon.

c) The woman's revelations come from a divine source (cf. conuersatur cum angelis, aliquando etiam cum domino).<sup>16</sup>

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15. For detailed discussions on this passage, see P. de Labriolle, La Crise. pp.320ff.;461; J.H. Waszink, Tertulliani De Anima: Amsterdam: 1947.pp.167ff. and references there; W. Schepelern, Der Montanismus und die phrygischen Kulte: Tübingen: 1929. pp.14f..

Questions arising from the passage include the situation of the service, (see P. Monceaux, Histoire Littéraire: Vol.1.p.404; H. Leclercq, L'Afrique Chrétienne: Paris:1904:Vol.1.p.167; both these writers assume the service took place amongst the Catholic community; G.N. Bonwetsch, Die Geschichte des Montanismus.p.186 and P. de Labriolle, La Crise.p.461 regard the incident as taking place amongst the followers of the New Prophecy) the translation of inter dominica sollempnia, (see A. d'Alès, La Théologie de Tertullien. pp.308 and 476; W. Schepelern, op. cit.. p.14; K. Adam, Der Kirchenbegriff Tertullians: Paderborn:1907.p.186; P. de Labriolle, La Crise. p.461 says that Tertullian himself was probably the preacher, cf. nescio.....disseruamus.) and the implication of the phrase apud nos.

16. The idea of conversation with the Lord is implied in the vision of Quintilla or Priscilla, recorded by Epiphanius in Pan.,49,1, which contains an announcement of the descent of the heavenly Jerusalem.



d) The result is that the woman can read some men's hearts and can offer help. J.H. Waszink draws out the importance of a true prophet being κερδιστὴν ὡς τῆς,<sup>17</sup> and refers to the Scriptural passages which confirm this.<sup>18</sup> The aim of Tertullian is to show that the woman's powers prove her authenticity.

e) Scripture has foretold the existence of such spiritual gifts in the Church.<sup>19</sup>

f) The words which the woman utters are carefully noted (cf. digeruntur), so that a record exists for future reference.<sup>20</sup>

g) The visions are tested (cf. ut etiam probentur) so that their authenticity can be determined and upheld.<sup>21</sup> How this testing takes place is implied in the passage cited above, and in the lines which follow. The criteria seem to be:-

i) the harmony which exists between the total content of the visions and Scripture.

ii) the harmony which exists between the content of the visions and common sense. This needs clarification. In the vision referred to in the above passage, the woman has seen the characteristics of the soul - its shape and colour. Tertullian then sets about proving that what the woman has seen must be true. Reason verifies her information:-

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17. See his work Tertulliani De Anima.p.169.

18. The Scriptural passages include:- Jn.3:20; 16:7ff.; 1 Cor.14:24f.; Eph.5:8ff.; 1Tim.5:20; 2 Tim.4:2; Tit.1:9;

19. See 1 Cor.12:1ff..

20. Perhaps this is further evidence for the existence of a collection of written oracles amongst the followers of the movement.

21. See J.H. Waszink's note on ut etiam probentur in Tertulliani De Anima.p.172.

Quem igitur alium animae aestimabis colorem quam aerium ac lucidum ?

Common sense verifies the woman's vision of a transparent and airy soul.

Sic et effigiem de sensu iam tuo concipe non aliam animae humanae deputandam praeter humanam, et quidem eius corporis quod unaquaeque circumtulit.

Logical reasoning would lead one to expect that the shape of a man's body determines the shape of his soul. Tertullian goes on to offer Scriptural evidence to support this argument. He appeals to the creation of Adam, described in Gen. 2:7, whence he concludes that the breath of God must have filled the body of Adam, and therefore taken its shape. Paul also confirms this when he talks of the "inner man".<sup>22</sup>

Thus, running throughout the whole passage above, is the thought that the authority of the woman's visions must be upheld. The layout of the chapter is interesting, for it sheds light on Tertullian's dependence on the particular vision he cites for his argument on the nature of the soul. The vision is given chief place in the chapter. Scripture and reason are made to play a subservient role to it. However, the harmony between the revelations in the vision, Scripture, and Reason is constantly asserted.

## 2. De An.,55,4.

Tertullian is discussing the privilege granted to martyrs, in that after death, their souls do not lie in wait in hell for judgement, but go straight to Paradise. This has been revealed in Scripture <sup>23</sup> and also in visions:-

Et quomodo Iohanni in spiritu paradisi regio reuelata, quae subicitur altari, nullas alias animas apud se praeter martyrum ostendit ? Quomodo

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22. Paul refers to ὁ ἕξω ἄνθρωπος in Rom.7:22; 2 Cor.4:16; and Eph.3:16.

23. Tertullian mentions John's vision in Rev.6:9.

Perpetua, fortissima martyr, sub die passionis in reuelatione paradisi solos illic martyras uidit, nisi quia nullis romphaea paradisi ianitrix cedit nisi qui in Christo decesserint, non in Adam ?

The martyrdom of Perpetua and her companions took place in 202/203 A.D.<sup>24</sup> and a description of it has been preserved.<sup>25</sup> The vision mentioned here by Tertullian in which Perpetua sees the souls of martyrs in Paradise has aroused interest as to precisely which vision recorded in the Passio Tertullian is referring.<sup>26</sup> This identification need not delay us here. If, as has been suggested, the vision is not that of Perpetua at all, there is still no need to doubt the authority which Tertullian accords to the vision. He clearly emphasises its value. He places it side by side with Scripture to furnish the proof he needs for his argument. John had received the revelation that the souls of martyrs received special treatment. This revelation came to him whilst he was under the influence of the Spirit.<sup>27</sup> Perpetua saw the same thing. The implication is to be drawn that she received her revelation, according to the view of Tertullian, by the agency of the Spirit. The harmony between John's vision and Perpetua's vision is closely preserved. Both are to be regarded in the same way.

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24. The date of the martyrdom of Perpetua is uncertain. The date February 2nd is given in the Greek Acta; Die Nonarum Martiarum is given in the short Latin Acta. See the note on the Passio later in this thesis, pp. 43 and 81.
25. The Latin text was discovered by L. Holsten in the Benedictine Monastery of Monte Cassino, and was later published in Rome in 1663. In 1889, Prof. Rendel Harris discovered a complete Greek text in the library of the Convent of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem. A year later, he and S.K. Gifford published the text.
26. There are two schools of thought regarding the identification of the vision to which Tertullian is referring. Some commentators think that he has in mind Perpetua's vision, whilst others believe that Tertullian is mistakenly referring to a vision of Satorus. J.H. Waszink, Tertulliani De Anima, pp. 561f. discusses the arguments. See the bibliography there.
27. See Rev. 1:10.

Both are instigated by the Spirit. John and Perpetua are both the vessels of the Spirit. Tertullian's respect for Perpetua is obvious. He calls her fortissima martyr. Her vision carries equal weight to that of John. The same Spirit which granted a revelation to John has granted a similar one to Perpetua and now utters its advice to the followers of the New Prophecy, since Tertullian goes on to cite a paraphrase of the Spirit's oracle on martyrdom which he quotes in De Fuga, 9, 4.

3. De Virg. Vel., 17, 3

Drawing upon the example of Arabian women who do not hesitate to use the veil, Tertullian continues:-

Nobis Dominus etiam reuelationibus uelaminis spatia metatus est. Nam cuidam sorori nostrae angelus in somnis ceruices, quasi applauderet, uerberans: "Elegantes, "inquit, " ceruices et merito nudae ! bonum est usque ad lumbos a capite reueleris, ne et tibi ista ceruicum libertas non prosit." Et utique quod uni dixeris, omnibus dixeris.

There can be little doubt that by the word nobis, Tertullian is not merely distinguishing Christians in general, but followers of the New Prophecy in particular. <sup>28</sup> Naturally, he argues that the rules laid down to the followers of the New Prophecy should extend to all Christians (cf. quod uni dixeris, omnibus dixeris ), but his emphasis is on the revelation received by one of the movement's adherents. It would appear that she has received a vision of some kind in which the precise measurements of the veil have been determined. The way in which Tertullian places the mention of this vision at the end of his work on the veiling of women may be taken as significant. Having expounded various Scriptural passages, <sup>29</sup> having appealed to reason and to pagan examples, he finally refers to this vision as his triumphant coup de grâce. His train of thought

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28. See P. de Labriolle, La Crise. p.356 where he argues that by nobis "Tertullien ne prétend point distinguer les siens des catholiques, mais les catholiques - parmi lesquels il se range - des païens dont il vient d'alléguer les pratiques."

29. These Scriptural passages include:- Gen.2:23; Gen.6:1ff.; Gen.24:64f.; Luke 1:26f.; 1 Cor.11:3ff..

seems to be:-

"We followers of the New Prophecy can prove from Scripture, from logical arguments, and from pagan examples that virgins should be veiled. But what is more, we can even prove the extent to which they should be veiled. This proves that our arguments must be correct."

Hence it would appear that the appeal to this vision not only supports Scripture, but also places the matter beyond doubt. It may not even be too extreme to argue that Tertullian places the authority of this vision above that of Scripture, since the latter can be subject to different interpretations, whilst the former removes any possible variations which may exist about the question in hand. <sup>30</sup>

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30. An interesting comparison may be made between the sentiments expressed in the three passages above and those found in Adu. Val., 4,4 where Tertullian writes:-

Si aliquid noui adstruxerint, reuelationem statim appellat praesumptionem et charisma ingenium, nec unitatem \* sed diuersitatem.

It may be argued that these words pre-condemn Tertullian's thoughts in the passages studied above. By admitting belief in the New Prophecy, Tertullian creates a distinction between himself and his Catholic brethren. To justify this distinction, he is forced to emphasise the spiritual nature of the revelations which the movement claims to have received. His previous condemnation of the gnostics on the grounds of their justification of novelties by claiming spiritual insight could be turned against Tertullian himself by the Catholic Christians at Carthage. He had himself become guilty of the very crime of which he condemned the gnostics. Furthermore, both Tertullian and the gnostics would sincerely believe that their claims were legitimate, and that they belonged to the true stream of Christianity. In fact, it was this very belief that led Tertullian into the extreme position which he adopted at the end of his life.

Mention must be made here of a fourth passage in which Tertullian refers to a vision of the descent of the heavenly Jerusalem - which, he says, fulfils an oracle of the New Prophecy:-

4. Adu. Marc.,3,24,3f..

Hanc ( sc. ciuitatem ) et Ezechiel nouit et apostolus Iohannes uidit et qui apud fidem nostram est nouae prophetiae sermo testatur, ut etiam effigiem ciuitatis ante repraesentationem eius conspectui futuram in signum praedicarit. Denique proxime expunctum est orientali expeditione. Constat enim ethnicis quoque testibus in Iudaea per dies quadraginta matutinis momentis ciuitatem de caelo pependisse, omni moeniorum habitu euanescente de profectu diei, et alias de proximo nullam.

Two differences between this account and those of the other three visions mentioned above are immediately obvious. Firstly, the vision described in Adu. Marc.,3,24 was not seen by a single woman, but by a number of witnesses - who need not have included a woman at all. Secondly, these witnesses were not all members of the New Prophecy, and indeed Tertullian stresses that pagans had been involved.

However, the description of the vision reveals an important similarity. In it Tertullian emphasises the relationship of the vision with Scripture. The vision supports and confirms the evidence of Ezekiel<sup>31</sup> and John.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, the very lateness of the vision seems to enhance the Biblical predictions.

One final point may be noted. Tertullian does not here exaggerate the distinction between the recipients of the vision and those who were not fortunate enough to enjoy it in the same way as he does in the other instances in which he refers to the visions of the New Prophecy. He does not emphasise the activity of the Spirit, nor the relationship of the recipients to the New Prophecy.

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31. See Ezek.48:30ff..

32. See Rev.21:10ff..

SUMMARY.

Four passages in which Tertullian associates the reception of visions with the New Prophecy have been noted. Three of these visions were granted to women. All four passages stress the relationship of the visions to Scripture, thus maintaining the authority and continuity of the revelations contained in them. Indeed, in two of the passages, the visions granted to the female adherents of the movement seem to be given a higher status than Scripture itself.<sup>33</sup>

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33. The above examination of Tertullian's emphasis on the oracles and visions of the New Prophecy raises the question of his understanding of the role and authority of the women associated with the movement. I do not intend to discuss the question in great detail here, since the scope of this treatise does not demand it. (For a fuller treatment of Tertullian's attitudes to women in general, and to the women associated with the movement in particular, see P. Monceaux, Histoire Littéraire: Vol.1. pp.387ff.; P. de Labriolle, La Crise. pp.318ff., and also pp.176ff.; and A.d'Ales, La Théologie de Tertullien. pp.290ff..) However, there can be little doubt that Tertullian's outlook is influenced by Paul's words in 1 Cor.14:34f.. He appeals to this text on three occasions, each of which dates from a different period in Tertullian's life. On the first occasion, in De Bapt.,17,5, he aims to restrict the powers of women, especially heretical women, and therefore he emphasises that women do not have the right of teaching, not to mention of baptising, as his opponent claims. On the second occasion when he appeals to the Pauline text, in Adu. Marc.,5,8,11, he stresses the silence expected of women in Church, although he does allow for their role in prophesying. It is interesting to note that this seems to be the first hint that Tertullian gives in his works of such a female role - significantly enough occurring in Adu. Marc., the earliest work in which Tertullian's interest in the New Prophecy becomes apparent. It may be legitimate to conclude that this interest leads him to broaden the role he visualises for women in Church, and to reconsider Paul's attitude to this role. In De Virg. Vel.,9,1 - the third occasion on which Tertullian appeals to 1 Cor.14:34f. - the idea of the broadening of the woman's role to include prophesying is not taken up. This lack of comment probably suggests that Tertullian sees no real contradiction between Paul's statement and his own belief in the complete authority of the prophetesses and their oracles. In fact, he never uses the text to uphold the woman's right to prophesy. This he takes for granted, and it seems as though he expects his opponents to do the same.

C. ECSTASY.

The above examination reveals the high esteem in which Tertullian holds the authority of the oracles and visions of the New Prophecy. The Paraclete is completely responsible for the revelations, thus ensuring their unquestionable validity. Tertullian emphasises the passivity of the human agent. In his description of the woman's experiences in De An., 9, Tertullian witnesses to their unpremeditated nature, being precipitated by some event or casual remark in the Church service. This emphasis on the activity of the Spirit leads us to a consideration of the manner in which the revelation is received, and of the whole concept of ecstasy.

The account of the origins of the New Prophecy recorded by Eusebius <sup>34</sup> witness to the ecstatic experience of Montanus and the prophetesses. Furthermore, Epiphanius <sup>35</sup> and other Church writers <sup>36</sup> constantly stress the invalidity of this ecstatic characteristic of the movement. Indeed, the most effective weapon which the Church could find to wield against the New Prophecy was the insistence that this type of ecstasy which emphasised a loss of the natural senses in inspiration could not be regarded as legitimate. The Church attempted to assign the origins of such a characteristic to the devil. <sup>37</sup>

Since ecstasy was obviously a central phenomenon in the New Prophecy, and since the Church was violently opposed to its form of manifestation, it will be fitting to consult Tertullian's writings in order to assess his attitudes towards the phenomenon.

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34. See especially, H.E., 5, 16, 7; 5, 17, 1ff..

35. See Pan., 48, 3ff..

36. See especially, Didymus of Alexandria, Fragm. in Actus Apost., 10, 10; Jerome, Comm. in Eph., 2, 3.

37. The Church appealed to the Biblical tradition of ecstasy to show that there was no precedent for the kind of ecstasy manifested in the New Prophecy; for example, see Eusebius, H.E., 5, 17, 3; Epiphanius, Pan., 48, 2f..



Unfortunately, the work which would have been of most value here is no longer extant. This is De Ecstasi, mentioned by Jerome <sup>38</sup> as a work in seven books, directed against the Church ( the seventh book being directed specifically against Apollonius ). <sup>39</sup> Jerome lists De Ecstasi alongside Tertullian's other extreme works, and hence the work is to be regarded as belonging to the final period of Tertullian's literary career. <sup>40</sup>

There are, however, several significant references to ecstasy in his extant writings. I have discovered eight occasions in his works where he uses the word ecstasis, <sup>41</sup> and two occasions where he uses the word amentia in the same context. <sup>42</sup> The most important point to notice about these usages, I would suggest, is that they all occur when Tertullian is sympathetic towards the New Prophecy. I have been unable to find any use of these words in this context earlier than Adu. Marc., 4, 22, which clearly reflects the influence of the New Prophecy.

It would seem valid to put forward the theory that Tertullian's growing interest in the New Prophecy leads him to consider closely the movement's attitudes towards ecstasy and its implications, with the result that from this time onwards, his works contain increasing numbers of references and allusions to the subject, culminating in the systematic treatment provided in De Ecstasi.

For Tertullian, ecstasy normally occurs during sleep. He supports this idea with the text of Gen. 2:21 - a text which plays an important and changing role in his understanding of ecstasy and its implications. <sup>43</sup>

So in De An., 45, 3ff. he writes:-

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38. See De Vir. Illust., 24; 40; 53.

39. Apollonius was an adversary of the New Prophecy ; see especially, Eusebius, H.E., 5, 18, 1.

40. See earlier in this thesis, pp. 13ff

41. See Adu. Marc., 4, 22, 4; 5, 8, 12; De An., 9, 4; 11, 4; 45, 3; 47, 3; 48, 4; De Iei., 3, 2.

42. See De An., 21, 2; 45, 3.

43. Tertullian reads the Greek ἐκστασις in his version of Gen. 2:21.

.... ecstasin ....., excessum sensus et amentiae instar. Sic et in primordio somnus cum ecstasi dedicatus: et misit deus ecstasin in Adam et dormit. Somnus enim corpori provenit in quietem, ecstasis animae accedit aduersus quietem, et inde iam forma somnum ecstasi miscens et natura de forma ....., Et quomodo, inquis, memor est somniorum anima, scilicet quam compotem esse non licet? Hoc erit proprietas amentiae huius, quia non fit ex corruptela bonae // ualetudinis, sed ex ratione naturae; nec enim exterminat, sed auocat mentem.

The reference to Gen.2:21 to emphasise the antiquity of the relationship of sleep and ecstasy is worthy of note. Epiphanius states that the Montanists used this text to support their views on ecstasy.<sup>44</sup> It would seem that the introduction of this completely new concept of ecstasy in Tertullian's discussion of dreams is to be explained by his interest in the New Prophecy. The emphasis which the movement placed on the ecstatic character of Montanus' reception of revelation seems to have influenced Tertullian's views. This conclusion is further supported by a consideration of De An., 11, 1ff.. Here Tertullian is discussing the difference between the soul and the "spirit". The soul exists first in man; the spirit is not a natural part of man's soul at birth. To prove his point, Tertullian appeals to the Scriptures. One of the examples<sup>45</sup> he gives is that of Adam:-

Nam etsi Adam statim prophetauit magnum illud sacramentum in Christum et ecclesiam: hoc nunc os ex ossibus meis et caro / ex carne mea; propter hoc relinquet homo patrem et matrem et agglutinabit se mulieri suae, et erunt duo in unam carnem, accidentiam spiritus passus est: cecidit enim ecstasis super illum, sancti spiritus uis operatrix prophetiae.

This final remark is obviously an allusion to Gen.2:21, and here the influence of the New Prophecy is even more clearly marked than in De An., 45, 3. Adam experienced ecstasy: in this ecstatic state he prophesied the sacrament of Christ and the Church. Paul was later to clarify this sacrament.<sup>46</sup>

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44. See Pan., 48, 4.

45. To stress that the spirit and the soul are distinct, Tertullian cites Is.57:16 and Is.42:5.

46. See Eph.5:31f..

The implication is that Adam did not know what he was saying. It was left to Paul to place the utterance in its ultimate context.

The expression ecstasis ....., sancti spiritus uis operatrix prophetiae is interesting. Naturally, Tertullian is eager to attribute prophecy to the Spirit. However, as far as I can discover, he never associates prophecy with ecstasy before his involvement in the New Prophecy. Furthermore, it would seem highly probable that, in his use of the phrase uis operatrix prophetiae, he is no longer thinking merely of prophecy recorded in Scripture, but is thinking directly of the revelations of the New Prophecy.

The appeal to Adam's ecstasy serves two purposes. Firstly, the fact that Adam had experienced ecstasy offers firm support to the legitimacy of the views of the New Prophecy on the nature of ecstasy and revelation, since Scripture confirms the antiquity and validity of such views. Secondly, an appeal to Adam as a prophet could only help to emphasise the place of prophecy in God's dispensation - a dispensation which has reached its ultimate revelation in the New Prophecy.

The lines along which Tertullian's thought has been moving become most clearly marked in De Iei.,3. Whereas in the two references to Gen.2:21 in De An., Tertullian's main concern is to use the text as support for his views on ecstasy, in De Iei.,3,2 he uses the text to insult the Catholics. His aim in this chapter is to trace the principle of fasting back to its earliest source, and in so doing, to defend the views of the New Prophecy on the subject. He says:-

Acceperat Adam a deo legem non gustandi de arbore agnitionis boni et mali, moriturus si gustasset. Verum et ipse tunc in psychicum reuersus post ecstasin spiritalem, in qua magnum illud sacramentum in Christum et ecclesiam prophetauerat, nec iam capiens quae erant spiritus, facilius uentri quam deo cessit, pabulo potius quam praecepto annuit, salutem gula uendit.

It is easy to see the implications which Tertullian draws in this passage. The Catholics, with their lax values, are characterised by Adam when he has forfeited the Spirit. The followers of the New Prophecy, on the other hand, are to be seen as represented by Adam before the Fall, in spiritual harmony and communion with God, and in this ecstatic state prophecy flourishes. The reference to ecstasin spiritalem reflects Gen.2:21. What Tertullian is wishing to assert here is that the followers of the New Prophecy are the true inheritors of the spiritual graces, since Adam, in his state of sinlessness, was first of all a man of the spirit. He was the archetype of Montanus.

Tertullian does not refer to Gen.2:21 until he becomes involved in the New Prophecy. I suggest that the theories of ecstasy which he inherited opened up new possibilities of a significant exegesis of this text. Furthermore, there is a definite development in his use of this text as his interest in the New Prophecy becomes more dominant. At first he is content to use it merely to support the movement's theory of ecstasy. Later, however, as his aims change, he sees Adam's ecstasy in Gen.2:21 no longer only as a precedent of the ecstasy of the New Prophecy, but also as indicative of Adam's status as an archetypal New Prophet.

As well as emphasising the antiquity of ecstasy and its role, and its importance for prophecy, Tertullian seems to accept the theory of the New Prophecy that an inspired prophet has no control over his mental faculties whilst he is under the influence of the ecstatic condition. The acceptance of this theory allows Tertullian to explain the words of Luke 9:33:-

... μὴ εἰδῶς ὃ λέγει.

Tertullian deals with this text only once, and that is in Adu. Marc., 4, 22, 4. He is systematically dealing with Marcion's attempts to disfigure the gospel of Luke. He has reached the account of the Transfiguration in Luke 9:28ff., and is showing that the appearance of Moses and Elijah with Christ proves

the continuation and harmony between the old dispensation and the new. Peter's words in Luke 9:33a indicate that he thought it good to be where he was in the company of Moses and Elijah. But Luke states that Peter did not know what he was saying. Tertullian has to prove that this ignorance was not the result of error. It did not prove Marcion's point.<sup>47</sup> There was another reason for it. Peter was experiencing ecstasy:-

Utrumne simplici errore an ratione, qua defendimus in causa nouae prophetiae gratiae exstasin, id est amantiam, conuenire ? In spiritu enim homo constitutus, praesertim cum gloriam dei conspicit uel cum per ipsum deus loquitur, necesse est excidat sensu, obumbratus scilicet uirtute diuina. De quo cum inter nos et psychicos quaestio est, interim facile est amantiam Petri probare. Quomodo enim Moysen en Heliam cognouisset, (nisi in spiritu ? ) - nec enim imagines eorum uel statuas populus habuit nec similitudines, lege prohibente - nisi quia in spiritu uiderat ? Et ita quod dixit, scilicet in spiritu non in sensu constitutus, scire non poterat.

Here is the application of the theory that ecstasy results in a loss of mental faculties. One receives the impression that, although Tertullian is applying principles of the New Prophecy to illuminate the text, he is at the same time grateful for the opportunity the text gives him to base these principles on Scriptural foundations. Theory supplements exegesis: exegesis supplements theory.

As far as I can discover, this is the only instance in all extant references to the New Prophecy of the use of this text for a defence of this theory of ecstasy.<sup>48</sup>

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47. Marcion argued that Peter's ignorance proved the lack of continuity between the Old and New Testaments.

48. In his commentary on the Acts of the Apostles, 10, 10f., Didymus of Alexandria refers to the vision of Peter which was received under ecstasy. He implies that this text had been taken over by the Phrygian followers of Montanus to show that Peter had lost control of his faculties. Didymus argues that Peter must have been in control of them or he would have been unable to re-tell the contents of his vision. It may be that Didymus is mixing up the text to which the followers of the New Prophecy appealed. In the story of Peter's ignorance at the Transfiguration, there is far more scope for the idea of lost mental faculties than there is in the story of Peter's vision in Acts 10. What is certain is that the significance of Peter in a justification of ecstatic behaviour is still central in Didymus' time. Could this be due to the foundations laid by Tertullian ?

SUMMARY

Tertullian's acceptance of the New Prophecy's theory of ecstasy as taking a man completely out of his natural senses cannot be questioned. There can be no doubt that the way in which Montanus and the prophetesses were inspired and received their revelations aroused controversy. Tertullian himself probably sees it as necessary to find Scriptural support for his beliefs. He finds such support in the account in the Septuagint version of Adam's ecstasy in Gen.2:21, and in Luke's account of the Transfiguration. Neither of these texts is used by Tertullian before his interest in the New Prophecy develops. I suggest that it is this interest which leads him to use these texts for such a purpose. Moreover, his thoughts do not remain static. As can be seen from his exegesis of Gen.2:21, Tertullian's increasing emphasis on the movement leads him to see further and more extreme implications for his interpretation of the text.

PART TWO

TERTULLIAN'S USE OF SCRIPTURE IN THE DEFENCE OF THE NEW PROPHECY

CHAPTER THREE

TERTULLIAN'S SCRIPTURAL DEFENCE OF THE NEW PROPHECY.

The increasing interest which Tertullian shows in the New Prophecy leads him into a situation of great urgency. As long as he is content to mention the movement only incidentally, as long as he is prepared to assert his kinship with the Catholic Christians at Carthage, both heretics and Catholics alike would be prepared to accept the casual references to the new revelation of the Paraclete. But as soon as this new revelation results in Tertullian's emphasis on the differences between Catholics and followers of the movement, and in the insistence on more rigorous conduct than that already practised in the Catholic Church, then Tertullian finds himself in need of Scriptural support for his claims. The Church had already been forced to defend its position against a number of heretical view-points,<sup>1</sup> and a defence against this new attack from those who claimed to have received a recent revelation of the Paraclete might have seemed only another task to be accomplished. However, such an attack on the movement was perhaps not as easy for the Church leaders as might be supposed. Firstly, reaction to the movement seems to have been diverse. Tertullian himself mentions the different attitudes in the Church of Rome.<sup>2</sup> He blames Praxeas for causing the rejection of the message of the movement by the Bishop of Rome,<sup>3</sup> thus reversing rulings praecessorum eius.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Such heresies include Docetism, Gnosticism, and Marcion's theory of two gods.

2. See Adu. Prax., 1, 4.

3. The identity of this Bishop often has been discussed. See, for example, E. Evans, Tertullian's Treatise against Praxeas: London: 1948. p. 185; P. Monceaux, Histoire Littéraire: Vol. 1. p. 403, n. 4; J. de Soyres, Montanism and the Primitive Church. pp. 37ff.. It would seem most likely that Victor is the bishop to whom Tertullian is referring.

4. It may be that this is to be taken as a rhetorical plural, as E. Evans, op. cit. p. 186, suggests, and thus refers to Eleutherus alone. However, Evans' statement in the same note that there is no evidence independent of this passage that Eleutherus or Soter condemned Montanism may be questioned, since Praedestinatus writes Scriptis contra eos ( Montanistas ) librum sanctus Soter, Papa Urbis, 1, 26.



About 180 A.D., the brethren in Gaul write to Eleutherus about the movement,<sup>5</sup> and it seems unlikely that the advice the brethren give is for him to accept the New Prophecy.<sup>6</sup> J.de Soyres argues<sup>7</sup> that Irenaeus' relative silence about the prophets<sup>8</sup> shows his uncertainty as to how to treat them. It may be that the martyrs Perpetua and Felicitas belonged to the movement.<sup>9</sup>

Secondly, the very nature of the movement would pose a problem, in that no leader of the Church would be eager to decry what in fact could be the activity of the Spirit, since the spiritual gifts which the movement claimed to possess were by no means uncommon in the early Church.<sup>10</sup> There were certainly large numbers of followers who would emphasise the validity of the spiritual gifts amongst them.

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5. Eusebius, H.E., 5,3,4, relates that letters were sent to brethren in Asia and Phrygia, and also to Eleutherus, Bishop of Rome, advocating peace among the churches.
  6. The problem arises as to whether these letters favoured the New Prophecy, or denounced it. Some commentators think that the letters condemn the New Prophecy. For this view, see T.H. Bindley, The Epistle of the Gallican Churches: London: 1900.p.12; P.de Labriolle, La Crise. p.243; and P. Monceaux, Histoire Littéraire.p.403. On the other hand, J.de Soyres, Montanism and the Primitive Church.p.39, says that had the letter denounced the movement, Eusebius would have certainly seized on this condemnation.
  7. op. cit., p.111, where he refers to the "guarded utterances of Irenaeus".
  8. P.de Labriolle, La Crise.pp.230ff., discusses passages in Irenaeus' writings in which hints of his relationship to the New Prophecy have been seen. He concludes ( p.242 ), "Il ne se sent contre le Montanisme aucune animosité. Bien autrement préoccupé des spéculations hétérodoxes du Gnosticisme, il ne guette pas l'occasion de l'attaquer directement. Il souligne même la maladresse de certaines oppositions suscitées par lui. Mais de la a le favoriser, a l'appuyer auprès de l'Église lyonnaise et des Églises d'Orient, a y donner son adhésion, il y avait loin: et rien ne prouve qu'il en ait eu l'audace, ou la tentation même."
  9. For the relationship of Perpetua and her companions to the New Prophecy, see the final section of this thesis, p.294.
  10. For the Biblical witness to the existence of spiritual gifts, especially prophecy, in the Church, see, for example, Acts 11:27ff.; 15 passim; 17 passim; 21:10f.; 1 Cor.14:12; and 2 Cor.1:19. The Didache ( 11ff.) implies that prophets were recognised leaders of the Church.

At first, the only influence which the movement seems to have exerted was a local one, and consequently reaction to it was limited. The Church's original reply to the threat appears to have been a practical one - an attempt at exorcism,<sup>11</sup> followed by oral disputation.<sup>12</sup> As this disputation became more common-place, both sides would look to Scripture for support.<sup>13</sup> Here would arise a further problem for the Church. The adherents of the New Prophecy were able to find authority in Scripture for their belief in the continuing activity of the Paraclete. Furthermore, they found a passage which they claimed condemned the Catholics' attitude to them. In Matt.23:34 foretells the rejection of the prophets, and the persecutions and killings which will accompany this rejection.<sup>14</sup> Evidence suggests that the followers of Montanus used this text against the Catholics.<sup>15</sup>

Tertullian, in his turn, was not slow to realise the value of Scriptural support for his arguments. He does not give any hint of the New Prophecy's application of Matt.23:34, but his writings contain frequent appeals to Scripture for a defence of the movement and its doctrines. This thesis attempts to highlight these. It is my belief that Tertullian provides for the movement he adopts a Scriptural rationale which hitherto it possessed only in part. To do this he is forced to elaborate applications given previously in his works, often expanding incidental allusions, often changing his emphasis, often contradicting earlier exegesis. A thorough examination of the texts he uses to defend the existence of the New Prophecy will be made in this chapter.

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11. See Eusebius, H.E., 5,16,17 and 5,18,13, where Bishop Zoticus is represented as trying to exorcise Maximilla. In the former passage, Bishop Julian is also mentioned in this context.
  12. See Eusebius, op. cit., 5,16,2. Eusebius states that the anonymous writer whom he has just cited had taken part in oral disputation with the New Prophecy.
  13. That the Catholics appealed to Scripture early in their attack on the New Prophecy is shown by Eusebius, op. cit., 5,17,3, where the anonymous writer is cited as refuting the movement's concept of ecstasy by referring to the prophets of the Old and New Testaments. See also Apollonius' rhetorical question quoted by Eusebius, op. cit., 5,18,4:-  
"δοκεῖ σοι πᾶσα γραφή κωλύειν προφήτην λαμβάνειν δῶρα καὶ χρήματα; ..."
  14. διὰ τοῦτο ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω πρὸς ὑμᾶς προφῆτας ... ἕξ αὐτῶν ἀποκτενεῖτε καὶ σταυρώσετε ... καὶ θιώξετε ἀπὸ πόλεως εἰς πόλιν.
  15. See Eusebius, op. cit., 5,16,12.

A. Jn.16:12f.

The fundamental emphasis of the New Prophecy was on the new revelation of the Paraclete. Tertullian accepts this emphasis, and, as we shall see, enlarges it. The term "Paraclete" is obviously taken over from the Johannine writings in the New Testament.<sup>16</sup> The basic legal meaning of the word ( "legal assistant" or "advocate" ) does not seem of great importance to the writer. His understanding of the word is probably best appreciated from a consideration of the use of παρακαλεῖν, and other cognates in the New Testament. This done, three important considerations emerge:-

- a) The Paraclete instructs believers in the truth communicated by Jesus, and convicts the world.
- b) Cognate words are used commonly for Christian preaching.
- c) Cognate words are used to represent the consolation to be expected in the Messianic age.

These considerations help to form a sound idea of the meaning of the term "Paraclete". C.K. Barrett describes the Paraclete as "the Spirit who operates in the Christian proclamation of the redemption effected in Jesus the Messiah, and thus confirms and instructs the Church , and pricks the conscience of the world."<sup>17</sup>

Of the several Johannine references to the "Paraclete", by far the most important for Tertullian is the one in Jn.16:12f.:-

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16. The passages in John's Gospel in which the term Παράκλητος is used are 14:16f.; 14:26; 15:26; and 16:7ff.. To these may be added the reference in 1 Jn.2:1, although the word here refers to Jesus.

17. See Peake's Commentary on the Bible, par.752a. See also the same author's article "The Holy Spirit in the Fourth Gospel" in JTS. N.S.1 ( 1950 ).pp.7ff..

Ἔτι πολλὰ ἔχω ὑμῖν λέγειν, ἀλλ' οὐ δύνασθε βαστάζειν ἄρτι· ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ ἐκεῖνος, τὸ Πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας, ὁδηγήσει ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν ἀληθείαν πᾶσαν· οὐ γὰρ λαλήσει ἑαυτοῦ, ἀλλ' ὅσα ἀκούει λαλήσει, καὶ τὰ ἐρχόμενα ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν.

Tertullian alludes to parts of this text on some twelve occasions in his writings. These will now be analysed. Three of them date from before his involvement in the New Prophecy,<sup>18</sup> and the other nine after. Thus, the first three passages may be regarded as uninfluenced by the ideas of the New Prophecy.

1. De Praesc. Haer., 8, 14.

Discussing the text "Seek and ye shall find",<sup>19</sup> Tertullian propounds the argument that in it no permission is granted to the heretics to deviate from the faith by means of vain investigations. This statement of Christ belongs to the beginning of his mission, and is therefore limited to the Jews in its application. The way to the Gentiles was not yet open, since Christ had not yet instructed his disciples to go and teach all nations and baptise them,<sup>20</sup> when they

consecuturi mox Spiritum sanctum Paracletum qui illos deducturus esset in omnem ueritatem.

Tertullian concludes that if the apostles were to be taught by the Paraclete, how much more effortlessly will the Gentiles be taught by the apostles.

Several points may be noted here:-

a) The coming of the Paraclete referred to in this passage can only be that of Pentecost. Once the apostles had received the Spirit, they could go and spread the Christian message to everyone - Jew and Gentile alike. The sense

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18. De Praesc. Haer., 8, 14; 22, 9f.; 28, 1.

19. Matt. 7:7.

20. See Matt. 28:19.

of the word "Paraclete" which is most dominant here must be that of the Spirit who operates in the proclamation of the Christian message.

b) In connection with this proclamation, the "passivity" of the recipient is evident. It is the Spirit, by means of the apostles, who illuminates men. No effort is required by way of research. If it appears that Tertullian is denying any personal contact between the Spirit and the Gentiles, it must be stressed that it is only the Spirit's instructing of the Gentiles which is at issue here, not the Spirit's constant activity within the Church.

c) Tertullian's exegesis of the text is interesting. It excludes any application of the text to men other than those to whom it is addressed. This idea is also expressed in a much later work, De Fuga, 6, where in his exegesis of Matt. 10:23 in which Christ advocates flight in persecution, Tertullian limits this text as referring to the Jews alone. In De Fuga, 13, 2, he adds

Omnium iam nunc dominicarum ( pronuntiationum ) suae sunt et causae et regulae; termini non in infinitum nec ad omnia spectant.

Precisely the opposite view is to be found in De Spect., 3, 8:-

Cum Deus Israhelitas admonet disciplinae uel obiurgat, utique ad omnes habet; cum Aegypto et Aethiopiae exitium comminatur, utique in omnem gentem peccatricem praeiudicat.

Similarly, in De Cult. Fem., 1, 3, 3, he says:-

..... a nobis quidem nihil omnino reiciendum est, quod pertineat ad nos.

These are two opposite views. In the closing section of De Praesc. Haer., 8, Tertullian adopts a compromise:-

Omnia quidem Domini dicta omnibus posita sunt, per aures Iudaeorum ad nos transierunt sed pleraque in personas directa, non proprietatem admonitionis nobis constituerunt, sed exemplum.

By adopting such a compromise, Tertullian can leave room for whatever limitations or more universal applications he chooses to apply to any given text. However, a significant conclusion may be drawn from the above analysis. Even at a very early period in his writing career, Tertullian's exegesis and rules of exegesis waver from one extreme to another.

2. De Praesc. Haer., 22, 9f.

Tertullian is here refuting the gnostic claim that the apostles were unreliable transmitters of the truth, either because they had not passed on the teaching in full, or because they did not themselves receive it in full. He refers to the words of Christ in Jn.16:12, and this may indicate that the gnostics appeal to the text to support their views on the apostles' partial knowledge. He refutes them by mentioning the close relationship between Christ and his disciples, and the unique privileges granted to the disciples. Furthermore, the words which follow in Jn.16:13 promise the imminent gift of the Spirit. This promise has been fulfilled:-

Et utique impleuit repromissum, probantibus actis apostolorum descensum spiritus sancti.

These words are followed by a warning that those who reject this scriptura can neither belong to the Holy Spirit since they do not acknowledge that he has been sent to the disciples, nor claim to be a church themselves since they have no proof of origin. This passage is significant. Tertullian sees the text as fulfilled completely in the coming of the Spirit ( at Pentecost ), and he asserts that the acceptance of this occurrence is necessary to guarantee the authority of the Church. There can be no doubt that he sees no scope for a further revelation of the Spirit. Christ's promise in Jn.16:12f. has been fulfilled once and for all.

3. De Praesc. Haer., 28, 1

The argument in this chapter is that, since so many churches exhibit uniformity in doctrine, the truth proclaimed by the Spirit through the apostles cannot be questioned. Tertullian speaks of

..... Spiritus sanctus uti .... in ueritatem deduceret .... missus a Christo.

The allusion to Jn.16:13 is obvious, and once again the fulfilment of the promise is accepted. The past participle missus and the emphasis on the preaching of the apostles point to the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost.

These three passages from De Praesc. Haer., dating from early on in Tertullian's literary career, emphasise the work of the Spirit in the proclamation of truth. The aim of the treatise is to refute heretics who claim to have doctrines superior to those of the Church. Tertullian argues that since the Church alone can claim to have the true doctrine, only the Church has the right to the Scriptures.<sup>21</sup> Any heretical exposition of the Scriptures is invalid, since corruption in doctrine necessarily results in corruption of exegesis.<sup>22</sup> Hence, the authority of the Church is a crucial factor in his argument, and one of the proofs for this authority depends on the apostolicity of the Church. Because of this, he is convinced that the gift of the Spirit which the apostles received at Pentecost must be stressed. He continually refers to it in this treatise.<sup>23</sup> Only if the apostles received their doctrine from Christ and the Spirit can the doctrine now held by the Church be the true one. Even the churches which cannot claim apostolic founders are apostolic pro consanguinitate doctrinae,<sup>24</sup> bound by ties of communion, brotherhood, and hospitality.<sup>25</sup>

It is to this basic premise that the text of Jn.16:12f. is applied in the three instances above. In each passage the promise of Christ is regarded as fulfilled at Pentecost. No further fulfilment is to be expected. The work of the Spirit is that of teacher of true doctrine, which has been passed on in full by the apostles.

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21. See De Praesc. Haer., 37ff..

22. ibid....

23. See De Praesc. Haer., 8,15; 13,5; 20,4; 22,10; 28,1.

24. See De Praesc. Haer., 32,6.

25. See De Praesc. Haer., 20,8:- *Probant unitatem communicatio pacis et appellatio fraternitatis et contesseratio hospitalitatis.*

The remaining nine passages in which Tertullian refers to Jn.16:12f. are to be dated after Tertullian's involvement in the New Prophecy.

4. De Cor.,4,5f.

This work is written to defend the action of a soldier who has refused to wear the laurel-crown of victory. The lack of Scriptural support for such behaviour does not deter Tertullian from arguing that the soldier's action was that befitting a Christian. Tradition, custom, and faith support it. Tertullian argues that every believer has the right to originate and establish a law, if it deo congruat,.... disciplinae conducat,.... saluti proficiat.<sup>26</sup> For such a right, he refers to Christ's encouragement to judge what is right,<sup>27</sup> and to Paul's assertion that God will reveal anything of which there is ignorance.<sup>28</sup> As for Paul's authority, Tertullian says that the apostle, spiritum dei habens deductorem omnis ueritatis, utters advice ( consilium ) which must be regarded as a divine command ( ratio diuina ).

The words deductorem omnis ueritatis echo Jn.16:13, and once again the reference is to the activity of the Spirit revealed in apostolic preaching. However, two very important points are to be noted here which throw a great deal of light on the changing ideas of Tertullian.

a) The apostle Paul was not himself present at Pentecost. Thus, the possession of the Spirit cannot be specifically pin-pointed as having taken place, in his case, in the upper room.<sup>29</sup> This is to be seen merely as a general reference to the activity of the Spirit in Paul ( no doubt

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26. De Cor.,4,5.

27. See Luke 12:27.

28. See Phil.3:15.

29. See Acts 2:1ff..



representative of all the apostles ). However, there may be more of a transition in Tertullian's thought than first meets the eye. I believe that here is to be seen the first stage of a broadening of his exegesis of Jn.16:12f., to apply to the activity of the Spirit, not necessarily associated with the upper room. Paul had not been present at Pentecost. In the same way, Tertullian later claims that the activity of the Paraclete is to be seen in the New Prophecy. His exegesis of Jn.16:12f. here makes the first step in removing the application of the text from the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost.

b) The truth into which the Spirit guides is no longer the truth of doctrine. Paul's counsel is not referred to for doctrinal purposes, but for matters of discipline. The allusion to Jn.16:13, therefore, is to be seen in the broader context of Paul's advice, especially in its relation to the wearing of the crown, rather than to the preaching of the Christian message, in particular. The importance of this distinction will become more evident later. <sup>30</sup>

##### 5. De Fuga, 1, 1

A Catholic, Fabius, has asked Tertullian for a precise definition of the behaviour expected of a Christian in times of persecution. Tertullian replies as an adherent of the New Prophecy, and his allusion to Jn.16:13 in this section is comprehensible in this context:-

Procuranda autem examinatio penes uos, ( qui ), si forte, Paracletum non recipiendo, deductorem omnis ueritatis, merito adhuc etiam aliis quaestionibus obnoxii estis.

The word uos must refer to the Catholics, who have not accepted the Paraclete. It would seem that here, as in De Cor., 4, the allusion to Jn.16:13

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> 30. See later in this thesis, p. 153 ff.

is applied in a broader sense not merely to doctrine, but also to conduct, since the question in hand is behaviour in persecution. In fact, when Tertullian writes De Fuga he must still be a member of the Catholic Church, since he addresses Fabius as frater, and it is unlikely that a schismatic would have been asked his point of view on such an issue. <sup>31</sup>

It is with this allusion to the text that its first application to some event other than the activity of the Spirit in the apostles ( whether at Pentecost or later ) can be seen. Tertullian states his acceptance of something which the Catholics deny - the Paraclete revealed in the New Prophecy. This is the first use of the text for this purpose - a use which will become more prevalent in later writings. Tertullian emphasises the possession of the Paraclete by the adherents of the New Prophecy. He does not attempt to explain how they possess the Paraclete, whilst the Catholics do not. In his earlier allusions to the text, he states the activity of the Spirit in the Church from the time of the apostles. Now he seems to disregard this and posits, by implication, a further revelation of the Spirit which has been welcomed only by a few. It is this illogical sequence in his thought which is never really sufficiently explained, even in his most elaborate statements on the subject. <sup>32</sup>

#### 6. De Fuga, 14, 3.

The treatise closes with a reference to the Paraclete which is dependent

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31. Tertullian's conflict with the Catholics, even in its most extreme, is never really fought on doctrinal grounds. The topics on which he writes reveal the practical issues at stake - marriage, fasting, the veiling of virgins, penitential procedures, action in times of persecution etc.. Admittedly, of vital concern is the acceptance of the further revelation of the Paraclete, but this acceptance results in a stricter code of conduct.
32. See later in this thesis, pp. 71ff..

upon Jn.16:12f.. Having put forward an uncompromising account of the steadfast behaviour of true Christians in a time of persecution, <sup>33</sup> Tertullian mentions the necessity of the Paraclete deductor omnium ueritatum, exhortator omnium tolerantiarum. The characteristic omnis ueritatis has given place to the plural omnium ueritatum, in order to make a better parallel with the subsequent omnium tolerantiarum. Here the role of the Paraclete has widened considerably. The phrase deductor omnium ueritatum has been used as a peg on which to hang the parallel phrase exhortator omnium tolerantiarum which contains the implications of the Paraclete's role as encourager of his followers in times of hardship, when he offers help and comfort. The idea of teacher or advisor has given way to practical helper. Pentecost has been left far behind. The coming of the Paraclete is a more recent event to be accepted by all Christians as valid in hardship, as demanding a more stringent code of conduct, and as providing the strength to achieve this.

7. De Virg. Vel., 1, 4ff..

In the opening chapter of this work is a vigorous defence of the New Prophecy. Tertullian argues that it is wrong to assume that God's activity has come to an end, and he quotes Jn.16:12f. in full to show that a further revelation of the Spirit is predicted. The New Prophecy has received this revelation. Again, the Spirit's purpose lies in the realms of discipline:-

Cum propterea Paracletum miserit Dominus, ut, quoniam humana mediocritas omnia semel capere non poterat, paulatim dirigeretur et ordinaretur et ad perfectum perduceretur disciplina ab illo uicario Domini Spiritu sancto. ( Jn.16:12f. is cited in full ) .... Quae est ergo Paracleti administratio, nini haec, quod disciplina dirigitur, quod scripturae reuelantur, quod intellectus reformatur, quod ad meliora proficitur ?

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33. See De Fuga, 14, 1ff..

8. Adu. Prax., 2, 1.

This work is a defence of the Catholic view of the Trinity against that of Praxeas<sup>34</sup> which stated that Father and Son were one. Although a follower of the New Prophecy, Tertullian takes up the Catholic standard and it would seem that he sees no necessity to adjust his former beliefs on the subject. He says:-

Nos uero et semper et nunc magis, ut instructiores per Paracletum, deductorem scilicet omnis ueritatis, unicum quidem Deum credimus ....

The word nos refers to the adherents of the New Prophecy, who have now the added advantage over the Catholics of being in possession of the Paraclete deductor omnis ueritatis, and who are therefore instructiores. The "truth" referred to here is that of doctrine, especially in relation to the Trinity. Tertullian is saying that the doctrine he has always regarded as the true one has been substantiated by the superior knowledge imparted by the Paraclete. He is less concerned with censuring the Catholics for their rejection of the Paraclete, and more concerned with affirming the truth of commonly held doctrine. There is no hint of the wider sense of discipline.

9. Adu. Prax., 30, 5.

In the finale of this treatise, Tertullian turns to the mission of the Holy Spirit:-

Hic ( sc. Christus ) interim acceptum a Patre munus effudit, Spiritum sanctum, tertium nomen diuinitatis et tertium gradum maiestatis, unius praedicatorum monarchiae sed et oikonomiae interpretatorem, si quis sermones nouae prophetiae eius admiserit et deductorem omnis ueritatis quae est in Patre et Filio et Spiritu sancto secundum Christianum sacramentum.

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34. The name Praxeas is probably a pseudonym, according to E. Evans, Tertullian's Treatise against Praxeas. pp. 184f..

Again, as in the previous occurrence noted above, this allusion to Jn.16:13 is rather more incidental than some of the others. It is not used specifically against the Catholics, but is merely slipped in as a recommendation of the New Prophecy. Here also, the implication is that those who have received the Paraclete have been led into a more complete understanding of doctrinal truth.

10. De Monog., 2, 2ff.

In this work, a more sophisticated defence of the New Prophecy is visible. In this particular chapter, Tertullian is refuting the Catholic claim that the teachings of the Paraclete, being novel, are to be rejected. He argues that the Paraclete's teaching is harmonious with that of Christ,<sup>35</sup> who had himself admitted that many things had been left unsaid until a later date when they would be revealed by the Spirit. Tertullian cites Jn.16:12f., and then adds a few lines later:-

Paracletus autem multa habens edocere quae in illum distulit Dominus, secundum praefinitionem, ipsum primo Christum contestabitur qualem credimus, cum toto ordine Dei creatoris, et ipsum glorificabit, et de ipso commemorabit et sic de principali regula agnitus illa multa quae sunt disciplinarum reuelabit ....

The two-fold nature of the Paraclete's teaching is emphasised here. First, and foremost, there is an agreement in the realms of doctrine between Christ and the Paraclete, who witnesses to what has gone before, and confirms it. Secondly, the Paraclete reveals the many things quae sunt disciplinarum.

11. De Monog., 3, 8.

Tertullian argues that the Paraclete teaches monogamy, and that teaching on such a matter has been revealed in stages, with various emphases and indulgences. There is nothing to indicate that, instead of monogamy, the

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35. Tertullian also emphasises in this section that an adversary spirit would be apparent from the diversity of his preaching, and consequently from the change in the order of discipline.

Paraclete could have preached the abolition of marriage altogether, if he had so desired:-

Igitur si omnia ista oblitterant licentiam nubendi, et condicione licentiae inspecta et praelatione continentiae imposita, cur non potuerit post apostolos idem spiritus superueniens ad deducendam disciplinam in omnem ueritatem per gradus temporum.... supremam iam carni fibulam imponere....

The reference to Jn.16:13 is obvious, and again the emphasis is on the truth of discipline.

## 12. De Iei.,10,6

Little time need be spent on this final allusion to Jn.16:13. Tertullian, having given Scriptural evidence for the necessity and advantages of fasting, <sup>36</sup> turns to the Catholic practices and asks where they find justification for stations at the ninth hour. He rebuts several possibilities, concluding that the practice originates from the death of Christ:-

Itaque seposito confirmatore omnium istorum paracleto, duce uniuersae ueritatis, an dignior apud nos ratio adferatur nonam obseruandi require .... Venit enim de exitu domini .....

The phrase duce uniuersae ueritatis may possibly refer to some specific truth, but it seems more likely that it has been added on to the word paracleto out of habit. Its variance from the characteristic deductor omnis ueritatis would enhance this opinion.

### SUMMARY

The emphasis which Tertullian places on Jn.16:12f. reveals two interesting trends in his thought as he becomes more and more sympathetic towards the New Prophecy. Both concern the Paraclete. Both need further clarification.

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36. See De Iei.,3ff.. Such evidence is discussed later,pp. 219 ff..

i) The Mission of the Paraclete, and the Relation of the Paraclete  
to the Holy Spirit

In De Praesc. Haer., Jn.16:12f. is regarded as having been fulfilled absolutely in the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost. In De Cor., this fulfilment is widened to apply to the apostle Paul, who himself was not present in the upper room. Soon Tertullian begins to apply the text to the coming of the Paraclete in the New Prophecy. The words of the text seem to imply only one major coming of the Spirit. Clearly, there is great discrepancy in Tertullian's earlier and later views. As a spokesman for the New Prophecy, he has either to explain away the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost, or to posit a further coming of the Paraclete, or to admit that the Paraclete in the New Prophecy is not the same as that of Pentecost.

There can be no doubt that Tertullian thought of the Paraclete in the New Prophecy as the same Holy Spirit of which he had spoken on many previous occasions in his works.<sup>37</sup> In numerous passages,<sup>38</sup> he speaks of the apostles' experiences at Pentecost. Indeed, this imparting of the Spirit is a presupposition of much of Tertullian's writing.

However, as his interest in the New Prophecy grows, his idea about the coming of the Paraclete begins to change. So, in Adu. Prax., 2,1, he can cite as part of the regula:-

Qui ( sc. Iesus Christus ) exinde miserit secundum promissionem suam a Patre Spiritum sanctum, Paracletum, sanctificatorem fidei eorum qui credunt in Patrem et Filium et Spiritum sanctum.

This statement seems to presuppose the belief in a more recent coming of the Paraclete than that of Pentecost.<sup>39</sup> Similarly, in De Iei., 13,5, he says:-

.... hunc ( sc. Spiritum sanctum ) qui recipimus, necessario etiam

37. Tertullian regards the Spirit as active in prophecy ( see Apol., 18,2; Adu. Marc., 3,22,7 etc ); in creation and baptism ( see De Bapt., 3ff. ); in the inspiration of Scripture ( see above, pp.26ff. ).

38. See the passages from De Praesc. Haer., and cf. Adu. Marc., 5,17,4.

39. See E.Evans, Tertullian's Treatise Against Praxeas. p.191.

quae tunc constituit obseruamus.

This is a reference to the followers of the New Prophecy.

The most explicit identification of the Holy Spirit and the Paraclete is made in the late work, De Pud., 12, 1;-

Itaque isti qui alium Paracletum in apostolis et per apostolos receperunt, quem nec in prophetis propriis agnitum iam nec in apostolis possident .....

This passage not only identifies the Spirit and the Paraclete, but also draws attention to two comings of the Paraclete - the one at Pentecost, the other in the New Prophecy. No attempt is made to explain how an acceptance of these two comings of the Spirit is compatible with Scripture, and especially with Jn. 16:12f.. Tertullian never really comes to terms with the discrepancy, and prefers to gloss over the problem. In the passage from De Pud. cited above, he seems to place the authority of the New Prophets above that of the apostles. Yet earlier, in De Exh. Cast., 4, 6, he emphasises the unique nature of the apostolic possession of the Spirit:-

Proprie enim apostoli spiritum sanctum habent, qui plene habent in operibus prophetiae et efficacia uirtutum documentisque linguarum, non quasi ex parte, quod ceteri.

Even in his explanation of the various processes of righteousness in De Virg. Vel., 1, 7, Tertullian passes straight over from the stage of the gospel to the stage of the Paraclete. <sup>40</sup>

The most profound attempt Tertullian makes to justify the coming of the Paraclete in the New Prophecy is in his emphasis on the more rigorous standards of discipline which this coming has imposed. For example,

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40. Sic et iustitia ..... primo fuit in rudimentis, natura Deum metuens; dehinc per legem et prophetas promouit in infantiam, dehinc per euangelium efferbuit in iuuentutem, nunc per Paracletum componitur in maturitatem.



the indulgences which Paul allowed may be abolished by the Paraclete. <sup>41</sup>

A passage in De Monog., 3,8 brings the above aspects together. In it Tertullian stresses the identification of the Spirit and the Paraclete, and brings into relief the more stringent demands made on the followers of the New Prophecy. He appeals to Eccles.3:1 ( cf. 3:17 ) to support his argument. This text plays an important role in his concept of the mission and activity of the Paraclete. <sup>42</sup> He says:-

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41. See especially, the passage in De Monog., 3 quoted below. Paul allows marriage. The Paraclete could demand celibacy.

42. The Septuagint version is :-

τοῖς πανσίν χρόνος, καὶ καιρὸς, τῷ παντὶ πράγματι ὑπὸ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ.

Tertullian uses this text on three occasions:-

a) In Adu. Marc., 5,4,15 he combines the text with Gal.6:9 and places them in the context of the harvest which a man will reap when he is judged by God:-

Tempore autem suo metemus, quia et Ecclesiasticus: tempus, inquit, omni rei.

b) In De Virg. Vel., 1,5 the text is used in relation to the work of the Paraclete, and to the process of revelation. See earlier in this thesis, pp. 28f., for the idea of this progressive revelation.

The text is pressed into the service of the New Prophecy to show that the revelation received is a legitimate part of God's dispensation. Everything has its stages. Nature witnesses to this. God's revelation follows the same pattern. In spite of the wider application given to the text, the context is similar to that of Adu. Marc., 5,4,15. The emphases of the passages vary, but the theme of the progression of the seed to the ripe fruit occurs in both instances. In Adu. Marc. the harvest brings with it judgement: in De Virg. Vel. the mature fruit provides the basis of an analogy with the Paraclete's fulfilment of the revelatory process.

c) The third occurrence of the text is in De Monog., 3,8, which is cited below. In this passage the emphasis is not so much on the legitimacy of the progressive revelation, as on the legitimacy of the Paraclete's stricter discipline. There seems to be uppermost in Tertullian's mind a realisation that the End is imminent - a realisation no doubt implied in the other two passages, but not explicitly expressed. Tertullian includes a reference to 1 Cor.7:29 which itself adds a sense of urgency. The coming of the Paraclete heralds in the final stages of God's dispensation. So, the emphasis is changed from the various phases of natural development to the urgency of the times. The advancement of discipline under the influence of the Paraclete is again at the centre of the passage, but it is no longer tied down to a comparison with the progress of nature.

..... cur non potuerit post apostolos idem spiritus superueniens ad deducendam disciplinam in omnem ueritatem per gradus temporum ( secundum quod Ecclesiastes: Tempus omni rei, inquit ) supremam iam carni fibulam imponere, iam non oblique a nuptiis auocans, sed exerte, cum magis nunc tempus in collecto factum sit,<sup>43</sup> annis circiter CLX exinde productis ?

The frequent occurrence of the word tempus in this passage emphasises a new aspect of the coming of the Paraclete as yet unmentioned by Tertullian, namely, the imminence of the End. The coming of the Paraclete has ushered in the final era of the history of salvation. Paul's words in 1 Cor.7:29 are used to support this sense of urgency. In this final phase, discipline is important. The Paraclete has a role to play in this respect.

ii) The Role of the Paraclete in the Advancement of Discipline.

The second development in Tertullian's thought about the Paraclete is again best considered in the light of his exegesis of Jn.16:12f.. This text says that the Paraclete will lead into all truth. In De Praesc. Haer.,<sup>44</sup> the truth taught by the Paraclete is that of doctrine. Soon, apart from allusions to the text in Adu. Prax.,2,1 and 30,5 and in De Iei.,10,6, the truth into which the Spirit leads has widened from its specifically doctrinal sense to one which is concerned with both doctrine and discipline, or even with discipline alone.<sup>45</sup> It is interesting to note that this enlargement is to be found in passages in which Tertullian uses the term Paracletus.

The word Paracletus occurs some forty-six times in Tertullian's works.<sup>46</sup>

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43. See 1 Cor.7:29.

44. See the passage cited above.

45. The Paraclete reveals the truth of discipline which hitherto men had been unable to bear.

46. As Tertullian's involvement in the New Prophecy grows, so does the frequency of his references to the Paraclete.

Only three of these occurrences are to be dated before his interest in the New Prophecy - two in De Praesc. Haer., 8, 14, where the concern is with the doctrinal truth taught by the apostles, and one in Adu. Val., 16, 1, where the concern is with the part played by the Paraclete in the gnostic system of beliefs,<sup>47</sup> and is thus not really relevant here.

The other forty-three occurrences are influenced by the New Prophecy, or at least, appear in works which are so influenced. Of these, five may be disregarded, since they are found in contexts concerned to show that the Paraclete is the third Person of the Trinity, and as such is to be distinguished from Christ and the Father.<sup>48</sup> Tertullian's understanding of the role of the Paraclete in the remaining thirty-eight instances may be considered under three headings.

a) The Paraclete imparts doctrinal truth

The mysteries, ambiguities, and parables of Scripture, especially in their bearing on the doctrine of the resurrection of the flesh, are illuminated by the Paraclete,<sup>49</sup> who is associated with the propagation of correct doctrine on various topics, one of which is the doctrine of the Trinity.<sup>50</sup> The Paraclete is the sanctificator fidei.<sup>51</sup> These sentiments are expressed in contexts which emphasise the role of the Paraclete purely as associated with the imparting of doctrinal truth.

b) The Paraclete imparts doctrinal truth and emphasises discipline

Two passages in Tertullian's writing witness to a change in his idea of the Paraclete's role. One - De An., 58, 8 - is concerned with the fate of

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47. The passage does not deal with Tertullian's own system of thought.

48. These passages are all found in Adv. Prax.

49. See De Resurr., 63, 9 where the New Prophecy is specifically mentioned.

50. See Adu. Prax., 1, 5 and 2, 1. In the former passage Tertullian says that Praxeas prophetiam expulit et haeresin intulit, Paracletum fugavit et Patrem crucifixit. The contrasts stress the truth of the Paraclete's word.

51. See Adu. Prax., 2, 1.

the soul in hell. Before it is judged after the resurrection, the soul receives some kind of discipline. The Paraclete confirms this often.<sup>52</sup> Thus, the role of the Paraclete could be regarded merely as that of teacher. However, I suggest that in the emphasis which is placed by Tertullian on the discipline which the soul must undergo, the Paraclete's role of disciplinarian and supporter of those undergoing severe hardship is being drawn to attention. The implication of the passage is that since the soul is disciplined, the conduct of a man on earth must be impeccable, and that the Paraclete in the New Prophecy provides the key to such behaviour.

The second passage - De Monog., 2,4 - has already been cited above.<sup>53</sup> In it, the Paraclete is portrayed as the witness to the teaching of Christ, and as the revealer of disciplinary matters.<sup>54</sup> In this activity, the Paraclete confirms what has gone before.

c) The Paraclete imparts disciplinary truth, and provides the strength to maintain it

The remaining thirty-one references to the Paraclete in Tertullian's works are all closely associated with the propagation of disciplinary values and standards, and with the upkeep of these. The subjects which he is discussing when he brings in these references are indicative of this new concept of the Paraclete's role. He is treating such matters as the correct behaviour in times of persecution,<sup>55</sup> martyrdom,<sup>56</sup> monogamy,<sup>57</sup> the veiling

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52. ... nemo dubitabit animam aliquid pensare penes inferos salua resurrectionis plenitudine per carnem quoque. Hoc etiam paracletus frequentissime commendauit, si qui sermones eius ex agnitione promissorum charismatum admiserit.

53. See p. 69.

54. ... illa multa quae sunt disciplinarum reuelabit .....

55. See De Fuga.

56. See De An., 55 and De Fuga.

57. See De Exh. Cast. and De Monog..

of virgins, <sup>58</sup> fasting, <sup>59</sup> and the Church's attitude to sinners. <sup>60</sup> It will be unnecessary to deal in detail with the majority of these occurrences of the word Paracletus. A few general observations will suffice.

The most complete assessment of the role of the Paraclete is to be found in De Virg. Vel., 1, 4f., which has been noted above. <sup>61</sup> One key sentence is worth quoting again:-

Quae est ergo Paracleti administratio, nisi haec, quod disciplina dirigitur, quod scripturae reuelantur, quod intellectus reformatur, quod ad meliora proficitur ?

Tertullian's emphasis on the two-fold character of the Paraclete's role is evident here. On the one hand, he stresses the activity of the imparting of correct doctrine. The Scriptures hold secrets which must be revealed. A man's perception and comprehension ( cf. intellectus ) must undergo a change. The Paraclete revealed in the New Prophecy is responsible for a new understanding to be achieved. On the other hand, a correct doctrine must be accompanied, and indeed, is made evident by the correct standards of discipline. Man must aim at a higher goal. The Paraclete shows the follower of the New Prophecy this goal, and also provides him with the strength and ability to attain it. The change which goes on in a man is directly associated with this emphasis on disciplinary standards.

The discipline which the Paraclete teaches is in no way novel. Rather, the Paraclete is to be seen as a restitutor, not an institutor. <sup>62</sup> The standards taught are far more rigorous than those previously imposed. In De Monog., 14, 4ff., Tertullian emphasises the extreme standards which are

58. See De Virg. Vel.

59. See De Iei.

60. See De Pud.

61. See p. 67.

62. See De Monog., 4, 1. .... ut Paracletum restitutorem potius sentias eius quam institutorem.

demanded by the Paraclete:-

Regnauit duritia cordis usque ad Christum, regnauerit et infirmitas carnis usque ad Paracletum .... Tempus eius, donec Paracletus operaretur, fuit, in quem dilata sunt a Domino quae tunc sustineri non poterant, quae iam nemini competit portare non posse, quia per quem datur portare posse non deest.

Thus, the coming of the Paraclete is seen as the finale of God's plan. <sup>63</sup>

Two examples will serve to show that the Paraclete supports those who are undergoing disciplinary rigours. In De Fuga, 14,3, the Paraclete is referred to as deductor omnium ueritatum, exhortator omnium tolerantiarum. <sup>64</sup> In De Iei., 13,5, he is described as aduocatus ad exorandum iudicem, signifying the special role he plays on behalf of his followers. ^

Tertullian stresses the distinction between the followers of the New Prophecy and the people he calls the psychici. <sup>65</sup> The latter have rejected the true doctrine revealed by the Paraclete, and the rigorous discipline which accompanies it. <sup>66</sup>

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63. See also De Virg. Vel., 1,7, where the coming of the Paraclete is compared to the final stage in the ripening of the fruit. This passage is discussed above, pp.28f..

64. See above, pp.66f..

65. See the following chapter, p.122f..

66. Two passages in which Tertullian mentions the Paraclete in the same context as carnal or psychic people may be noted:-

a) In De Resurr., 11,1f., he mentions those who live according to the flesh, and cites the oracle uttered by the mouth of Prisca Carnes sunt, et carnem oderunt. The implication is that those who accept the New Prophecy understand the stringent standards of discipline demanded of them. The passage is valuable in an understanding of Adu. Prax., 1,7.

b) In Adu. Prax., 1,7, Tertullian refers to the effect which his acceptance of the New Prophecy has on his relationship with the Catholics:-

Et nos quidem postea agnitio Paracleti atque defensio disiunxit a psychicis.

Since Tertullian is here defending the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity, it is unlikely that his separation is on the grounds of doctrine. The nature of this separation is discussed above, pp.12f.. Where Tertullian disagrees with the Catholics is in his acceptance of the more rigorous demands of the Paraclete in the realm of discipline.

SUMMARY

The above examination shows that Tertullian uses the term Paracletus far more after his interest in the New Prophecy develops. Many of the occurrences of the term are directly associated with a citation of Jn.16:12f.. It would seem legitimate to conclude that this text is most influential in forming and maintaining his concept of the term, and his use of it. P. de Labriolle argues that Tertullian's knowledge of the Greek language would enable him to see in the word its numerous nuances. The Paraclete is the sustainer, the comforter, the intercessor.<sup>67</sup> However, such an understanding of the role of the Spirit is hardly a new one in Tertullian's writings. From the time that he writes Ad Mart., Tertullian regards the Spirit as the strengthener of the weak flesh, and as the advocate who helps in times of need.<sup>68</sup>

What has changed is the rigorous discipline which the Paraclete demands, and the hardships which have to be overcome are easier to bear for those who have accepted the new revelation. The Paraclete encourages, offers strength and performs the duty of advocate on behalf of those who adopt his teaching.

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67. See La Crise.p.324. See also W. Bender, Die Lehre über den heiligen Geist bei Tertullian: München: 1961.pp.155ff., where the role of the Paraclete is discussed.

68. See Ad Mart.,1,3 where Tertullian advises the martyrs to retain the Spirit who has entered prison with them, so that he might lead them to God. In Ad Mart.,3,3, the Spirit is referred to as xystarches in the struggle about to be undertaken by the martyrs.

For further discussion on the Paraclete in the New Prophecy, see H. Karpp, Schrift und Geist bei Tertullian. The concept of disciplina and its development is examined by V. Morel, in his two articles in Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique, 35 ( 1939 ).pp.243ff. and ibid.40 ( 1944-5 ). pp.5ff..

B. Joel 2:28f.

As well as Jn.16:12f., a second Scriptural reference to the mission of the Spirit is taken over by the New Prophecy. This text is Joel 2:28f. ( in the Septuagint, 3:1f. ):-

Καὶ ἔσται μετὰ ταῦτα καὶ ἐκχεῶ ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύματός μου ἐπὶ πᾶσαν σάρκα καὶ προφητεύσουσιν οἱ υἱοὶ ὑμῶν καὶ θυγατέρες ὑμῶν, καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι ὑμῶν ἐνύπνια ἐνυπνιασθήσονται, καὶ οἱ νεανίσκοι ὑμῶν ὄρασεις ὄψονται καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς δούλους καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς δούλας ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις ἐκχεῶ ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύματός μου.

The belief in the outpouring of the Spirit, the prominence of prophecy and visions, and the over-riding importance of eschatological implications among the followers of the movement must all have played a part in commending the prediction in this text to the redactor of the Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis as a possible source of support for his beliefs in the New Prophecy. In the Prologue of the Passio he writes:-

Sed uiderint qui unam uirtutem Spiritus unius sancti pro aetatibus iudicent temporum, cum maiora reputanda sunt nouitiora quaeque ut nouissimiora secundum exuperationem gratiae in ultima saeculi spatia decretam. In nouissimis enim diebus, dicit dominus, effundam de Spiritu meo super omnem carnem, et prophetabunt filii filiaeque eorum; et super seruos et ancillas meas de meo Spiritu effundam; et iuuenes uisiones uidebunt, et senes somnia somniabunt. itaque et nos qui sicut prophetias ita et uisiones nouas pariter repromissas et agnoscimus et honoramus .... 69

Whether we regard the martyrs themselves as members of the New Prophecy or not, <sup>70</sup> there can be no doubt that the redactor of the Passio is sympathetic to the movement, and his words imply that his opinions are not shared by all the Christians of the time. <sup>71</sup> However, he does not regard himself as alienated from the Church.

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69. Passio, 1,3ff. The text is reproduced from H. Musurillo, The Acts of the Christian Martyrs: Oxford: 1971. p.106.

70. See earlier in this thesis, p.7, n.32.

71. cf. uiderint qui unam uirtutem Spiritus unius sancti pro aetatibus iudicent temporum ....



The redactor sees in Joel 2:28f. Scriptural support for the movement's authority, although his exegesis must not be stretched too far. He believes that the Spirit's activity cannot be limited to certain times and seasons, but is to be seen continually at work in the Church. Furthermore, everyone can participate in the graces which the Spirit imparts. They are not restricted to members of one particular section of the Church. Hence, the prophecy of Joel must be seen as fulfilled, not in one specific outpouring of the Spirit, but in many such outpourings, the latest of which is to be witnessed in the New Prophecy. Thus, Joel 2:28f. is not a prediction of the New Prophecy alone, but of the activity of the Spirit in the last days. The prophecy certainly gives the movement its claim to authority, but it does not do so to the exclusion of all else. The redactor's concern lies less in a defence of the New Prophecy's appeal to Scripture, and more in the emphasis that the New Prophecy is the latest incident of the Spirit's activity.

It has been suggested that the redactor of the Passio is Tertullian. <sup>72</sup>

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72. J.A. Robinson, The Passion of St. Perpetua. Texts and Studies, 1, 2. Cambridge. 1891. pp. 47ff., argues that from a comparison of certain Scriptural texts and vocabulary, it is likely that the redactor of the Passio was Tertullian. P. de Labriolle, "Tertullien, auteur du prologue et de la conclusion de la Passion de Perpetue et de Felicite," Bulletin d'ancienne litterature et d'archeologie, 3 ( 1913 ). pp. 126ff. argues along the same lines. The identification has been both accepted ( for example, W.H.C. Frend, The Donatist Church: a movement of protest in Roman North Africa. Oxford. 1952 ), and rejected ( for example, C. Bigg, The Origins of Christianity. pp. 293f., note. Bigg argues that Tertullian's incorrect rendering of the vision of Perpetua in De An., 55. and the lack of reference to the author in the Passio warns against this identification.).

This identification is still not universally accepted, but its possibility is generally acknowledged. Therefore, a study of Tertullian's use of Joel 2:28f. will be interesting not only in tracing any developments in his exegesis, but also in comparing his treatment of the text with that of the Passio.

Tertullian uses the text on nine occasions - all of them in writings in which the influence of the New Prophecy is to be detected. An analysis of these occurrences will be of use here.

1. De An., 47,2

In this chapter, Tertullian classifies dreams. Some are sent from God:-

A deo autem, pollicito scilicet et gratiam spiritus sancti in omnem carnem et sicut prophetaturos, ita et somniaturos seruos suos et ancillas suas, ea deputabuntur quae ipsi gratiae comparabuntur, si qua honesta sancta prophetica reuelatoria aedificatoria uocatoria, quorum liberalitas soleat et in profanos destillare, imbres etiam et soles suos peraequante deo iustis et iniustis ..... maior paene uis hominum ex uisionibus deum discunt.

There are several indications of Tertullian's interest in the New Prophecy in this work.<sup>73</sup> Hence, the question is posed as to whether this citation of Joel 2:28 can be regarded as influenced by the New Prophecy. I would suggest not, since Tertullian willingly admits that the dreams to which he is referring can be enjoyed by the profane as well as by the Christians. It would seem that the application of the text is a very general one. J.H. Waszink notes that this is the only association of this text with dreams in Tertullian's works.<sup>74</sup>

2. De Resurr., 10,2

The opponents of Tertullian's theory of the resurrection of the flesh

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73. See especially, De An., 9,4; 55,5; 58,8. These passages are discussed on pp. 39 ff..

74. See Tertulliani De Anima. p.503.

put forward passages of Scripture which disparage the flesh, and from these claim that ignominious flesh cannot rise again. Tertullian himself appeals to texts which show the precise opposite.<sup>75</sup> One of these is Joel 2:28. Thus the emphasis is not so much on the action of the Spirit, but more on the worthiness of the flesh to receive the Spirit from God.

3. De Resurr., 63, 7ff.

In this final chapter of his treatise, Tertullian emphasises his conclusion that the flesh will be resurrected in a pure state. Anyone who denies this is denying the Creator. Attempts have even been made, by an abuse of Scripture, to deny that Christ came in the flesh. Tertullian takes comfort:-

*Atenim deus omnipotens aduersus haec incredulitatis et peruersitatis ingenia prouidentissima gratia sua effundens in nouissimis diebus de suo spiritu in omnem carnem, in seruos suos et ancillas, et fidem laborantem resurrectionis carnalis animauit et pristina instrumenta manifestis uerborum et sensuum luminibus ab omni ambiguitatis obscuritate purgauit .... Sed quoniam nec dissimulare spiritum sanctum oportebat, quominus et huiusmodi eloquiis superinundaret, quae nullis haereticorum uersutiis semina subspargerent, immo et ueteres eorum cespites uellerent, idcirco iam omnes retro ambiguitates et quantas uolunt parabolas aperta atque perspicua totius sacramenti praedicatione discussit per nouam prophetiam de paraclito inundantem ....*

E. Evans regards it as a possibility that this passage and the oracle attributed to Prisca in De Resurr., 11, 2 may have been added after the work was complete, since they are the only explicit references to the New Prophecy in this work, and neither of them makes any notable addition to the argument.<sup>76</sup> It is interesting to observe the specific application of Joel 2:28f. to the New Prophecy. However, whereas it is used in the Passio to refer to recent events and visions, in De Resurr., 63 there are overtones of a completely different nature. Tertullian does not appeal to the endurance

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75. Tertullian's opponents appeal to Gen.6:3; Is.40:7; Rom.8:8; 8:18; Gal.5:17.

He replies with references to Is.40:5; Joel 2:28; 1 Cor.3:16; 6:15; 6:20.

76. See Tertullian's Treatise on the Resurrection. p.339, and cf. also p.223.

or superior spiritual powers of the visionaries, but merely to the New Prophecy's claim to a superior understanding of Scripture. <sup>77</sup> I would therefore suggest that his application of the text is far more general than that of the Passio, since he takes only the part of the text which suits his needs - the general reference to the outpouring of the Spirit, rather than the specific references to prophecy and visions.

4. Adu. Marc., 5, 4, 2

Tertullian is here discussing Marcion's interference with Paul's words in Gal. 4:4. <sup>78</sup> He argues, against Marcion, that just as the Creator possesses the beginning of the times, so too he possesses their end. The coming of Christ was pre-destined to occur at the end of the times. He cites Joel 2:28 to support this:-

( deus ) .... qui filii denique sui reuelationem in extremitatem temporum et disposuit et praedicauit ..... in nouissimis diebus effundam de meo spiritu in omnem carnem, secundum Iohalem.

The obvious implication to be drawn is that Tertullian sees the coming of Christ as the fulfilment of this prophecy.

5. Adu. Marc., 5, 4, 4

The same chapter contains an assessment of the reason for Christ's coming - redemption, so that the Gentiles might be adopted as God's sons:-

Itaque ut certum esset nos filios dei esse, misit spiritum suum in corda nostra clamantem: abba pater. <sup>79</sup> In nouissimis enim, inquit, diebus effundam de meo spiritu in omnem carnem. Cuius gratia, nisi cuius et promissio gratia ?

This may refer to the sending of the Son, <sup>80</sup> or to the sending of the

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77. See earlier in this thesis, p. 29f.

78. ὅτε δὲ ἦλθεν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου, ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν Υἱὸν αὐτοῦ, γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός, γενόμενον ὑπὸ νόμον, ....

79. This is an allusion to Gal. 4:6.

80. Cf. τὸ Πνεῦμα τοῦ Υἱοῦ in Gal. 4:6.

Spirit at Pentecost. Whichever event it is to which the text applies, there can be no doubt that Tertullian regards its effects as applicable to all Christians, and not just to one specific group of them - namely, the followers of the New Prophecy. His thought here is that the Creator's prophecies have been fulfilled in the coming of Christ and of the Holy Spirit. The God of the Old Testament is the God of the New Testament also. The exposition of Gal.4:4 and 4:6 ( especially the reference to in Gal.4:6 ) would bring to mind immediately the prophecy of Joel 2:28.

6. Adu. Marc.,5,8,6ff.

In his discussion of Paul's account of the spiritual gifts in 1 Cor.12:1ff., Tertullian is at pains to show that these have been foretold in the old dispensation.<sup>81</sup> These gifts were to be sent by Christ himself on his return to heaven. These prophecies have indeed been fulfilled:-

..... iam nunc et illa promisso spiritus absoluta, facta per Iohalem: in nouissimis temporibus effundam de meo spiritu in omnem carnem, et prophetabunt filii filiaeque eorum, et super seruos et ancillas meas de meo spiritu effundam. Et utique si in nouissimos dies gratiam spiritus creator repromisit, Christus autem spiritalium dispensator in nouissimis diebus apparuit .....

As in the passage from Adu. Marc.,5,4,2, noted above,<sup>82</sup> the text of Joel 2:28 is applied to the coming of Christ. Spiritual gifts are the result of this coming. Tertullian is very clear as to whom these gifts are granted. They are not given to all mankind, but to a select few, whom Tertullian refers to as fili hominum. At first sight, this could appear to be a restricting of the possession of the gifts to a very small section of people within the Church. However, it is unlikely that he would want to emphasise the presence of such a sect within the Church to Marcion.

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81. Tertullian cites Is.11:1ff..

82. See the previous page.

It would seem more likely that he is thinking of the Christian Church in toto rather than one particular section of it.

This opinion seems confirmed by his words in closing this chapter. He appeals to Marcion to exhibit the spiritual gifts at work in his community. The passage is worth citing quite fully:-

Exhibeat itaque Marcion dei sui dona, aliquos prophetas, qui tamen non de humano sensu, sed de dei spiritu sint locuti, qui et futura praenuntiarint et cordis occulta traduxerint; edat aliquem psalmum, aliquam uisionem, aliquam orationem, dumtaxat spiritalem, in ecstasi, id est in amentia, si qua linguae interpretatio accessit; probet mihi etiam mulierem apud se prophetasse ex illis suis sanctioribus feminis magnis, dicam: si haec omnia facilius a me proferuntur et utique conspirantia regulis et dispositionibus et disciplinis creatoris, sine dubio dei mei erit et Christus et spiritus et apostolus.

There is little doubt that Tertullian is appealing to the gifts which are evident among the followers of the New Prophecy, although he does not at this time think of this group as separate from the rest of the Catholics. These gifts are in the possession of the Church as a whole. Once again, however, there is no trace of an application of Joel 2:28 to support the authority of the New Prophecy over against that of the Catholics.

#### 7. Adu. Marc., 5, 11, 4

Tertullian's constant thought in this work is the continuity between the Old and the New Testaments. Emphasising this in his comments on Paul's reference to the letter and the spirit in 2 Cor. 3:6, he says:-

( is ) denique, qui litteram tabulis lapideis incidere, idem et de spiritu edixerat: effundam de meo spiritu in omnem carnem ....

The argument here is that the prophecy of Joel is fulfilled in the transition from the law to the gospel. Here there is no overtone in his exegesis in relation to the New Prophecy.

8. Adu. Marc., 5, 17, 4

Consideration of Eph. 1:13 in which Paul tells the Ephesians that they have been stamped with the seal of the Holy Spirit of promise,<sup>83</sup> leads Tertullian to identify this promise with the prophecy of Joel 2:28:-

Cuius promissionis ? Factae per Iohalem: in nouissimis diebus effundam de meo spiritu in omnem carnem, id est et in nationes. Ita ( et ) spiritus et euangelium in eo erit Christo, qui praesperabatur, dum praedicabatur.

For Tertullian, the outpouring of the Spirit, referred to by Joel, had taken place in the preaching of the gospel to the world, and in the acceptance of the non-Jews as God's children. The fulfilment of the promise is, therefore, closely bound up with the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost, and its operation through the apostles. No further application of the text is seen to be necessary.

9. De Fuga, 6, 4

The concern of this chapter is to prove that Christ's command to flee in times of persecution<sup>84</sup> is no longer relevant. He had wished this precept to be restricted to the apostles, and only then at the beginning of their mission. Similarly, Judaea is no longer to be the only country in which the gospel is to be preached:-

Adeo intra terminos Iudaeae praeceptum fugae continebatur. Nobis autem nulla Iudaeae praefinitio competit praedicationis in omnem iam carnem effuso Spiritu Sancto.

This allusion to Joel 2:28 again refers to the activity of the Spirit through the apostles' proclamation of the gospel to the world. Even though De Fuga is written to defend the principles of the New Prophecy, there is no trace of the application of the text to the new activity of the Paraclete.

83. ἑσφραγίσθητε τῷ Πνεύματι τῆς ἑπιγγελίας  
τῷ Ἁγίῳ...

84. See Matt. 10:23. This text is discussed later in this thesis, pp. 24<sup>3</sup> ff.-

SUMMARY

Nine occurrences of Joel 2:28(29) have been noted. Not one of these cites the text in full, and the emphasis is mainly on the reference to the outpouring of the Spirit. The only exceptions to this emphasis are in De Resurr., 10,2 where the value of the flesh is commended rather than the activity of the Spirit, and in De An., 47,2 where the argument concerns the divine origin of some dreams.

Apart from in De Resurr., 10,2 and 63,7, all the occurrences regard the prophecy of Joel as having been absolutely fulfilled, whether it be in the experience of dreams, in the transition from the law to the gospel, in the coming of Christ, in the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, or in the adoption of the Gentiles as God's sons, since they have now taken over the privileges rejected by the Jews. There is no trace, in these seven occurrences, of the idea that the prophecy of Joel has only been partly or conditionally fulfilled.

Only in De Resurr., 63,7f. is there any indication at all that the prophecy of Joel has been fulfilled in the outpouring of the Spirit in the New Prophecy. However, this application is a far more limited one than that in the Passio. Tertullian's main concern is to show that in the New Prophecy is to be found the key to a better understanding of Scripture, not possessed by those who have not received the Paraclete. Although the foundations are laid in De Resurr., 63 for a thorough-going application of the text to the New Prophecy, nowhere are these foundations built on, not even in Tertullian's most extreme writings.

There is thus presented a problem. Since Joel 2:28f. is used in De Resurr. in the context of the New Prophecy, why is it not used in subsequent writings in a similar context, when the urgency for Scriptural



support of the New Prophecy is increasing all the time ? Even if the hypothesis that the closing section of De Resurr. is a later addition <sup>85</sup> is correct, the problem is by no means solved, since there would then be no trace of the development of Tertullian's exegesis in this direction. Whether the passage is early or late, it contains an exegesis which is unique in his writings. If the text really offers such first class support for the authority of the New Prophecy, why is Tertullian prepared to use it on only one occasion ?

I would suggest that his reluctance arises from his realisation that the text is really unsuitable for such an application. The words in omnem carnem are begging for a wider application than Tertullian, as an exponent of the doctrines of the New Prophecy, would be prepared to give them. The words are contradictory to the thought of a small sect claiming them as its own. In omnem carnem presupposes the universal outpouring of the Spirit, not the outpouring confined to a small group of people. As a member of such a group within the larger community of the Church, Tertullian could easily apply the text to the outpouring of the Spirit to the Church as a whole, but more especially to the "spiritual" members within that Church. However, as his relationship with the Catholics become more and more strained, he would see no great advantage in pressing Joel 2:28f. into service in opposition to the Catholics. In fact, the Catholics would easily have turned back on Tertullian the exegesis of the text which he had already applied to it, namely, that in omnem carnem refers to the activity of the Spirit within the Church, made up of Jews and Gentiles alike.

Nor could the second part of the text be applied to the New Prophecy specifically either. The experience of dreams and visions was in no way restricted to the members of the movement. In De An., Tertullian argues that even the heathen have dreams. <sup>86</sup>

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85. See above, pp. 33.

86. See De An., 47, 2.

Tertullian's exegesis of the text nowhere approaches that of the Passio. On this ground the attempt to identify the redactor of the Passio with Tertullian may lose some of its support. If no such identification is to be made, is it to be assumed that there is an application of the text to the New Prophecy, contemporary to Tertullian, and that he must have known of this application, and rejected it? <sup>87</sup> It may even be that De Resurr., 63,7 is influenced by the Passio, and that, on later reflection, Tertullian decides to avoid such exegesis because it is unsuitable. Such hypotheses are questionable.

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87. Tertullian certainly knows of the Passio. See De An., 55,5 and the discussion earlier in this thesis, p. 81.

C. Luke 16:16a ( cf. Matt.11:13 )

Ὁ νόμος καὶ οἱ προφῆται μέχρι Ἰωάννου.

Tertullian himself states on several occasions throughout De Iei. <sup>88</sup>

that this text is used by the Catholics to refute the revelation claimed by the New Prophecy, and its accompanying rigorism. Since the text is obviously so important in the Catholic controversy with the followers of the movement, it will be valuable to trace Tertullian's attitude towards the text throughout his writings, and to note any developments which may occur in his use and understanding of it as he becomes more energetic in his defence of the New Prophecy.

I have discovered twelve occasions on which this text is either cited or alluded to. <sup>89</sup> One of these may be disregarded, as it occurs in the latter part of Adu. Iud. <sup>90</sup> which is similar to the passage from Adu. Marc., 3, 23, noted below. <sup>91</sup>

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88. See De Iei., 2, 2; 11, 4ff.; 12, 2. These passages are discussed later in this chapter. That the text is adduced by the Catholics is shown also in Pseudo-Athanasius, Sermo contra Omnes Haereses, 10 and Synopsis Scripturae Sacrae, Canticum Canticorum, 16.

89. G.F. Diercks, in his edition of De Orat. in Corpus Christianorum, asks his readers to compare Tertullian's words in De Orat., 1, 3 ( totum praeministri opus cum ipso spiritu transiret ad Dominum ) with Matt.11:13 and Luke 16:16. Even if the ideas of Tertullian's words and the texts referred to are to some extent similar, it would be wrong, I think, to see here a direct citation or even indirect allusion to the texts. Hence, I would disregard this passage as of any value in an attempt to trace any developments in Tertullian's use of Luke 16:16.

90. The latter part of Adv. Iud. is found in Adv. Marc., 3, 12ff..

91. See the following page.

1. Adu. Iud.,8,13f.

This passage is extremely important for an assessment of Tertullian's use of the text. It must be quoted extensively:-

Post enim aduentum eius (sc. Christi ) ( et passionem ipsius ) iam non uisio neque prophetes, <sup>92</sup> qui Christum nuntiet uenturum. Denique si non hoc ita est, exhibeant Iudaei prophetarum post Christum aliqua uolumina, angelorum aliquorum uisibilia miracula, ( quasi ) quae retro patriarchae uiderunt usque ad aduentum eius Christi, qui iam uenit. Ex quo ( si ) signata est uisio et prophetia, id est statuta, et merito euangelista: lex et prophetae, inquit, usque ad Iohannem baptistam. Baptizato enim Christo, id est sanctificante aquas in suo baptizate, omnis plenitudo spiritalium retro charismatum in Christo cessauit signante uisiones et prophetias omnes, quas aduentu suo adimpleuit.

The implication of this passage is that the spiritual gifts of visions and prophecy have come to an end with Christ's coming. Not only is this a direct contradiction of the view that the Spirit descended at Pentecost and is at work in the Church, but it is also a denial of any future revelation, such as Tertullian upholds in his acceptance of the New Prophecy. This is a statement of his belief that Christ has fulfilled the prophecy of the Old Testament, and by his coming the Jews have forfeited their claim to spiritual gifts. It is important to note that the text is used in relation to the connection between Christians ( or Christ ) and the Jews. It seems as though Tertullian is taking the thought lex et prophetae usque ad Iohannem baptistam literally, in that he assigns the cessation of these spiritual gifts to the very time that Christ first meets John - at his baptism.

2. Adu. Marc.,3,23,1ff.

This passage is found to bear a great resemblance to Adu. Iud.,13,24ff.. One analysis will therefore suffice. Tertullian is talking about the fate of the Jews who have rejected Christ:-

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92. This is an allusion to Dan.9:24.

.... uide an quod sequitur ( i.e. in Isaiah's prophecies ) expunctum sit. Abstulit enim dominus Sabaoth a Iudaea et ab Hierusalem inter cetera et prophetam et sapientem architectum, <sup>93</sup> spiritum scilicet sanctum, qui aedificat ecclesiam, templum scilicet et domum et ciuitatem dei. .... Et ita subtractis charismatum roribus lex et prophetae usque ad Iohannem;..

The unbelief of the Jews has resulted in their forfeiture of the spiritual graces. Once again, the text is taken as referring to the Christians' inheritance of these graces.

3. Adu. Marc.,4,33,7f.

Tertullian is giving an exegesis of Luke, and has reached 16:16:-

Possum iam colligere, cur tanto aeuo deus Marcionis fuerit in occulto. Expectabat, opinor, donec haec omnia disceret a creatore. Didicit igitur usque ad Iohannis tempora atque ita exinde processit adnuntiare regnum dei dicens: lex et prophetae usque ad Iohannem; ex quo regnum dei adnuntiatur. Quasi non et nos limitem quendam agnoscamus Iohannem constitutum inter uetera et noua, ad quem desineret Iudaismus et a quo inciperet Christianismus, non tamen, ut ab alia uirtute facta sit sedatio legis et prophetarum et initiato euangelii, in quo est "dei regnum".

The emphasis here is not so much on the forfeit to be paid by Judaism, as on the displacement of Judaism by Christianity. The arrival of John marks the watershed between the old dispensation and the new. Tertullian is not rebuking the Jews for their unbelief. He is more concerned with Marcion's introduction of another god at this watershed. The occasion of the work has resulted in a change in emphasis, although it must be noted that, once again, the contrast is between Judaism and Christianity.

4. Adu. Marc.,5,2,1

Tertullian has now reached his exposition of Paul's letter to the Galatians, in which the apostle refers to Judaism and its law. Tertullian says:-

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93. See. Is.3:1ff..

Amplectimur etenim omnem illam legis ueteris amolitionem .....  
Quodsi creator quidem uetera cessura promisit, nouis scilicet orituris,  
Christus uero tempus distinxit decessionis iustius,<sup>94</sup> - lex et prophetae  
usque ad Iohannem - terminum in Iohanne statuens inter utrumque ordinem  
desinentium exinde ueterum et incipientum nouorum, necessarie et apostolus  
in Christo post Iohannem reuelato uetera infirmat, noua uero confirmat,  
atque ita non alterius dei fidem curat quam creatoris, apud quem et  
uetera decessura praedicabantur.

Here again, Tertullian is stressing the transition from the old  
dispensation to the new, which takes place with the coming of John.  
The Christian dispensation is now the legitimate one.

5. Adu. Marc.,5,8,5

Tertullian says that from the very moment of Christ's appearance on  
earth, the entire operation of spiritual grace came to rest in him, and,  
as far as the Jews were concerned, came to an end:-

Sicut et res ipsa testatur, nihil exinde spirante penes illos spiritu  
creatoris, ablato a Iudaea sapiente et prudente architecto et consiliario  
et propheta,<sup>95</sup> ut hoc sit: lex et prophetae usque ad Iohannem. Accipe  
nunc, quomodo et a Christo in caelum recepto charismata obuentura  
pronuntiarit: ..... data dedit filiis hominum, id est donatiua, quae  
charismata dicimus.

The contrast again is emphasised between the Jews from whom the spiritual  
graces have been removed, and the Christians ( filiis hominum ) who have  
received the charismata from Christ himself.

6. De An.,9,3

Discussing the nature of the soul, Tertullian is about to relate the  
experience of a female follower of the New Prophecy who, he says, has  
received a revelation on this matter:-

Nam quia spiritalia charismata agnoscimus, post Iohannem quoque  
prophetiam meruimus consequi. Est hodie soror apud nos ....

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94. The text of these last few words seems corrupt. E. Evans, Adversus  
Marcionem by Tertullian: Oxford: 1972.p.512, reads istius.

95. See Is.3:1ff..

There is an obvious allusion to Luke 16:16 here. As a member of the New Prophecy, Tertullian places great importance on the revelations received by the movement. The experience of the woman has already been discussed.<sup>96</sup> In order to justify this experience, he has to give it authority, and must emphasise its divine origin. Therefore, he refers to the reception of charismata amongst the followers of the movement. One important charismatum is the gift of prophecy, of which he would be acutely aware. Luke 16:16 suggests that prophecy has ceased with John. Tertullian denies this, but does not say specifically how his group possess the gift of prophecy, in overt contradiction of the text. He does not expect any opposition from his readers on this matter.

7. Adu. Prax., 31, 1

In the conclusion of this treatise, Tertullian points out the similarity of the heresy which he is refuting<sup>97</sup> to the doctrine of the Jews who do not accept the Son and the Spirit either. He continues:-

Quid enim erit inter nos et illos ( i.e. the Jews ) nisi differentia ista ? Quod opus euangelii, quae est substantia noui testamenti statuens legem et prophetas usque ad Iohannem, si non exinde Pater et Filius et Spiritus sanctus, tres conditi, unum Deum sistunt.

Any attempt to reduce God to a monarchy threatens the very existence of the gospel. Underlying the whole argument of this passage is the assumption that the watershed between the old and the new dispensation is to be seen in the coming of John.

8. De Iei., 2, 2

Tertullian is expounding some of the arguments by which the Catholics oppose the views of the New Prophecy on fasting. The Catholics acknowledge as days appointed for fasting the Day of Atonement<sup>98</sup> and the days on which

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96. See above, pp. 39 ff.

97. He is refuting the Monarchian doctrine that the Father and the Son are one identical person.

98. See Lev. 16:29ff.; 23:26ff..

the bridegroom was taken away, <sup>99</sup> and he continues:-

et hos<sup>esse</sup> iam solos legitimos ieiuniorum Christianorum abolitis legalibus et propheticis uetustatibus. Ubi ( sc. psychici ) uolunt enim, adgnoscent quid sapiat lex et prophetae usque ad Iohannem.

It is in the context of law that Luke 16:16 is cited by the Catholics, rather than in the context of spiritual graces. They use the text to support their argument that the Jewish dispensation has been superseded, and that there should be no dependence on the customs presented in it. Tertullian's words may imply that there are other occasions when the Catholics refuse to recognise the implications of the text. At any rate, Tertullian does not deal in detail with an exegesis of the text. Rather, he prefers to gloss over it and ignore the difficulties it contains for his justification of the acceptance of the New Prophecy.

9. De Iei., 11, 4ff.

Spiritus diaboli est, dicis, o psychice. With these words Tertullian briefly and concisely sums up one of the major Catholic refutations of the New Prophecy. The Catholics regard the movement as heresy or pseudo-prophecy, the work of the devil. Tertullian's defence of his position in this section centres on the harmony between the movement's views on fasting and the laws imposed by God in both the Old and the New Testaments. He continues:-

Sed rursus palos terminales figitis deo, sicut de gratia, ita de disciplina, sicut de charismatibus, ita et de solemnibus, ut perinde officia cessauerint, quemadmodum et beneficia eius, atque ita negetis usque adhuc eum munia imponere, quia et hic lex et prophetae usque ad Iohannem. Superest ut totum auferatis, quantum in uobis, tam otiosum.

Luke 16:16 is again placed in the mouths of the Catholics, and the impression is given that it is upon this text that they rely for the defence of their views on fasting.

10. De Iei., 12, 2

This section follows on immediately after the one cited above. In it,

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99. Cf. Matt. 9:14f. and parallels.



Tertullian abandons his opposition to the Catholic understanding of the text:-

Ut ab Iohanne paracletus obmutuisset .....

I do not think that there is in this concession an indication that he admits his interpretation of the text to be wrong, and that the Catholics are right to appeal to it. I think rather that the concession is a rhetorical one, designed to serve as a foundation upon which Tertullian can build a section devoted entirely to the condemnation of Catholic over-indulgence and moral laxity.

Ut ab Iohanne paracletus obmutuisset must certainly be regarded as an allusion to Luke 16:16, and it is noticeable that the emphasis is on the element of prophecy, rather than on that of law, because he continues:-

et ipsi nobis prophetae in hanc maxime causam extitissemus .....

He has cleverly transferred the thought of his readers from the implications of the text in relation to the law ( 11,6 ) to its implications regarding prophecy.

#### 11. De Pud.,6,1ff.

Tertullian states that he is prepared to argue out with the Catholics the question of the Church's right to forgive adultery and fornication, provided that they can find Scriptural support for such a right. One of the principles by which the use of such Scriptural evidence must be governed is that

lex et prophetae usque ad Iohannem secundum Dominum.

This reference to Luke 16:16 prompts Tertullian to define the implications of the text:-

Nam et si cum maxime a lege coepimus demonstrando moechiam, merito ab

eo statu legis, quem Christus non dissoluit, sed impleuit. Onera enim legis usque ad Iohannem, non remedia. Operum iuga reiecta sunt, non disciplinarum. Libertas in Christo non fecit innocentia iniuriam.

Once again, the emphasis is on the law and its relation to the Christian.

#### SUMMARY

The above examination of Tertullian's use of Luke 16:16a has revealed that he refers to it in a variety of contexts. On some occasions, the emphasis is on the element of law, on others, on the element of prophecy. His treatment of the text reveals several inconsistencies, caused in part by the nature of the arguments which he sets out to defend, and in part by his sympathies towards the New Prophecy.

The first problem is that Tertullian is not consistent in his understanding of the words prophetae usque ad Iohannem. On at least two occasions,<sup>100</sup> the phrase is taken as signifying that the charismata ( i.e. spiritual graces in general ) have been withdrawn from the Jews, and have now been passed on to the Christians. On two occasions,<sup>101</sup> the implication of prophetae is specifically applied to prophecy.

Here is found the second inconsistency. The exegesis of the text in Adu. Iud.,8,14 is concerned to show that, with the coming of Christ, prophecy has ceased. If this is really the view of Tertullian at one time in his life, then his involvement in the New Prophecy must have led his thoughts in the opposite direction, as the reference to the text in De An.,9,3 shows. The only way to alleviate this inconsistency is to assume that Tertullian is not thinking of prophecy as having ceased completely, but rather that the charismata in general, and prophecy in particular, have passed over from the Jews to the Christians. But if Tertullian meant this, why did he not say it more precisely? The whole context of Adu. Iud.,8,14 reveals his aim of proving that Christ has fulfilled the prophecies

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100. See Adu. Marc.,3,23,3 (= Adv. Iud.,13,26); 5,8,5.

101. See Adu. Iud.,8,14 and De An.,9,3.

which announced his coming. To prove this is so important, that Luke 16:16 is adopted for the purpose. The result is that Tertullian is led to the extremity by denying the validity of prophecy after John. Hence I would suggest that he is thinking of prophecy specifically, rather than of charismata in general, and that this passage completely contradicts his later view revealed in De An.,9.

The third point to notice is that in all the references to the text, except in De An., De Iei., and De Pud., the emphasis is on the relationship between the Jews and the Christians, or between the Jews and Christ. John's coming is seen as a watershed, as the boundary between the old dispensation and the new. The favours which God formerly bestowed upon the Jews are now granted to the Christians. In De Iei. and De Pud., however, this emphasis has changed. The main stress now falls upon the relation of the law to the Christians and to the followers of the New Prophecy. A precedent for such a use of the text has already been set in Adu. Marc.,5,2,1, where Tertullian has freely admitted that the old law has been abolished by Christ's coming. However, this is not the view of De Iei. and De Pud.. It is necessary for Tertullian to defend his newly adopted principles about fasting and penitence by an appeal to the Old Testament law. His defence of the New Prophecy's views on fasting depends upon a complete acceptance of this law. Therefore, he is forced to condemn the Catholics for accepting the implications of the text which he himself has upheld earlier in Adu. Marc.,5,2,1. Hence, from a conviction that the law has been abolished, he swings round to the position that the precepts of the law ( as regards fasting, at any rate ) are to be upheld, and he assesses the validity of the New Prophecy on the principle that its followers accept and follow the precepts of the law imposed by God on his faithful.

An intermediate view is expressed in De Pud., 6, 2, where Tertullian mentions adultery and the Church's right to forgive the adulterer, saying that the onera of the law are displaced, but not its remedia. He seems constantly to be placed in the dilemma of wishing to appeal to the Old Testament law for authority, and yet of being forced, at the same time, to acknowledge its annulment.<sup>102</sup>

Further, the occurrence of the text in De An. shows that Tertullian, now involved in the New Prophecy, realises that Luke 16:16 must not be taken as denying the complete cessation of prophecy. He does not, however, expound the obvious problems so raised. Clearly, he does not expect to be pressed on the issue. When later the text is taken up by the Catholics in support of their rejection of the New Prophecy, it is the element of law which is emphasised as having become obsolete.

I would conclude that the text is most significant for an understanding of Tertullian's appeal to Scripture. It is not true to say that one exegesis of the text gives place to another as his sympathies towards the New Prophecy grow. It is rather that a completely different interpretation is applied to the text when the need arises. Furthermore, Tertullian's exposition of this text reveals a number of inconsistencies in his exegesis, and shows his tendency to push arguments to their untenable extremes.

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102. For a further assessment of Tertullian's views on the relation of the law and the gospel, see earlier in this thesis, pp. 26 f. See also, p. 280 ff.

FINAL REMARKS

Three texts have been noted in which Tertullian finds some support for a defence of the New Prophecy. His use of these texts reveals inconsistencies, development, and, in the case of Joel 2:28f. an apparent rejection of the implications placed on the text by the redactor of the Passio, or if this redactor were Tertullian himself, a rejection or radical change of previous exegesis. Tertullian fails to explain the two comings of the Paraclete which as a follower of the New Prophecy he is forced to accept, and equally, he never really comes to terms with the assertion that prophecy had to come to an end with John.

CHAPTER FOUR

TERTULLIAN'S USE OF SCRIPTURE IN HIS ATTACK ON THE CATHOLICS.

The Scriptural defence of the New Prophecy manifested itself very soon after Tertullian's works began to bear traces of his interest in the movement. It was not until some time later, however, that a more sinister appeal to Scripture was made, in order to slander those people who did not accept the views put forward by the movement. As long as Tertullian could accommodate the New Prophecy in his concept of the Catholic Church, few problems arose in his relationship with his fellow Christians. But when differences between beliefs became more and more apparent, Tertullian saw a need to depreciate Catholic authority and doctrine. The source from which he most naturally drew his inspiration was Scripture.

Five texts must be closely examined in order to see the use to which Tertullian puts them to decry the Catholics.

A. Matt.26:41b

Τὸ μὲν πνεῦμα πρόθυμον, ἡ δὲ σὰρξ ἀσθενής.

This text occurs seven times in Tertullian's writings, and some significant developments are to be noted in its usage.

1. Ad Mart.,4,1

Tertullian's concern here is to encourage the martyrs to remain steadfast in their hour of affliction, and not to succumb, even though the words of Christ may tempt them to take the easy way out of their hardship:-

Scimus ex dominico praecepto, quod caro infirma sit, spiritus promptus. Non ergo nobis blandiamur, quia Dominus consensit carnem infirmam esse. Propterea enim praedixit spiritum promptum, ut ostenderet, quid cui debeat esse subiectum, scilicet caro seruiat spiritui, infirmior fortiori, ut ab eo etiam ipsa fortitudinem assumat.

It is Christ's intention that the flesh be subject to the spirit. Weakness of the flesh cannot be adduced as an excuse for cowardly action. The interpretation placed on the text in this early work sets the scene for what was to become in the main, Tertullian's standard application of the text in his "Catholic" writings.

2. Ad Uxor., 1, 4, 1

Discussing the subject of celibacy, Tertullian rejects the excuse which Matt. 26:41 seems to supply:-

Sed carnem legimus infirmam, et hinc nobis adulamur in quibusdam. Legimus tamen et spiritum firmum. Nam in uno sensu utrumque positum est. Caro terrena materia est, spiritus uero caelestis. Cur ergo ad excusationem proniores quae in nobis infirma sunt opponimus, quae uero fortia non tuemur? Cur caelestibus terrena non cedant?

Here again is to be found <sup>the same idea</sup> as that in the passage above. Pampering ourselves is not to be tolerated. It is our duty to follow the stronger element within us.

The translation is noteworthy. Tertullian translates the word  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\theta\upsilon\mu\circ\nu$  by firmum, not promptum as in all the other occurrences of the text. No doubt this rendering was adduced by his desire to provide a completely successful comparison between the weakness of the flesh and the strength of the spirit. If this is true, it may show that Tertullian did not stick rigidly to one translation, but was prepared to translate freely if the necessity arose. Alternatively, it is possible that he was citing from memory.<sup>1</sup>

1. For Tertullian's use of versions, see especially, P. de Labriolle, "Tertullien a-t-il connu une version latine de la Bible?" in Bulletin d'ancienne littérature et d'archéologie chrétienne: 4:1914. pp. 210ff.; P. Monceaux, Histoire Littéraire: Vol. 1. pp. 106ff.; T. P. O'Malley, Tertullian and the Bible: Language-imagery-exegesis: Utrecht: 1967. pp. 1ff. and bibliography there.

3. De Pat.,13,7

Tertullian is extolling the virtues of bodily patientia. In times of persecution and martyrdom, patientia is a necessity in order that the weakness of the flesh may be overcome:-

Si spiritus promptus sed caro - sine patientia - infirma, ubi salus spiritus et carnis ipsius ?

In Ad Mart.,4, it was the spirit's role to subject the flesh. In this passage, these roles are to some extent reversed. It is the role of the flesh to be strengthened by patientia, for in the power of the flesh lies the salvation of the spirit. The emphasis is completely different, although the interwoven relationship between the flesh and the spirit is still uppermost in Tertullian's mind. This idea, I would suggest, is closely bound up with his concept of the resurrection of the soul and of the flesh. The two elements are inseparable (cf. salus spiritus et carnis ipsius).

4. De Carne,9,7

Tertullian is here refuting the gnostic claim that Christ did not live the life of a real man.<sup>2</sup> He appeals to the various examples found in the gospels of incidents in which Christ's weakness is emphasised:-

Esurit sub diabolo, sitit sub Samaritide, lacrimatur super Lazarum, trepidat ad mortem - caro enim, inquit, infirma - sanguinem postremo fundit.

There is no comparison drawn between the weakness of the flesh and the virtues of the spirit. Tertullian's only purpose is to show that Christ's flesh had its limitations.

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2. This view was propounded by the Docetists.



5. De Fuga, 8, 1f.

Tertullian appeals to the example of Christ himself to encourage his reader(s) to stand fast in times of persecution. Talking of Christ, he says:-

Professus quidem et ipse est animam anxiam usque ad mortem et carnem infirmam, ut tibi ostenderet primo in se utramque substantiam humanam fuisse ex proprietate anxietatis animae et imbecillitatis carnis, ne aliam, ut quidam nunc induxerunt, aut carnem aut animam Christi interpretareri, dehinc ut, demonstratis condicionibus earum, scires illas nihil ualere per semetipsas sine Spiritu. Et ideo praeponit: "Spiritus promptus", ut utramque condicionem substantiae utriusque respiciens, intelleges in te esse etiam fortitudinem Spiritus, quomodo et infirmitatem carnis, ac iam hinc scias quid unde facias et quid cui subicias infirmum scilicet forti, ne, ut nunc facis, de carnis quidem infirmitate causeris, de Spiritu autem firmitate dissimules.

I have quoted this passage at such great length because in it the various interpretations of Matt. 26:41 found in the earlier writings are united. Firstly, Christ's admission that his soul was troubled, even unto death,<sup>3</sup> is combined with the emphasis on the weakness of the flesh to show that Christ was truly human. Secondly, the weakness of the flesh is stressed to show that the spiritus promptus has a very important and indispensable role to play in man's salvation. Thirdly, again it is a question of the weaker element being brought under the control of the stronger.

A further point may be noted. There seems to be some interplay of different concepts in this passage. Tertullian's reference to the anima of Christ hinders to some extent the nice comparison between the flesh and the spirit. Instead of two elements, Tertullian has to deal with three - caro, anima, and spiritus. Consequently, his concept of spiritus seems to become more enlarged. It looks as though Tertullian is thinking, at least in one sentence,<sup>4</sup> of spiritus no longer in the sense of that element in man which opposes the flesh, but in the sense

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3. See Matt. 26:38; cf. Jn. 12:27.

4. ...scires illas nihil ualere per semetipsas sine Spiritu.

of the Spirit of God. Having allowed himself this digression in his thinking, Tertullian then returns to the concept of the spiritus promptus as the element to which the flesh must be subject.

Since De Fuga was written after Tertullian's interest in the New Prophecy had been aroused, it does not seem impossible that the reference to the spiritus promptus could have brought into being the rather obscure allusion to the activity of God's Spirit. This is further confirmed when a consideration is made of interpretations of the text in subsequent works.

6. De Monog., 14, 4ff.

Discussing Paul's permission of second marriage,<sup>5</sup> Tertullian argues in this chapter that any such permission would have been granted because of the circumstances at the time, and must therefore be regarded as a temporary indulgence, allowed because of the weakness of man's flesh. The time of such indulgence has its limits:-

Regnauit duritia cordis usque ad Christum, regnauerit et infirmitas carnis usque ad Paracletum....Tempus eius, donec Paracletus operaretur, fuit, in quem dilata sunt a Domino quae tunc sustineri non poterant, quae iam nemini competit portare non posse, quia per quem datur portare posse non deest. Quamdiu causabimur carnem, quia dixit Dominus: Caro infirma ? Sed praemisit: et spiritus promptus, ut vincat spiritus carnem, ut cedat quod infirmum est fortiori. Nam et: Qui potest capere capiat, inquit, id est qui non potest, discedat.

At first sight the interpretation given to Matt.26:41 seems to be no different from that found in previous passages, namely, the submission of the weak flesh to the stronger spirit. However, a closer examination of the context will reveal a great development in exegesis. In this chapter, Tertullian is stressing the rigid moral code of the New Prophecy. The time has now arrived when excuses can no longer be

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5. See 1 Cor.7:39.

made for lax conduct. It is no longer patientia which holds the key to the strengthening of the flesh, thus opening the door to salvation. It is now the acceptance of the Paraclete's teaching which brings about salvation. The various stages of imperfect conduct which existed before have come to an end with the coming of the New Prophecy.

The interpretation given to Matt.26:41 has accordingly taken on a new dimension. The spirit which wars with the flesh is no longer that stronger element in man's make-up, but is in fact the Spirit of God, the Paraclete, revealed in the New Prophecy. Tertullian seems to regard the phrase spiritus promptus as indicative of the presence and ability of the Paraclete. I would suggest that this interpretation becomes more clearly understood when one remembers that the Latin word promptus can also mean "ready", "at hand", "apparent", "manifest". The meaning of the word would have been significant for Tertullian's belief in the recent revelation of the Paraclete in the New Prophecy.

Further support for this interpretation can be adduced. The citation from Matt.19:12

Qui potest capere capiat

summons up the idea of the receiving of something. The preceding words of Tertullian have emphasised the overcoming of the weak flesh by the Spirit. It seems as though Tertullian is suggesting that he who can receive the Spirit should do so. If this were merely a reference to the spirit that is within men, the meaning would be obscure, since all men possess this spirit within them and there is no question of some receiving it, and others not. However, if the reference to the spirit is taken as inseparable from Tertullian's emphasis on the coming of the Paraclete, then the sense must be that of a plea to those who are able to accept the teachings and power of the Paraclete to do so. There is a choice to be made -

the acceptance or the rejection of the Spirit, revealed in the New Prophecy. A wrong decision seals the fate of the chooser. Those who do in fact accept the Paraclete have declared their allegiance to Christ, and have therefore acquired the power to overcome the weakness of the flesh referred to by Christ.

The idea of an alternative is new in regard to Tertullian's understanding of Matt.26:41. In the previous uses of the text there was no such choice. It is the duty of all Christians to ensure that their weak flesh is subject to the power of the spirit. In his Catholic days, Tertullian does not see in the text the necessity of a rejection by Christ of all those who fail to resist the temptations of the flesh. Only when he becomes strongly influenced by the New Prophecy does such an idea arise in his mind.

#### 7. De Pud.,22,14f.

The main theme of this work is the Church's inability to forgive adultery and fornication. In this final chapter, Tertullian argues that an apostate who has denied under torture is more to be commended than an adulterer or a fornicator:-

Quis magis negavit, qui Christum vexatus an qui delectatus amisit ?

He closes the treatise with a comment on those who apostatise:-

Solis illis caro infirma est. Atquin nulla tam fortis caro quam quae spiritum elidit.

These sentiments need elucidation. The implication of solis illis caro infirma est seems to be that those who apostatise desire to do the right thing, but unfortunately, their weak flesh will not allow them to stand up to the test. Their spirit is willing, but their flesh is weak. On the other hand, adulterers and fornicators cannot plead as their excuse the infirmity of the flesh since clearly their testing is of a different nature. They enjoy giving in to temptation. Sinning to them is a pleasure. Hence their spirit is not willing to overcome temptation. However, the full significance of the words cannot be realised unless the following

sentence is considered immediately:-

Atquin nulla tam fortis caro quam quae spiritum elidit.

The flesh of those who apostatise is weak. Only they can plead this excuse. Adulterers do not have weak flesh, for their flesh overcomes the spirit. This final sentence of the treatise is interesting. It has been argued that the ending of De Pud. seems abrupt, and that there must have been further material which has not come down to us.<sup>7</sup> I disagree. If De Pud. is to be regarded as Tertullian's final work,<sup>8</sup> then these words represent the last statement which Tertullian writes against the "psychici", or at least which has remained extant. It would be surprising if such a final statement did not contain a re-assertion of Tertullian's adopted position, and a cutting remark against those who refused to join him in his acceptance of this position. The closing words of De Pud. provide these, and they are based on Matt.26:41.

In several occurrences of the text noted above, Tertullian constantly emphasises the duty of Christians to ensure that their flesh is subject to the spirit. In all cases except one, it is to the spirit as the element in man's make-up to which he refers. In De Monog.,<sup>14</sup> the exception is made. The spirit to which the flesh should be subject is now the Paraclete. It is in this sense that the final remark of De Pud. should be understood. The "psychici" cannot plead the infirmity of the flesh as an excuse for their adultery or fornication, since the strength of their flesh has been manifested in their rejection of the Paraclete. Tertullian turns the text of Matt.26:41 against the Catholics

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7. See W.P.le Saint, Tertullian: Treatises on Penance, on Penitence, and on Purity: Maryland: 1959. p.298, n.707. I have been unable to consult the article written by A.Kroymann (Quaestiones Tertullianae Criticae:Innsbruck:1893.p.95) mentioned by W.P.le Saint.

8. See earlier in this thesis, p. 9 , n. 41.

as a whole, and not merely against those of their number who commit adultery or fornication. The implication of the closing sentence of De Pud. has widened from the narrow context of moral laxity, to the context of ignorance and rejection. The failure of the Catholics to accept the recent revelation of the Paraclete shows that they do not understand the purpose of God. This ignorance manifests itself in lax standards and fleshly extravagances.

SUMMARY.

Tertullian's use and interpretation of Matt.26:41 undergoes a drastic A<sup>11</sup>  
× change as he becomes more sympathetic to the New Prophecy. Whereas in his earlier works the text is used to encourage his readers to submit to the will of the spirit and to overcome the urges of the flesh, in De Monog. and De Pud. the text is used to stress the submission which is required in an acceptance of the teaching and standards of the Paraclete. The development of this idea seems to appear first in De Fuga. Tertullian's final attack on the Catholics in De Pud. is occasioned by his earlier allusion to the text .

B. Gal.5:17a

The same struggle between the flesh and the spirit is referred to in this text.

ἡ γὰρ σὰρξ ἐπιθυμεῖ κατὰ τοῦ πνεύματος, τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα κατὰ τῆς σαρκός, ...

Tertullian uses the text on three occasions:-

1. De An.,40,2

Tertullian's argument here is that the flesh, in itself, is not sinful: it is only an instrument of the soul:-

Nam etsi caro peccatrix, secundum quam incedere prohibemur, cuius opera damnantur concupiscentis aduersus spiritum, ob quam carnales notantur, non tamen suo nomine caro infamis.

The words concupiscentis aduersus spiritum seem to allude to Gal.5:17. Tertullian's desire is to show that although the works of the flesh may be sinful, flesh itself is not. This theme is constantly reiterated in De Resurr..

## 2. De Resurr., 10, 3.

Again, Tertullian's aim is to excuse the baseness of the flesh, and he refutes the idea that Paul thought very little of the flesh:-

Nam etsi negat habitare quidquam boni in carne sua,<sup>9</sup> etsi adfirmat eos, qui in carne sint, deo placere non posse,<sup>10</sup> quia caro concupiscat aduersum spiritum, et si qua alia ita ponit, ut carnis non tamen substantia, sed actus oneretur, dicemus quidem alibi nihil proprie carni exprobrari oportere nisi in animae suggillationem, quae carnem ministerio sibi subigit.

It is the soul which is the principal cause behind the actions of the flesh.

## 3. De Monog., 1, 2f.

Tertullian is introducing his treatise written to defend the idea of monogamy accepted by the followers of the New Prophecy:-

Unum matrimonium nouimus, sicut unum Deum..... Sed psychicis, non recipientibus spiritum, ea quae sunt spiritus non placent. Ita quibus quae sunt spiritus non placent, ea quae sunt carnis placebunt, ut contraria spiritus. Caro, inquit, aduersus spiritum concupiscit, et spiritus aduersus carnem. Quid autem concupiscet caro quam quae magis carnis sunt? Propter quod et in primordio extranea spiritus facta est. Non, inquit, permanebit spiritus meus in istis hominibus in aeuum, eo quod caro sint.

In this passage, a change has occurred in Tertullian's understanding of Gal.5:17a. No longer is the emphasis on the flesh alone, but now the activity of the spirit has come into focus. However, it is not the

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9. See Rom.7:18.

10. See Rom.8:8.

11. See Gen.6:3.

spiritual element in man's make-up which is understood here, but the activity of God's Spirit - the Paraclete - revealed in the New Prophecy. The Catholics, rejecting the Paraclete, fight against the things of the Spirit. Paul's words in Gal.5:17 almost become synonymous with the Catholics' rejection of the Paraclete. The Catholics are "the flesh" who oppose the Spirit.<sup>12</sup>

#### SUMMARY

In Paul's letters, the word  $\piνεμα$  seems to be used in three different ways, to mean:-

- a) the soul of a man as the principle of thought or consciousness;
- b) the activity of the Holy Spirit;
- c) the person of the Holy Spirit.<sup>13</sup>

In about half the places where the word is used, there is some uncertainty as to the meaning Paul intends. W.P.le Saint points out that Tertullian uses the text of Paul in the way best suited to his particular argument.<sup>14</sup>

The "spirit" against which the flesh strives is not specifically drawn out, in De An.,40 and De Resurr.,10. The "spirit" could conceivably refer to man's principle of thought or consciousness, or even to the Holy Spirit. However, in De Monog.,1, Tertullian's understanding of the text has become far more clearly defined. The "Spirit" is the Paraclete of the New Prophecy.

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12. Cf. Prisca's oracle, quoted by Tertullian in De Resurr.,11,2:-  
Carnes sunt, et carnem oderunt.

13. For Paul's understanding of the word  $\piνεμα$ , see W.P.le Saint, Tertullian: Treatises on Marriage and Remarriage: Maryland: 1951.p.152, n.6; D.E.H. Whiteley, The Theology of St. Paul: Oxford: 1964.pp.41ff.; H. Wheeler Robinson, The Christian Doctrine of Man: Edinburgh: 1926.pp.109ff.; W. David Stacey, The Pauline View of Man: London: 1956.pp.128ff., etc..

14. W.P.le Saint, op. cit.. p.152, n.6.



It cannot be said that Tertullian has contradicted himself in his usage of Gal.5:17a, but it is obvious that his interest in the New Prophecy has led him to see in the text a larger application. The struggle which Paul visualises between the flesh and the spirit has, for Tertullian, become embodied in the Catholics' rejection of the Paraclete.

C. Gen.6:3a.

Another text which points to a conflict between "spirit" and "flesh" is Gen.6:3a. The Septuagint version is:-

ΚΑΙ ΕΪΠΕΝ ΚΥΡΙΟΣ ὁ Θεός, Οὐ μὴ καταμείνω  
τὸ πνεῦμά μου ἐν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις. τούτοις  
εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα διὰ τὸ εἶναι αὐτοῦς σὰρκας. - -

Tertullian uses this text on two occasions.

1. De Resurr., 10, 2.

Tertullian is referring to the Scriptural texts adduced by those who wish to show God's low opinion of the flesh.<sup>15</sup> Gen.6:3a is one of these texts:-

Notatur in Genesi dicens dominus: Non manebit spiritus meus super ipsos homines, quia caro sunt. Sed et auditur per Iohellem: Effundam de spiritu meo in omnem carnem.

The reference to Joel 2:28 has already been noted above,<sup>16</sup> but one or two further points may be emphasised in relation to its contrast here with Gen.6:3. Firstly, Tertullian makes no attempt to deny that God disparages the flesh in Gen.6:3. Instead, he appeals to Joel 2:28 to show that there are passages of Scripture which elevate the flesh.

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15. These texts include Is.40:7; Rom.8:18; Rom.8:8; and Gal.5:17, as well as Gen.6:3.

16. See earlier in this thesis, p.83.

Secondly, the way in which Tertullian contrasts the two passages would suggest that he thinks of them in a similar way. In omnem carnem in Joel 2:28 must refer to all mankind. So it would seem that Gen.6:3 should be taken as a reference to all flesh. Certainly, there is no question here of some flesh having escaped God's disparagement. The overriding idea in this section of De Resurr., 10, is that just as some Scriptural texts decry the flesh, others elevate it. Emphasis on one set of texts, to the exclusion of the other, is invalid.

2. De Monog., 1, 3.

The occurrence of Gen.6:3 in this passage has already been noted.<sup>17</sup> Describing the struggle which goes on between the flesh and the spirit, Tertullian emphasises the resulting estrangement of the two elements:-

Propter quod et in primordio extranea spiritus facta est. Non, inquit, permanebit spiritus meus in istis hominibus in aeuum, eo quod caro sint.

It would seem, at first sight, as though Tertullian is appealing to Gen.6:3 to show that the flesh and the spirit were, from the beginning, opposed to each other in all men. The text appears to be used as an elucidation of the statement

Propter quod et in primordio extranea spiritus facta est.

The subject of the verb is caro. But is this to be seen merely as a general statement referring to all mankind? The original context of Gen.6:3 is concerned with the restriction which God placed upon the length of man's life. This is not the sense in which the text is used here.

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17. See earlier in this chapter, p. 111.

I would suggest that Tertullian has left far behind the original intention of the writer of Gen.6:3. Added to this, the application to which Tertullian puts the text in De Resurr.,10,2 has been completely forgotten. The whole tenor of De Monog.,1 is concerned to show the great contrast between those who have received the Paraclete in the New Prophecy and those who have not. It would seem unlikely that Tertullian would use the text to prove that all men are bereft of the Spirit for eternity.

The clue to Tertullian's understanding of the text, in the section in De Monog.,1, rests, I think, on the translation. A comparison of the two occurrences of the text shows clearly the different words which he uses in his rendering.

De Resurr.,10,2.

Non manebit spiritus meus  
super ipsos homines,  
quia caro sunt.

De Monog.,1,3.

Non permanebit spiritus meus  
in istis hominibus  
in aeuum,  
eo quod caro sint.

The most significant word for an appreciation of Tertullian's use of the text is istis for τούτοις in De Monog.,1,3. The word iste has frequently become known as the "demonstrative of the second person" - used especially in reference to persons and things connected in some way with the person addressed.<sup>18</sup> However, in Gen.6:3, the implication is that God is speaking to himself. So then, to whom does the word istis of Tertullian's translation refer? I would put forward the suggestion that by the word istis Tertullian is thinking of the Catholics. Further considerations support this hypothesis.

Firstly, the word iste can also be used to imply scorn or

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18. See C.T. Lewis and C. Short, A Latin Dictionary: Oxford: 1900. p.1005,  
S.V. iste.

contempt.<sup>19</sup> This would fit in very well with the bitter attack which Tertullian is making on the Catholics in the opening chapter of De Monog.

Secondly, if iste were given the rather different meaning "of such a kind" ( i.e. My spirit shall not remain on men of such a kind for eternity ), this meaning would imply that there was another kind of man upon whom God's spirit would abide. The distinction between the Catholics and the followers of the New Prophecy would therefore still be maintained.<sup>20</sup>

Thirdly, the inclusion of the phrase in aeuum presupposes that the spirit had in fact been in the possession of istis hominibus for some time, and that this time had now expired or was soon to do so. If Tertullian is thinking of the Catholics here, he would have regarded the acceptance of the Paraclete as the limit of this time.

Fourthly, Prisca's oracle Carnes sunt, et carnem oderunt<sup>21</sup> may be an allusion to Gen.6:3. If so, it may have inspired Tertullian to see in this text an allusion to the Catholics' rejection of the Paraclete.

Fifthly, throughout this section of De Monog.,<sup>1</sup> Tertullian makes constant reference to "the spirit", and I think it legitimate to suppose that, in the majority of these references, he is envisaging the specific action of the Paraclete. If Gen.6:3 can also be regarded as applicable to the rejection of the Paraclete by the Catholics, then it must be seen to fit well into the general context of the passage as a whole.

If this hypothesis is valid, Tertullian must be regarded as taking Gen.6:3 to be a prophecy of the Catholics' forfeiture of the Paraclete.

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19. For the various meanings of the word iste, with examples, see C.T. Lewis and C. Short, A Latin Dictionary.p.1005.

20. Tertullian uses the word iste on a number of occasions in De Monog.,<sup>1</sup>. In each case except the one in Gen.6:3, it is used in the sense of "the latter". On three occasions it refers to the Catholics. This may be no more than mere grammatical style, rather than a specific application of the word to the Catholics. Ista is also used in the chapter in relation to licentia.

21. See De Resurr.,<sup>11,2</sup>.

SUMMARY

In De Resurr., 10,2, Tertullian applies Gen.6:3 to "all flesh", and he makes no attempt to argue that it is relevant to only one section of mankind. However, in De Monog., 1,3, his interpretation of the text has considerably changed under the influence of the New Prophecy. I hold the view that he sees the text as applicable to one specific group - the Catholics - who formerly had received God's Spirit, but who now have sacrificed this privilege because they have refused to accept the revelation of the Paraclete.

D. Rom.8:8

This text contains a further reference to "the flesh" and its relation to God, or rather, the relation of those who are in the flesh to God: -

οἱ δὲ ἐν σαρκὶ ὄντες Θεῷ ἰσχύει οὐ δύναται.

Tertullian uses this text four times after his involvement in the New Prophecy. Although only the latest application of the text can be said to be determined by specific interests of the movement, it provides a notable contrast with the three earlier ones.

1. Adu. Marc., 5,10,11ff.

Discussing the resurrection of the flesh, Tertullian is commenting on Paul's words in 1 Cor.15:50 that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.<sup>22</sup> At first sight, this verse might appear to refute a belief in the resurrection of the flesh. Tertullian's concern is to show that Paul's words do not deny such a doctrine because Paul is referring to the substantiam pro operibus substantiae when he really

22. Τοῦτο δὲ φημι, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα  
βασίλειαν Θεοῦ κληρονομήσαι οὐ δύναται, --

wishes to refer to the actions of the flesh rather than its substance.

Tertullian appeals to Rom.8:8 to support this argument:-

...solitus et alias substantiam pro operibus substantiae ponere, ut cum dicit eos, qui in carne sunt, deo placere non posse. Quando enim placere poterimus deo, nisi dum in carne hac sumus ?

Tertullian wishes to show also that, although the works of the flesh may be evil, this does not mean that the flesh itself is evil too. He blames the soul for the actions of the flesh:-

Ita et corpus carnalium operum uas est, anima est autem, quae in illo uenenum alicuius mali facti temperat.

## 2. De Resurr., 10,3

This same argument is repeated here. Those who oppose the view that the flesh will be resurrected put forward various Scriptural texts to disparage the flesh. One of these texts is Rom.8:8. Again, Tertullian emphasises that it is not the substance, but the activities of the flesh which are referred to here. <sup>23</sup>

## 3. De Resurr., 46, 1ff.

Here again is the same argument, although a new idea is added to emphasise the full significance of Rom.8:8f.:-

Talem ubique apostolum recognoscas, ita carnis opera damnantem, ut carnem damnare uideatur, sed, ne ita quis existimet, ( et ) ex aliorum uel cohaerentium sensuum suggestu procurantem. Nam et dicens eos, qui in carne sunt, deo placere non posse statim de prauo intellectu ad integrum reuocat adiciens: Vos autem non estis in carne sed in spiritu. Eos enim, quos in carne esse constabat, negando in carne esse in operibus carnis non esse monstrabat, atque ita illos demum deo placere non posse, non qui in carne essent, sed qui carnaliter uiuerent, placere autem illos deo, qui in carne positi secundum spiritum incederent.

Christians are able to please God because, although living in the flesh, they follow the instructions of the spirit. The expansion of Tertullian's

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23. This passage from De Resurr. has already been noted above, pp. 82f.

exegesis of Rom.8:3 has arisen from his consideration of the verse immediately following. Hence, he places less emphasis on the responsibility of the soul for the actions of the flesh, and more on the spiritual quality of the lives of those whose works are influenced by fleshly desires.

#### 4. De Iei., 17, 4ff.

The aim of this treatise is to attack the Catholic practices of fasting, and to replace them by more stringent practices. This closing chapter is particularly vehement in its condemnation of the "gluttony" of the Catholics and of the moral laxity which results. The followers of the New Prophecy, on the other hand, fast regularly, and this is a mark of their superior discipline. A fairly extensive quotation of this final chapter will reveal Tertullian's train of thought as he expounds Rom.8:8:-

Quis sanctior inter uos, nisi conuiuandi frequentior, nisi obsonandi pollucibilior, nisi calicibus instructor? Merito homines solius animae et carnis spiritalia recusatis. Talibus si placerent prophetae, mei non erant. Cur ergo non constanter praedicatis: manducemus et bibamus, cras enim moriemur? <sup>24</sup> Sicuti nos non dubitamus exerte mandare: ieiunemus fratres et sorores, ne forte cras moriamur. Palam disciplinas nostras uindicemus. Nos certi sumus eos qui in carne sunt deo placere non posse, non utique in substantia carnis, sed in cura, sed in affectione, sed in operatione, sed in uoluntate. Macies non displicet nobis; neque enim ad pondus deus carnem tribuit, sicut nec spiritum ad mensuram. <sup>25</sup> Facilius, si forte, per angustam salutis ianuam introibit caro exilior; citius resuscitabitur caro leuior, diutius in sepultura durabit caro aridior..... Aduersus haec ( sc. potestates mundi ) non carne et sanguine, sed fide et spiritu robusto oportet adsistere.

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24. See Is.22:13; 1 Cor.15:32.

25. See Jn.3:34.

This exegesis of Rom.8:8 is extremely interesting, since it marks a development in Tertullian's application of the text. On the three occasions when the text is used in Adu. Marc. and in De Resurr., his major concern is to argue that Paul condemns not flesh itself, but its actions. Only in De Resurr., 42 is there any hint that Tertullian is thinking of the contrast which Paul makes between those who live according to the flesh and those who live according to the spirit. This idea is pressed into service to a far greater extent in De Iei., 17, although the emphasis of this contrast has changed. No longer are Paul's words taken to stress the difference between the Christians who live according to the spirit and the pagans who heed their fleshly desires. Tertullian takes up Paul's thought, and applies it to the relationship between the followers of the New Prophecy and the Catholics:-

Merito homines solius animae et carnis spiritalia recusatis.

The Catholics reject the teaching of the Paraclete.

Tertullian does not stop here. The text of Rom.8:8 also affords the opportunity of pressing home his bitter sarcasm even more forcefully. He takes up a literal interpretation of caro and applies it to the Catholics' overweight. He enlarges upon the advantages of underweight in the life to come:-

Macies non displicet nobis,..... Facilius, si forte, per angustam salutis ianuam introibit caro exilior; citius resuscitabitur caro leuior, diutius in sepultura durabit caro aridior.....

It is not unknown for Paul to use the word  $\sigma\alpha\rho\varsigma$  in a purely physical



sense,<sup>26</sup> but Tertullian has clearly left far behind the meaning intended by Paul in Rom.8:8. Tertullian then goes on to add what seems like a compromise between the literal usage of caro in a physical sense and the more usual Pauline application which contrasts the flesh and the spirit. The idea of over-eating leads him to consider the question of bodily strength. He concludes that, since the contest is to be fought on the grounds of faith and spirit, bodily strength is of no value in the fight against potestates mundi.

#### SUMMARY.

The four instances when Rom.8:8 is used in Tertullian's works reveal a development of thought reflecting the increasing interest he shows in the New Prophecy. In his early exegeses of the text, he argues for the sanctity of the fleshly substance. In De Resurr.,46, he brings into his interpretation the contrast which Paul had in mind between those who live according to the flesh and those who are guided by more spiritual motivations. By the time he writes De Iei., his concern is predominantly to decry the Catholics. He uses Rom.8:8 for this purpose, by applying the contrast already delineated in De Resurr.,46 to the relationship between those who accept the teaching of the New Prophecy, and those who do not. At the same time, he cleverly adds further implications, emphasising the gluttony of the Catholics, their rejection of the Paraclete, and their poor chances of attaining salvation.

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26. For Paul's use of  $\sigma\sigma\alpha\rho\kappa\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$ , see D.E.H. Whiteley, The Theology of St. Paul.pp.39ff.; H. Wheeler Robinson, The Christian Doctrine of Man.pp.113ff.; C. Ryder Smith, The Bible Doctrine of Man: London: 1951.especially,pp.140ff.; W.D. Stacey, The Pauline View of Man. especially,pp.154ff.; R. Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament:trans.by K.Grobel London: 1952: Vol.1.pp.203ff.. For a discussion of Tertullian's treatment of Paul's attitude to the body, see M.F. Wiles, The Divine Apostle: Cambridge: 1967.pp.26f..

E. 1 Cor.2:14a.

ψυχικὸς δὲ ἄνθρωπος οὐ δέχεται τὰ τοῦ  
πνεύματος τοῦ Θεοῦ. μωρία γὰρ αὐτῷ ἐστίν, ...

Tertullian cites this text on only one occasion, but it plays a major role in his conflict with the Catholics, as he becomes more and more involved in the New Prophecy.

Adu. Marc., 2, 2, 6f.

Tertullian is rebuking heretics, and Marcion in particular, for professing to know more about God than has in fact been revealed. Appealing to Paul's words in 1 Cor.1:21 and 25, Tertullian argues that God holds their seeming "wisdom" as folly for Christians know that the foolishness of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God is stronger than men. He continues with this paradox:-

Et ita deus tunc maxime magnus, cum homini pusillus, et tunc maxime optimus, cum homini non bonus, et tunc maxime unus, cum homini duo aut plures. Quodsi a primordio homo animalis, non recipiens quae sunt spiritus, stultitiam existimavit dei legem, ut quam observare neglexit, ideoque non habendo fidem etiam quod uidebatur habere ademptum est illi; <sup>27</sup> paradisi gratia et familiaritas dei, per quam omnia dei cognovisset si oboedisset, quid mirum, si, redhibitus materiae suae et in ergastulum terrae laborandae relegatus in ipso opere pronus et depresso ad terram, usurpatum ex illa spiritum mundi uniuerso generi suo tradidit, dumtaxat animali et haeretico, non recipienti quae sunt dei? Aut quis dubitabit ipsum illud Adae delictum haeresin pronuntiare, quod per electionem suae potius quam diuinae sententiae admisit?.....

The words homo animalis, non recipiens quae sunt spiritus are obviously taken from 1 Cor.2:14, and stultitiam existimavit dei legem seems to be inspired by μωρία γὰρ αὐτῷ ἐστίν Tertullian's argument seems to be that since Adam rejected God's command, he did not receive

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27. See Luke 8:18; cf. Matt.13:12.

spiritual illumination and by his sin, which is to be regarded as heresy, the whole race inherited this "natural" outlook. The implication of Tertullian's argument is that Christians, unlike the heretics, have now received the things of the Spirit, and so are no longer "natural". Adam is the proto-type of the heretics, since his sin must be regarded as heresy.

On frequent occasions in his later writings, Tertullian refers to the Catholics as psychici.<sup>28</sup> There can be no doubt that this term of address has been adopted from 1 Cor.2:14. Tertullian sees the term as precisely suitable for the Catholics who have rejected the new revelation of the Paraclete in the New Prophecy.<sup>29</sup>

Although Tertullian translates  $\psi\upsilon\chi\iota\kappa\acute{o}\varsigma$  as animalis in Adu. Marc., 2,2,6 and as psychicus elsewhere, his understanding of the word remains constant. He regards it as signifying someone who has rejected spiritual guidance. However, a major development in his application of the text is to be noted from the time he writes Adu. Marc. to his more extreme writings. In Adu. Marc., the text is applied to Adam, the proto-type of the heretics, and hence by implication, to the heretics themselves. In his later writings, he applies the text to the Catholics, in contrast with the followers of the New Prophecy.

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28. See Adu. Marc., 4,22,5; Adu. Prax., 1,6; De Monog., 1,1; De Iei., 1,1; De Pud., 1,10; 6,14; 10,8; 16,24; 18,2; 21,16.

29. For a discussion about the relation of the term  $\psi\upsilon\chi\iota\kappa\acute{o}\varsigma$  to  
a) the mystery religions, see H.A.A. Kennedy, St. Paul and the Mystery Religions: London: 1913, and to  
b) gnosticism, see P. de Labriolle, La Crise.p.143. This same author gives a full treatment of Tertullian's terminology in this context see ibid. .pp.138ff..

FINAL REMARKS

Five texts have provided Tertullian with support for an attack on the authority of the Catholics, when such an attack becomes necessary. In three of the texts, a nice contrast is drawn between "spirit" and "flesh", and in a fourth text, the verse which immediately follows it in the Bible draws a similar contrast. Hence, the opportunity is given for an application of the texts to the relationship between those who have accepted the teaching of the Paraclete and those who have not. The former are under the guidance of the Spirit: the latter still walk in the ways of the flesh. Their conduct is determined accordingly.

The above analysis of the contexts in which these texts are used and of the interpretations placed upon them, reveals a development in Tertullian's thinking, which is completely influenced by his interest in the New Prophecy. Applications given to the various texts in early works are enlarged; emphases are altered; further implications are explored. No opportunity is wasted to turn Scripture against opponents, and every nuance of meaning in the texts is brought out if the need arises.

This chapter has been concerned with the examination of texts which are used generally by Tertullian in an attack on his opponents. It has been impossible to avoid making mention of various issues which were at stake in the controversy surrounding the New Prophecy. The following chapters of this thesis will deal more fully with some of these issues.

PART THREE

TERTULLIAN'S USE OF SCRIPTURE IN RELATION TO THE CHURCH AND MATTERS OF DISCIPLINE

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CHURCH

The concern of this chapter is not to enter into profound discussions as to Tertullian's complicated, and often elusive, understanding of the nature and role of the Church. Numerous books are available on these topics.<sup>1</sup> As in other chapters of this thesis, the main interest is an analysis of any interpretations of Scriptural texts which Tertullian uses to support his argumentation, when he is elaborating his description of the Church during the various periods of his life.

There are three important texts on which Tertullian relies in his discussion about the Church. An analysis of these reveals some interesting developments in his exegesis.

A. Matt. 18:20

ὁ κύριός γάρ ἐστιν, δύο ἢ, τρεῖς συνηγμένοι εἰς τὸ ὄνομα, ἐκεῖ εἶμι ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν.

This text is used on five occasions by Tertullian and the emphases which he places on it vary:-

1. De Bapt., 6.2

The meaning of the baptismal formula is being discussed here, and Tertullian draws on Matt. 18:16<sup>2</sup> to emphasise the importance of the triune formula:-

Nam si in tribus testibus stabit omne uerbum dei, quanto magis donum? Habebimus ( de ) benedictione eosdem arbitros fidei quos et sponsors salutis, sufficit ad fiduciam spei nostrae etiam numerus nominum diuinorum. Cum autem

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1, These include E. Altendorf. Einheit und Heiligkeit der Kirche: Untersuchungen zur Entwicklung des altchristlichen Kirchenbegriff im Abendland, von Tertullian bis zu den antidonatistischen Schriften Augustins: Berlin: 1932; A. Beck, Römisches Recht bei Tertullian und Cyprian: eine Studie zur frühen Kirchenrechtsgeschichte: Halle: 1967; H. von Campenhausen, Kirchliches Amt und geistliche Vollmacht in den ersten Jahrhunderten. Tübingen: 1953; A. Ehrhard. Die Kirche der Märtyrer: München: 1932.

2. εἰν δὲ πρὸς ἡκούσῃ, παράλαβε μετὰ σοῦ ἔτι ἕνα ἢ δύο, ἵνα εἴη στόματός δύο μαρτύρων ἢ τριῶν σταθῆ πάν ῥήμα.

sub tribus et testatio fidei et sponsio salutis pigneretur necessario adicitur ecclesiae mentio, quoniam ubi tres, id est pater et filius et spiritus sanctus, ibi ecclesia quae trium corpus est.

The final sentiment of this section expresses the emphasis on the Trinity as the "three" referred to in Matt.18:20, alluded to in the words ecclesia quae trium corpus est. There is no implication in this section that Tertullian is thinking of the "three" as representing three people who have become members of the Church. This implication is soon to become visible in subsequent works.

2. De Paen.,10,5f.

Tertullian's concern in this chapter is with the necessity of "exomologesis"<sup>3</sup> in second repentance, and he is encouraging his fellow-brethren not to shrink from asking their Christian brothers for forgiveness:-

Quid consortes casuum tuorum ut plausores fugis ? Non potest corpus de unius membri uexatione laetum agere: condoleat uniuersum et ad remedium conlaboret necesse est. In uno et altero ecclesia est, ecclesia uero Christus: ergo cum te ad fratrum genua protendis Christum contrectas, Christum exoras; ....

Here the emphasis is turning away from the more Trinitarian aspects of the text, and is beginning to concentrate on more spiritual concepts. Where a Christian is, there Christ is. The concept of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ is very prevalent here.<sup>4</sup>

3. Ad Uxor.,2,8,9

In this chapter, Tertullian is extolling the virtues of Christian marriage. Christian partners in marriage can enjoy the delights of sharing fellowship with God and with each other. Worship, prayer, singing, good works, and going to church take on a different and more satisfying significance when they are shared by partners in a Christian marriage. Tertullian adds:-

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3. Tertullian regards "exomologesis" as a full confession of sin in order to achieve forgiveness for a second time. It is accompanied by prayer, fasting, and acts of complete humiliation in front of clergy and fellow-Christians. See De Paen.,9,1ff..
  4. See E. Mensch, The Whole Christ: The Historical Development of the Doctrine of the Mystical Body in Scripture and Tradition ( translated by J.R. Kelly ): London:1938.pp.371ff..

His pacem suam mittit ( sc. Christus ). Ubi duo, ibi et ipse: ubi et ipse, ibi et malus non est.

There is no doubt that these words are inspired by Matt.18:20, although there is perhaps less direct reference to the Church as a body of people in this section. Tertullian does think of the marriage partners as members of the Church,<sup>5</sup> but his thoughts in the words ubi duo seem to echo the marriage partnership rather than the Church.

4. De Fuga,14,1f.

Tertullian's subject in this chapter is the behaviour expected of Christians in times of persecution. He advises as follows:-

Postremo si colligere interdium non potes, habes noctem, luce Christi luminosa aduersus eam. Non potes discurrere per singulos, si tibi est in tribus ecclesia? Melius est turbas tuas aliquando non uideas, quam adducas. Serua Christo uirginem sponsam; nemo quaestum de ea faciat.

Here Tertullian certainly sees the Church as consisting, in extreme circumstances, of three members. His dependence on Matt.18:20 is obvious.

5. De Exh. Cast.,7,3

The aim of this section is to prove that the ancient law of monogamy of the priesthood is still relevant in the new dispensation - and relevant to an even greater degree. Tertullian argues that there is no excuse for laymen to have more than one marriage partner, since they too are priests, and can therefore perform priestly functions. He says:-

Ubi ecclesiastici ordinis non est consessus, et offensus et tinguis et sacerdos es tibi solus; scilicet ubi tres, ecclesia est, licet laici. 81

Once again, Tertullian takes the text to support the existence of the Church in spite of there being very few members present. However, he enlarges the implications of the text to include the thought that where there are only a

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5. See Ad Uxor.,2,8,8. In ecclesia dei pariter utrique, pariter in conuiuio dei ...



few members, they have the authority to take on the role of priests. This thought has not been expressed in the earlier exegesis of the text, and seems to be closely associated with his greatly developing emphasis on the inadequacy of the Catholic priesthood.

W.P. le Saint makes the comment that "under the influence of Montanism Tertullian departs more and more from his concept of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ and begins to think of it exclusively as the internal church of the Spirit." <sup>6</sup> Tertullian's usage of Matt.18:20 seems to reflect the sentiments of le Saint. The spiritual aspects of the text which are certainly evident in Tertullian's earlier writings give way to a more physical interpretation in the later period. Admittedly, his interpretation of the "threesome" in the text as representing the Trinity is far removed from the original meaning of the verse, and the fact that Tertullian can use such an application shows the fluidity of his exegesis, as does the way in which on some occasions he chooses to concentrate on the "twosome" in the text, <sup>7</sup> whilst on other occasions he dwells on the element of the "threesome". <sup>8</sup>

It seems remarkable that Tertullian does not lay further emphasis upon the Trinitarian and spiritual aspects of the text in his later works, when his concerns are to show the spiritual qualities of the Church of the New Prophecy, rather than the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the Catholics. However, Tertullian's exegesis takes him in a different direction. A more physical interpretation of the text emphasises the nature of the Church as a gathering of people who, if no official priest is present, can act as their own priest.

Thus, a change in exegesis can be detected as Tertullian lays more emphasis on the principles of the New Prophecy. This can be further illustrated by a consideration of his use of Scripture to assert this idea of the priesthood of all believers.

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6. See Tertullian: Treatises on Marriage and Remarriage.p.177,n.174.

7. See De Paen.,10,6; Ad Uxor.,2,8,9.

8. See De Rapt.,6,2; De Exh.Cast.,7; De Fuga,14.

B. Rev.1:6

καὶ Πλτρί ... καὶ ἐποίησεν ἡμῶν βρσιλείαν, ἱερεῖς τῷ Θεῷ  
αὐτοῦ, ...

This text is used by Tertullian on five occasions, and is very important in relation to his development of the idea of the priesthood of all believers:-

1. De Orat.; 28, 2f.

In his emphasis on the necessity and virtues of prayer, Tertullian turns in this chapter to a discussion about the relation of prayer to sacrifice. It is prayer, he says, which is the spiritual victim which has abolished the pristine sacrifices.<sup>9</sup> He adds, further on:-

Veniet hora, inquit, cum ueri adoratores adorabunt Patrem in spiritu et ueritate. Deus enim spiritus est et adoratores itaque tales requirit.<sup>10</sup> Nos sumus ueri adoratores et ueri sacerdotes, qui spiritu orantes spiritu sacrificamus orationem hostiam Dei propriam et acceptabilem, quam scilicet requisieret, quam sibi prospexit.

The idea of the priesthood of all the members of the Church is implicit in this passage, although the direct influence of Rev.1:6 is questionable. It seems unlikely that Tertullian would use the analogy of the the priest's offering of the sacrificial victim in the spiritual sense of prayer, had he not been convinced that it is legitimate to think of each member of the Church as a priest. If this is so, Rev.1:6 would be the obvious text from which he could draw support.

However, whatever may be said of this dependence on Rev.1:6, it is certain that Tertullian's concern here is with the priesthood of all believers. There is no question of the clergy and the laity being in opposition. The authority of the Church's hierarchy never comes into doubt. As a believer in Christ, each member of the Church is responsible for his own attitudes to worship, and his sacrificial offering should be the spiritual gift of prayer.

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9. For the idea of the spiritual sacrifice, see 1 Pet.2:5.

10. Jn.4:23f..

2. De Cor., 15, 2

This is the only occasion on which Tertullian uses the text for a different purpose from the context of the ministry - whether it be the ecclesiastical or the spiritual ministry. His concern here is with the unimportance of the meaning of a crown. He argues in this final chapter of his treatise, occasioned by a young soldier's refusal to wear the crown of victory, that earthly crowns are merely a pale shadow of the glorious crown that awaits each believer in the next world:-

Quid caput strophilo aut draconario damnas diademati destinatum ?  
Nam reges nos deo et patri suo fecit Christus Iesus.

The aspect of Rev. 1:6 which is emphasised here is the kingship, rather than the priesthood, of believers, and <sup>the text</sup> is therefore not directly relevant in the present discussion.

3. De Exh. Cast., 7, 1ff.

In this treatise, Tertullian's involvement in the New Prophecy is becoming increasingly evident, and attitudes already expressed in Ad Uxor. regarding monogamy are crystallising into a more extreme form.<sup>11</sup> His usage of the text in this passage is closely allied with his idea that the clergy should be monogamists. Having appealed to the Old Testament for support,<sup>12</sup> he goes on to argue that what applies to the clergy must also apply to the laity:-

Vani erimus, si putauerimus quod sacerdotibus non liceat laicis licere.  
Nonne et laici sacerdotes sumus ? Scriptum est: Regnum quoque nos et sacerdotes  
deo et patri suo fecit.

The impression is received from the chapter as a whole that Tertullian's desire to find Scriptural evidence for his increasing emphasis on the monogamy of the laity leads him to argue that, since monogamy is demanded of the clergy,

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11. Remarks which are expressed as advice in Ad Uxor. are hardened into a more stringent code of conduct to be followed in De Exh. Cast.

12. Tertullian appeals to the text Sacerdotes mei non plus nubent which he claims appears in Lev.. The text is discussed <sup>ca</sup> pp. 145f..

it is demanded of the laity too. The inclusion of Rev.1:6 is precipitated by this emphasis. The text supports his argument that the clergy and the laity are bound by the same rules. The logical conclusion of this argument is that the laity possess the same rights as the clergy. Tertullian does in fact grant this, in cases of emergency:-

Igitur si habes ius sacerdotis in temetipso ubi necesse est, habeas oportet etiam disciplinam sacerdotis nec ubi necesse est habere ius sacerdotis.

It is worth noting that the citation of Rev.1:6 results from the necessity of refuting the argument of Tertullian's opponents that, although priests should be monogamous, there is no need for this ruling to apply to the laity.

#### 4. De Monog., 7,6ff.

In a similar context to the one expounded above in De Exh. Cast., Tertullian again cites Rev.1:6 in association with his ideas on the monogamy of the priesthood and the laity. Having referred to various texts <sup>13</sup> to prove that priests should marry only once, he goes on to assert that all members of the Church are priests, using Rev.1:6 as evidence:-

Nos autem Iesus summus sacerdos et magnus Patris de suo uestiens ( quia qui in Christo tinguuntur, Christum induerunt ), sacerdotes Deo Patri suo fecit, secundum Ioannem.

Tertullian's citation of Rev.1:6 is followed by a rather arbitrary exegesis of Luke 9:59f., <sup>14</sup> by which he wishes to prove that Christ's intention is that the laity are to think of themselves as priests. At the end of the chapter, Tertullian says:-

sacerdotes sumus a Christo uocati

and this must be a reference to Rev.1:6. Tertullian has again applied the text to support his belief in the priesthood of all the members of the Church.

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13. Tertullian combines an exegesis of Ex.20:12 and 22:13 to show that a priest's daughter may not marry a second time, and he interprets Lev.20:21 arbitrarily to show that, since this law states that a man should not marry his brother's wife, it may be argued that men should not re-marry, and this includes priests.

14. This text is discussed later in this chapter.

5. De Monog., 12, 1ff.

Tertullian's opponents argue that any prohibition of multiple marriage applies merely to the priesthood. Again, the reply is that any rule binding the clergy binds the layman also. He elaborates his earlier argument that it is from the laity that the clergy are chosen, and adds that if monogamy is a quality expected of the clergy but not of the laity, then all other qualities expected of a priest ( e.g. sobriety, hospitality ) are not to be demanded of a layman. In his argumentation, Tertullian cites Rev.1:6:-

Unde enim episcopi et clerus ? Nonne de omnibus ? Si non omnes monogamiae tenentur, unde monogami in clerum ? An ordo aliqui seorsum debet institui monogamorum, de quo allectio fiat in clerum ? Sed cum extollimur et inflamur aduersus clerum, tunc unum omnes sumus, tunc omnes sacerdotes, quia sacerdotes nos Deo et Patri fecit.

Tertullian does not go on to elaborate the ways in which the laity are responsible for duties performed by the priesthood.

There can be traced through the above passages a development in the way in which Tertullian applies the text of Rev.1:6. Excluding the usage of the text in De Cor., 15, there are four passages which are important in an assessment of the increasing influence of the New Prophecy on his exegesis of this text. Assuming that De Orat. shows some dependence on Rev.1:6, then there can be no doubt that Tertullian thinks of the priesthood of all believers as a spiritual characteristic. Each believer is responsible for his own attitude to prayer and worship, and it is prayer which is the spiritual victim which the Christian must sacrifice to God. There is no trace in De Orat., 28 of the idea which becomes more prevalent in the later writings that the clergy may be absent, in which case the laity may substitute.

In De Exh. Cast., these ideas become evident. No longer is the text used in the context of spiritual worship. Now it is applied to support the argument that, since the laity are priests, they too must be subject to the same rules

as priests. Alongside this idea appears the conviction that, since it is from the laity that the clergy are chosen, the laity must be subject to the same rules as the priests who are chosen from their ranks.

It will be observed that Tertullian's emphasis and exegesis of Rev.1:6 have become more elaborate and differently directed than those of his earlier work, De Orat.. It can be no small coincidence that such a development goes hand in hand with the decline in the respect which Tertullian has for the Catholic clergy. Indeed, the idea that the true Christian believer is his own priest helps Tertullian to overcome the inadequacy he feels is present amongst them. His interest in the New Prophecy leads him to emphasise the rigorous standards expected of a believer, and the text which shows that believers are priests serves to stress the strict code of conduct demanded of the laity. Hence, the priesthood of the laity is envisaged when there is such a small number of believers present to rule out the presence of a priest,<sup>15</sup> and also when the authority of the Catholic clergy as a hierarchical order is thrown into jeopardy by the low standard of conduct which they are prepared to accept.<sup>16</sup>

The absence of Scriptural support for the argument that all believers are priests leads Tertullian to rely heavily on Rev.1:6. Any other texts which he adduces are necessarily subjected to superficial and arbitrary exegesis.<sup>17</sup>

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15. See De Exh. Cast.,7,3. Ubi ecclesiastici ordinis non est concessus, et offers et tinguis et sacerdos es tibi solus; scilicet ubi tres, ecclesia est, licet laici.

16. See De Monog.,7,1ff. contains hints of the desire of the Catholics, perhaps the priests, to ignore the law of the Old Testament, which Tertullian states must not be done.

17. See the discussion in this chapter on Tertullian's use of Luke 9:59f. and n.13 on the previous page.

C. Luke 9:59f.

Εἶπεν δὲ πρὸς ἕτερον, Ἀκολουθεῖ μοι. ὁ δὲ εἶπεν, Ἐπίτρεψόν μου  
πρῶτον ἀπελθόντι θάψαι τὸν πατέρα μου. εἶπεν δὲ αὐτῷ, Ἄφες  
τοὺς νεκροὺς θάψαι τοὺς ἑαυτῶν νεκρούς, σὺ δὲ ἀπελθὼν  
διάγγελλε τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ.

This text, already mentioned earlier in the chapter, provides an interesting example of the way in which Tertullian's exegesis develops under necessity. He uses the text on three occasions:-

1. De Bapt., 12, 9

Treating the question as to how the apostles could be saved if they had not been baptised, Tertullian concludes that their faith was so great that, as the first to be chosen, they would be saved. He ends the chapter:-

Id si apostolis defuit, nescio quorum fides tuta sit: uno uerbo domini suscitatus a teloneo, dereliquit patrem et nauem; ( et ) artem qua uitam sustentabat deseruit, ( qui ) patris exequias despexit; summum illud domini praeceptum: Qui patrem aut matrem mihi praeposuerit non est me dignus ante perfecit quam audiuit. <sup>18</sup>

It would seem that Tertullian has taken two implications from the text of Luke 9:59f.:-

- a) The young man mentioned in the text is, in fact, an apostle, and
- b) The young man did, in fact, leave his father's funeral in the midst of preparation and follow Jesus.

Such implications show Tertullian's rather vague knowledge of the text, or perhaps his tendency to read into it nuances which may not necessarily be there. Here the text is bound up with salvation, and the young man is said to have fulfilled the command of Jesus that a man must leave his father and mother for the sake of his belief. Again, this association is arbitrary, since the young man's father has just died.

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18. Matt.10:37.

2. Adu. Marc., 4, 23, 10

Once more, Tertullian is speaking about salvation. He turns to the text of Luke 9:59f. and writes:-

Illi autem causato patris sepulturam cum respondet: sine mortui sepeliant mortuos suos, tu autem uade et adnuntia regnum dei, utramque legem creatoris manifeste confirmavit: et de sacerdotio in Leuitico, prohibentem sacerdotes supremis etiam parentum interesse - super omnem, inquit, animam defunctam sacerdos non introibit, et super patrem suum ( et super matrem suam ) non contaminabitur - et deuotione in Arithmis;.....

Here the text is joined to Lev. 21:11, and the argument is that Christ's words fulfilled the older legislation which argued that a priest should not be allowed to bury his parents. Similarly, Tertullian goes on to state that Christ's teaching confirms the law of Num. 6:6f., and adds:-

Puto autem, et deuotioni et sacerdotio destinabat quem praedicando regni dei imbuerat.

The implication in this sentence is that the young man whom Jesus forbids to attend his father's funeral fulfils the role of priest because he was called by Christ to preach the kingdom of God. There is no evidence of the idea that his mere conversion fitted him for the role of priest. This idea seems to develop as a direct result of Tertullian's interest in the New Prophecy.

3. De Monog., 7, 8

In this passage, mentioned above, <sup>19</sup> Tertullian asserts that the laity are priests. Having just cited Rev. 1:6, he continues:-

Nam et illum adolescentem festinantem ad exsequias patris ideo reuocat, ut ostendat sacerdotes nos uocari ab eo, quos lex uetabat parentum sepulturae adesse: Super omnem, inquit, animam defunctam sacerdos non introibit et super patrem suum et super matrem suam non contaminabitur.

No longer is Tertullian content to apply the passage from Luke 9 to either an apostle as in De Bapt. or to a man whom Christ is said to have called to

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19. See, p. 132.



preach the gospel. Here, the role of the priest, supported again by reference to Lev.21:11, is attributed not to one sector of believers, but to all believers - or perhaps, to all the followers of the New Prophecy.

There is traceable a great development in Tertullian's thoughts on the subject of the relation of Luke 9:59f. to the priesthood. His exegesis of the text in De Bapt. is either a wrong one, or is absolutely superficial, in its suggestion that the young man is an apostle who obeys Christ's command. In Adu. Marc., the application of the text has broadened, but Tertullian does not completely leave behind this apostolic identification of the young man, for he sees in the text an indication that the man's role is that of priest because he has been called to preach. In De Monog., however, the text is used in association with Lev.21:11 to support the argument that true believers are priests. There is no evidence that this priestly role is restricted to preaching. It would seem that Tertullian's emphasis on the priesthood of all believers, brought into relief by his interest in the New Prophecy, has led him to extend the priestly function of true Christians beyond the preaching of the gospel, even to the performance of sacramental and ecclesiastical duties, if the need arises.

The extent to which Tertullian's understanding on the matter of the laity as priests changed may be seen from a comparison of the passage cited from De Monog. with the following one taken from De Praesc. Haer., 41,7f. where the heretics are condemned on the grounds of their practice of allowing the clergy's role to be carried out by the laity:-

Nusquam facilius proficitur quam in castris rebellium ubi ipsum esse illic promereri est. Itaque alius hodie episcopus, cras alius: hodie diaconus qui cras lector; hodie presbyter qui cras laicus. Nam et laicis sacerdotalia munera iniungunt.

The final sentence speaks for itself.

CHAPTER SIX

MARRIAGE AND REMARRIAGE

Tertullian writes three works in which his main theme is marriage.<sup>1</sup> From the point of view of this thesis, these works are fascinating in that each of them originates from a different stage in his life.<sup>2</sup> Ad Uxor. is to be dated early on in his career; De Exh. Cast. reflects the thoughts of a man who is interested in the New Prophecy, although he has not yet finally committed himself to a thorough-going acceptance of its doctrines; De Monog. reveals a completely converted writer whose main desire is to defend his newly accepted beliefs at all costs. This development in Tertullian's outlook explains the numerous contradictions which occur in his treatment of the subject. As A. d'Ales has said:-

"Tertullien a beaucoup ecrit sur le mariage, et sur aucun sujet il ne s'est tant contredit."<sup>3</sup>

The arguments which Tertullian advances in his exposition of marriage and remarriage remain essentially the same in the three treatises in question. He admits that marriage has been blessed by God,<sup>4</sup> but emphasises his preference for continence.<sup>5</sup> Monogamy is part of God's plan;<sup>6</sup> second marriage is permissible on some occasions;<sup>7</sup> multiple marriage cannot be tolerated on the grounds of an appeal to the patriarchs.<sup>8</sup> Christians should avoid concupiscence which is often the cause of remarriage.<sup>9</sup> The Bible, and even heathen examples, support these arguments.<sup>10</sup>

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1. The three works are Ad Uxor. ( in two books ), De Exh. Cast. and De Monog..
  2. See the introduction of this thesis, p.18.
  3. La Théologie de Tertullien.p.370.
  4. See Ad Uxor.,1,2,1; De Exh. Cast.,1,5; De Monog.,1,2.
  5. See especially, Ad Uxor.,1,3; 1,6; 1,8; De Exh. Cast.,1; 4; 13; De Monog.,1; 3;17.
  6. See Ad Uxor.,1,2,1; De Exh. Cast.,5,1; De Monog.,4,2.
  7. See especially, Ad Uxor.,2,1; De Exh. Cast.,3; De Monog.,11.
  8. See Ad Uxor.,1,2; De Exh. Cast.,6; De Monog.,6.
  9. See especially, Ad Uxor.,1,4ff.; De Exh. Cast.,9ff.; De Monog.,14ff..
  10. See Ad Uxor.,1,6; De Exh. Cast.,13; De Monog.,17.

Tertullian's defence of marriage in all three treatises seems to conflict with two statements of Apollonius, in which he appears to emphasise the New Prophecy's opposition to marriage:-

- a) οὗτός (sc. Montanus) ἔστιν ὁ διδάξας λύσεις γάμων, ὁ νηστείας νομοθετῶν ||  
b) δείκνυμεν οὖν αὐτῶν, πρώτας τὰς προφητίδας ταύτας, ἀφ' οὗ τοῦ πνεύματος ἐπληρώθησαν, τοὺς ἄνδρας καταλιπούσας. 11

The problem posed by these two statements is obvious. If the New Prophecy opposes marriage, why should Tertullian, in his most extreme pamphlet on the subject, <sup>12</sup> stress the legitimacy of marriage, providing it is contracted only once? Surely if he had known of the movement's aversion to marriage, he would never have written the sentiments expressed in De Monog..

Three comments may alleviate the problem:-

a) The emphasis which the New Prophecy places on the imminent end of the world <sup>13</sup> might easily result in an apparent rejection of marriage, in that one partner's belief in the movement might lead to his separation from his unbelieving spouse. To the outsider, this action might appear as though the New Prophecy were rejecting marriage.

b) Tertullian's arguments in De Monog. may often be regarded as extreme. He looks down on the heretics' repudiation of marriage, <sup>14</sup> and his earlier advice against second marriage becomes a condemnation of second marriage as adultery. <sup>15</sup> These extreme positions may not necessarily be those

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11. See Eusebius, H.E., 5, 18, 2f..

12. I.e. De Monog..

13. See Epiphanius, Pan., 48, 2, where Maximilla's oracle of the imminent end of the world is recorded (Μετ' ἐμὲ προφήτις οὐκέτι ἔσται, ἀλλὰ συντέλεια).

14. See especially, De Monog., 1, 1.

15. See De Monog., 9f..

put forward by the New Prophecy. It would appear as though De Monog. reflects as much Tertullian's own determination to win his argument with the Catholics as it does the official doctrines of the New Prophecy on the subject of marriage.

c) It may be that the extremes manifested in the original Phrygian movement are unknown to Tertullian.<sup>16</sup>

It is noteworthy that the views which Tertullian utters in De Monog. may be seen to have their roots in his earlier treatises. The arguments do not change so much as the tone in which they are advanced. Elaborations, modifications, and even contradictions are introduced. Such developments are clearly reflected in his use and interpretation of Scripture, and it is to these that this chapter is devoted. The chapter is divided into three main themes: Monogamy; Marriage and the Clergy; and Divorce. Under each section, Tertullian's use of Scripture is analysed and conclusions drawn.

#### A. MONOGAMY

##### 1. Tertullian's Use of the Old Testament

###### 1) Adam and Eve

In Ad Uxor., 1, 2, 1, Tertullian lays the foundation for what in his later treatises are to become elaborate arguments in favour of the legitimacy of marriage. It is an institution blessed by God

ut seminarium generis humani et replendo orbi et instruendo saeculo. There must surely be an allusion here to Gen. 1:28.<sup>17</sup> However, although marriage is permitted for the procreation of children, it is to be contracted only once:-

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16. See the introduction of this thesis, pp 3ff..

17. The Septuagint version is:-

καὶ γυλόγησεν αὐτοὺς ὁ Θεὸς λέγων Αὐζάνεσθε καὶ  
πληθύνεσθε καὶ πληρώσατε τὴν γῆν....

Nam et Adam unus Euae maritus et Euae una uxor illius: una mulier, una costa.

The pregnant words una mulier, una costa<sup>18</sup> are taken up and elaborated in De Exh. Cast.,5,1, and to a lesser extent in De Monog.,4,2. In these two later works, Tertullian makes several points:-

a) God could have made more than one woman since Adam had more than one rib,<sup>19</sup> and in De Exh. Cast.,5,1, he emphasises that the limitation which God places on the number of women he creates is not the result of any incapability on God's part:-

cum utique nec artifex nec materia defecisset.

b) In the later two works,<sup>20</sup> Tertullian emphasises that the law of monogamy has been decreed from the beginning of the human race. Its very antiquity adds to its value. If God has ordained monogamy from the beginning, it is obvious that this form of marriage is to be followed by future generations.<sup>21</sup> The idea of the antiquity of the divine law is implied in Ad Uxor.,1,2,1, but is not explicitly stated.<sup>22</sup>

c) Whereas in Ad Uxor. Tertullian passes straight on from una mulier, una costa to a consideration of the multiple marriages of the patriarchs, in both De Exh. Cast. and De Monog. he pauses to consider further implications which arise from the account of Adam and Eve. So, in De Exh. Cast.,5,2, he says:-

Denique erunt, inquit, duo in carnem unam ....

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18. An obvious allusion to Gen.2:21f., given in the Septuagint as:-  
... και ελαβεν μίαν τῶν πλευρῶν αὐτοῦ και ανεπληρωσεν σάρκα  
αὐτῆς - και ὑποδόμησεν κυριος ὁ θεος τὴν πλευράν ἣν  
ἔλαβεν ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἀδάμ, εἰς γυναῖκα και ἡγαγεν αὐτὴν πρὸς  
τὸν Ἀδάμ.

19. Jerome takes up this theme in Adu. Iovin.,1,14 and Epist.,123,11.

20. See De Exh. Cast.,5,1 and De Monog.,5,1.

21. In De Monog.,4,2, Tertullian cites Gen.2:24 as support for his view that monogamy is prophesied for the future.

22. Cf. Non quidem abnuimus coniunctionem uiri et feminae benedictam a deo ut seminarium generis humani et replendo orbi et instruendo saeculo excogitatam atque exinde permissam, unam tamen.

This is a citation of part of Gen.2:24. The subject of inquit is not expressed, but it has already been shown <sup>23</sup> that Tertullian understands this text as first uttered prophetically by Adam whilst in ecstasy. The emphasis on this statement as a prophecy uttered by Adam provides further support for the legitimacy of monogamy. The words duo in carnem unam preclude all possibility of multiple marriage. There would no longer be two in one flesh, but many. Furthermore, Paul's use of the text <sup>24</sup> to describe Christ's relationship with his Church supplements the argument:-

..... agnoscere debemus duplicatam et exaggeratam esse nobis unius matrimonii legem tam secundum generis fundamentum quam secundum Christi sacramentum. De uno matrimonio censemur utrobique, et carnaliter in Adam et spiritaliter in Christo. Duarum natiuitatum unum est monogamiae praescriptum.

Christ upholds the law of monogamy which has been first established in Adam.

This comparison between Adam and Christ is more fully drawn in De Monog., 5, 3ff., although the comparison is far from happy. Tertullian's aim in this section is to show that, in Christ, all things are recalled to the beginning. He cites Eph.1:9f.. <sup>25</sup> Having given several examples <sup>26</sup> to prove his point, he comments:-

..... et matrimonii indiuiduitas, sicut ab initio fuit, et repudii cohibitio, quod ab initio non fuit .... proinde uideamus .... an in eadem te forma conueniat nouissimus quoque Adam in qua et primus, quando nouissimus Adam, id est Christus, innuptus in totum, quod etiam primus Adam ante exilium.

Here lies an error in the comparison between Adam and Christ. The words ante exilium obviously refer to Adam's expulsion from the garden

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23. See above, pp. 50f..

24. In Eph.5:32.

25. γνωρίσας ἡμῖν τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ, κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν αὐτοῦ, ἣν προέθετο ἐν αὐτῷ εἰς οἰκονομίαν τοῦ πληρώματος τῶν καιρῶν, ἀνκεφαλαιώσασθαι τὰ πάντα ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ, τὰ ἐπὶ τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

26. Tertullian mentions that Christ's teaching on divorce ( cf. Matt.19:8 ) goes back to the beginning, and he refers to Christ's use of Alpha and Omega. ( cf. Rev.1:8, which Tertullian sees as Christ's own words ).

of Eden after his disobedience. Adam is of course "married" before he leaves the garden. Either Tertullian is thinking of the consummation of Adam's marriage,<sup>27</sup> or he has deliberately "erred" to make the analogy with Christ more convincing.

Later in the same chapter,<sup>28</sup> he refers to the comparison between Adam and Eve and Christ and his Church:-

..... ( sc. Christus ) monogamus occurrit in spiritu, unam habens ecclesiam sponsam, secundum Adam et Euae figuram, quam apostolus in illud magnum sacramentum interpretatur, in Christum et ecclesiam ...

Here again the obvious allusion is to Eph.5:32, but this time an application is placed on the text which it cannot support. Eph.5:32 does not refer specifically to Adam and Eve. It refers to marriage in general. Tertullian's eagerness to provide a convincing analogy has led him into an exegetical error.

d) Two further arguments drawn from the example of Adam and Eve are found only in De Monog.,4. God's desire for monogamy, rather than for polygamy, is to be seen in the statement in Gen.2:18, which Tertullian translates as:-

Non est ... bonum homini solum eum esse, faciamus adiutorium illi.<sup>29</sup>

If God had intended Adam to have more than one wife, he would have said adiutores. Also, the fact that Eve is of Adam's own flesh and blood shows that Adam could have married his own daughters if he had so wished. But Adam observes the law of monogamy until his death.<sup>30</sup>

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27. Cf. Gen.4:1.

28. De Monog.,5,7.

29. The Septuagint version is:-  
καὶ εἶπεν κύριος ὁ θεός Οὐ καλὸν εἶναι τὸν ἄνθρωπον  
μόνον· ποιήσωμεν αὐτῷ βοηθὸν κτλ' αὐτόν.

30. See De Monog.,4,3.

In his assertion of the blessedness of marriage and of the necessity for monogamy, it is not surprising that Tertullian appeals to the example of Adam and Eve to prove the antiquity of the institutions. As the need arises for his arguments to become more forceful, the emphasis laid on the two figures becomes more evident. Arguments found in *Ad Uxor.* are elaborated in the later treatises: additions and errors are introduced. All reflect the urgency which Tertullian feels in proving his point.

ii) Lamech and Noah

These two figures are used in the writings on marriage to represent the intermediate stage between Adam and the patriarchs. There is no reference to Lamech in *Ad Uxor.*. The first time he is mentioned in connection with marriage is in *De Exh. Cast.*, 5,4:-

Numerus matrimonii a maledicto uiro coepit: Primus Lamech duabus maritatus tres in unam carnem effecit.

There is a fuller reference in *De Monog.*, 4,4:-

Semel tamen uim passa institutio Dei per Lamech, constitit postea in finem usque gentis illius. Secundus Lamech nullus exstitit, quomodo duabus maritatus. Negat scriptura quod non notat. 31 Aliae diluuium iniquitates prouocauerunt, semel defensae, quales fuerunt, non tamen septuagies septies, quod duo matrimonia meruerunt.

In Gen.4:19, Lamech is said to have married two wives. 32 Because he is a descendant of Cain, Lamech, from whom bigamy derives, is labelled by Tertullian as maledicto uiro. The reference to Lamech in *De Monog.* is an enlargement of the one in *De Exh. Cast.*. Tertullian's concern in *De Monog.* seems to be to show that Lamech's bigamy is the exception, rather than the rule.

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31. For a discussion of some aspects of Tertullian's exegetical principles, see pp. 268ff.

32. The Septuagint version is:-

τῆ μιᾷ Ἀδὰμ, καὶ ἔλαβεν ἑαυτῷ Λαμεχ δύο γυναῖκας, ὄνομα τῆ δευτέρᾳ Σελᾶ.



He draws a rather nice, but inaccurate, conclusion about the punishment which Lamech's sin deserved. Whatever the causes which brought about the necessity for the flood, <sup>33</sup> those who were punished in it were punished only once. Lamech, on the other hand, is to be punished seventy times seven-fold - an indication of the great severity of his sin. However, here Tertullian has made an exegetical error. The warning of the punishment awaiting Lamech <sup>34</sup> has nothing to do with his bigamy. It refers to Lamech's killing of a man who has struck him. <sup>35</sup> Tertullian's carelessness in his use of Scripture is again evident.

Tertullian follows his reference to the flood in De Monog., 4, 4, by mentioning Noah:-

Sed et reformatio secundi generis humani monogamia matre censetur. Iterum duo in unam carnem crescere et redundare suscipiunt, Noe et uxor filiique eorum in unicis nuptiis.

The monogamy of Noah's sons cannot be affirmed from Gen. 7:7, <sup>36</sup> but 1 Pet. 3:20 states that eight people went into the ark and were saved by water. Tertullian certainly knows this epistle, <sup>37</sup> and it may well be that he has this text at the back of his mind here. He is not content to show that Noah and his sons were monogamists. He adds:-

etiam in ipsis animalibus monogamia recognoscitur.

He quotes Gen. 6:19 as support for this. So far, so good. However, he then goes on to allude to Gen. 7:2 and takes the words δύο δύο ζῴοντες καὶ θῆλυ. to refer to each animal's having only one mate - an interpretation which the text need not necessarily support. Tertullian's concluding mention of Noah

is in comparison with Adam. Both are fathers of mankind: both are monogamists. 38

33. See Gen. 6:5ff..

34. The Septuagint version is:- ὅτι ἑπτὰκις ἐκδεδίκηται ἕκ ΚΑΙΝ, ἕκ δὲ ΛΑΜΕΧ ἑβδομηκοντάκις ἑπτά.

35. See Gen. 4:23.

36. εἰσῆλθεν δὲ ΝΩΕ καὶ οἱ υἱοὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἡ γυνὴ αὐτοῦ καὶ αἱ γυναῖκες τῶν υἱῶν αὐτοῦ μετ' αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν ΚΙΒΩΤΟΝ διὰ τὸ ὕδωρ τοῦ κατακλυσμοῦ.

37. Tertullian's works reveal his knowledge of 1 Pet.. Cf. Scorp., 12, 2f. and De Orat., 20, 2. See H. Ronsch, Das neue Testament Tertullians: Leipzig:1871.p.558.

38. See De Monog., 5, 4

It is worth noting that there is no mention of Noah in either Ad Uxor. or De Exh. Cast.. One is left with the impression that Tertullian is leaving no stone unturned in his attempt to find Scriptural proof for his defence of monogamy. So intent is he on finding this proof, that he forces upon several texts interpretations which they cannot bear.

iii) The Patriarchs

The problem posed by the patriarchs in a consideration of monogamy is expounded in Ad Uxor.,1,2, De Exh. Cast.,6, and De Monog.,6. The treatment given to the problem is by no means consistent, and witnesses quite clearly to a development in Tertullian's thought.

The problem is stated in Ad Uxor.,1,2,2, as follows:-

Sane apud ueteres nostros ipsosque patriarchas non modo nubere, sed etiam plurifariam matrimoniis uti fas fuit. Erant et concubinae.

At first sight this would appear to be authority for second marriage, and even multiple marriage. Tertullian's explanation of the problem is enlightening. He continues:-

Sed licet figura tum in synagogam et ecclesiam <sup>39</sup> intercesserit, ut tamen simpliciter interpretemur, necessarium fuit instituere quae postea aut amputari aut temperari mererentur. Superuentura enim lex erat; item mox legi succedere habebat dei sermo circumcisionem inducens spiritalem. Igitur per licentiam tunc passiuam - oportebat enim legis adimplendae causas praecurreris - materiae subsequentium emendationum praeministrabantur, quas dominus euangelio suo, dehinc apostolus "in extremitatibus saeculi" <sup>40</sup> aut excidit redundantes aut composuit inconditas.

This passage is full of obscurity in textual reconstruction and meaning. <sup>41</sup>

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39. This part of the passage is obscure textually. Another reading is figuraliter in sinagoga ecclesia .

40. Cf. 1 Cor.10:11 and 2 Tim.3:1.

41. Naturally, the textual reconstruction adopted will affect the translation. It is certainly helpful that the thoughts of this passage have parallels in Tertullian's other works on marriage; see De Exh. Cast.,6,1 and De Monog.,6,3.

The basic idea underlying the first few words seems to be that, although sometimes allegorical interpretations can be placed on Old Testament passages as types of the new dispensation, there is no need for such a complicated exegesis here. Such practices as polygamy were introduced only for a short period. In this case it is the introduction of the law which brings polygamy to an end. However, Tertullian does seem to imply that the multiple marriages of the patriarchs are types of something to come, when he says in De Exh.

Cast., 6, 1:-

Sane licebit ( sc. innumerum nubere ), si qui adhuc typi futuri alicuius sacramenti supersunt, quod nuptiae tuae figurent.....

Similar thoughts are apparent in De Monog., 6, 3:-

Quid digamia illa Abrahae portendat idem apostolus edocet interpretator utriusque testamenti, sicut idem semen nostrum in Isaac uocatum determinat.

This sentence may be the key to Tertullian's thoughts about the multiple marriages of the patriarchs. Paul interprets Abraham's digamy allegorically, and Tertullian takes recourse to this interpretation. He never seems to get to grips with explaining how the multiple marriages of the other patriarchs could be types, nor what they were types of. <sup>43</sup>

42

Another problem occurs in Tertullian's attempt to link Abraham's digamy with the period of his life when he was circumcised. So in De Monog., 6, 2, Tertullian says to the Catholics who are obviously arguing that, as children of Abraham, they are entitled to marry more than once:-

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42. See Gal. 4:24f., where Paul interprets Abraham's digamy as an allegory of the old and the new dispensations.

43. See also, De Monog., 6, 3, where Tertullian says:-

Aliud sunt figurae, aliud formae. Aliud imagines, aliud definitiones. Imagines transeunt adimpletae, definitiones permanent adimplendae.

For a discussion on Tertullian's use of the terms forma and figura, see E. Evans, Tertullian's Treatise against Praxeas. pp. 54f. and 321. Cf. T.P. O'Malley, Tertullian and the Bible: Language - imagery - exegesis. especially chapter 3.

Aut si posteriorem Abraham patrem sequeris, id est digamum, recipe et circumcisum. 44

Tertullian's attempt to connect Abraham's uncircumcision with the practice of monogamy is not happy. Gen.16:16 states that Abraham was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael, whilst in Gen.17:1, Abraham is represented as being ninety-nine years old when he received the covenant of circumcision.

Having spent some time on Abraham, Tertullian moves on, in De Monog.,6,4, to the example of other Old Testament figures who, he argues, provide authority for monogamy. 45

## 2. Tertullian's Use of the New Testament

### i) New Testament Models

In his uses of the Old Testament, Tertullian is eager to discover examples to substantiate his views on monogamy. He appeals to various Old Testament figures. He adopts the same approach in his usage of the New Testament. It is noteworthy that he only does this in De Monog.. In Ad Uxor. and De Exh. Cast., Old Testament examples will suffice. The more important it becomes for him to prove his point at all costs, the more necessary it is for him to adduce further Scriptural authority. The New Testament provides several models for Christians to follow. 46 Zachariah and John witness to the standards expected of a Christian. The former is a monogamist: the latter is a celibate. John baptised Jesus. What could be more fitting than that the body of Christ should receive its initial consecration from one whose flesh was like the flesh which conceived and bore that flesh? Furthermore, Mary was a virgin,

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44. Cf. Ad Uxor.,1,2,3.

45. He mentions Joseph, Moses, Aaron and Joshua.

46. Tertullian discusses these figures in De Monog.,8,1ff..

and she would marry only once. The reason for this was that both types of chastity might be exalted in the birth of Christ. Simeon recognises Christ in the Spirit. He was not a digamist.

Tertullian's appeal to Simeon as an example of celibacy or monogamy is shaky. There is no direct evidence in Scripture for such a view. Tertullian's only argument is that if Simeon had not been a celibate, or a monogamist, Christ would have had a better witness in Anna, the widow. She had been married only once. Her example shows what type of persons should be dedicated to the spiritual temple, the Church. This analogy between the Jewish Temple and the Church is interesting. The one is a type of the other. <sup>47</sup>

Thus, Christ has witnesses in his infancy. The witnesses he has in later life are no different. Peter is married, but only once. <sup>48</sup> He must have been a monogamist, since the Church, founded upon him, appoints only monogamists to places in the hierarchy. The precarious nature of this argument is obvious. So too, is the assumption made by Tertullian from the silence of Scripture that the other disciples were either celibate or continent. <sup>49</sup>

One passage in 1 Cor.9<sup>50</sup> may be interpreted in such a way as to give the impression that the apostles had wives. Tertullian's rendering is:-

Non enim habemus potestatem uxores circumducendi, sicut ceteri apostoli et Cephas ? <sup>51</sup>

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47. Perhaps this sentiment sheds light on the interpretation of Ad Uxor.,1,2,2, where the Church and the Synagogue are associated with typology.

48. See Mk.1:30.

49. This is an example of Tertullian's maxim that what Scripture does not assert, it denies. See later, p.282.

50. 1 Cor.9:5.

51. The Greek is:-

μη οὐκ ἔχομεν ἐξουσίαν ἀδελφῶν, γυναῖκα περιάγειν,  
ὡς καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ τοῦ Κυρίου  
καὶ Κηφᾶς; Tertullian cites this text in De Monog.,8,5.

He explains away the implications of marriage by an appeal to the Greek word  $\gammaυνή$  which is capable of meaning both "woman" and "wife". If Paul had been referring to marriage here, he could have been more specific, since in Greek there is a special word for "wives".<sup>52</sup> Tertullian appeals to the context for support, and argues that Paul's previous statement<sup>53</sup>  $\muὴ οὐκ ἔχομεν ἐξουσίαν φλεγεῖν καὶ πίνειν$  refers to his abstinence from food and drink, and thus the following sentence shows that he abstained from marriage too. Hence, 1 Cor.9:5 does not refer to "wives" but to "women" - women who administered to the needs of the apostles, just as women ministered to Christ,

This interpretation is a false one. Paul's words in 1 Cor.9:4 cannot be taken as a demonstration of his abstinence from food. The point at issue is Paul's authority to obtain his living by preaching the Christian message. He is saying that his preaching earns him the right to eat and drink, not that he is abstaining from food.<sup>54</sup> Thus, the transfer of the idea of abstinence to the following sentence is illegitimate. Consequently, Tertullian's denial of marriage in the case of the apostles is not convincing.

A perfect example of Tertullian's development in both thought and use of Scripture is provided by a consideration of this text,<sup>55</sup> for it is alluded to in De Exh. Cast.,8,3, where it is given a completely different interpretation:-

Licebat et apostolis nubere et uxores circumducere, et de euangelio ali. Sed qui iure hoc usus non est in occasione, ad exemplum nos suum scilicet et prouocat, docens in eo esse probationem, in quo licentiae experimentum abstinentiae praestruxit.

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52. The word is possibly  $\sigmaύζυγος$ .

53. In 1 Cor.9:4.

54. In this chapter, Paul is maintaining his authority as an apostle against his opponents.

55. I.e. 1 Cor.9:5.

Tertullian again emphasises Paul's abstinence which is an example for Christians to follow, in the sense that Paul had the opportunity to take what was permitted to him, yet he chose the stricter course of behaviour. No attempt is made to explain away the reference to uxores in the text. He is quite content to admit that other apostles were married. The aim of De Exh. Cast. is not to do away with marriage altogether, but merely to show that a different preference is emphasised by Paul. When he writes De Monog. however, Tertullian has left behind the sentiments of De Exh. Cast. and there is no turning back. Apart from the case of Peter, Tertullian wishes to refute the claim that the other apostles may have had wives also. This he attempts to do by explaining away the possibility that  $\gamma\upsilon\nu\kappa\acute{\iota}\kappa\alpha\iota\varsigma$  refers to "wives". The difference in temperament between the two works is clearly visible here.

Tertullian goes on, in De Monog., 8, to consider examples from the life and teaching of Christ. He attaches great importance to chastity both in his own life and in his teaching.<sup>56</sup> He says that the kingdom of heaven is for children

cum consortes illis facit alios post nuptias pueros.<sup>57</sup>

He encourages us to imitate the

simplicitatem columbae ... auis non tantum innocuae, uerum et pudicae, quam unam unus masculus nouit.<sup>58</sup>

He says that the Samaritan woman has no husband, thus making it clear that to have more than one husband is adultery.<sup>59</sup> At the Transfiguration, he appears with Moses, a monogamist, and Elijah, a celibate.<sup>60</sup>

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56. Tertullian argues that Christ constantly rebukes the Pharisees for hypocrisy. Christ, on the other hand, means what he says. He endorses a chaste life.

57. De Monog., 8, 7. The reference seems to be to Matt. 19:12.

58. Ibid..

59. See Jn. 4:16ff..

60. See Luke 9:28ff. and parallels.

ii) The Evidence of Paul's Epistles

Tertullian's appeal to the New Testament consists, to a large extent, of an exposition of Paul's attitude to marriage as revealed in 1 Cor.7, and it is necessary to note the different emphases and modifications which are placed on the apostle's teaching.

In 1 Cor.7:9, Paul permits marriage:-

Εἰ δὲ οὐκ ἔγκρατεύονται, γάμησάτωσαν· κρείττον γάρ ἐστὶν γαμῆν ἢ πυροῦσθαι.

Tertullian seizes upon this statement in support of his defence of marriage, but his use of the text varies from treatise to treatise. In Ad Uxor.,1,3,5, he lays the foundation for what is his main exegesis of the text:-

Namque malle debes quod prodest quam quod non obest.

The highest good, rather than some form of second best, is to be achieved.

The analogy is drawn of flight in persecution. Although it is permitted to flee, how much more honourable it is to undergo martyrdom for the faith.

The apostle encourages Christians to be zealous for better things.

This basic argument is expounded in De Exh. Cast.,3, where the exposition of the text is introduced by a discussion on free will. God stated his preference to Adam, but Adam was free to pursue his own choice. So it is with marriage. God's preference should be followed, rather than any indulgences which he may have granted. Again, the argument of "relative good" is used <sup>61</sup> in relation to 1 Cor.7:9. The example is given:-

quomodo melius est uno oculo quam duobus carere. <sup>62</sup>

It is obvious, thinks Tertullian, that the comparison is based on a false premise, for neither marriage nor the possession of one eye are the ultimate

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61. See also, De Exh. Cast.,8,1ff., where Tertullian discusses Paul's words in 1 Cor.10:23 that all things are lawful, but not all things are expedient.

62. De Exh. Cast.,3,10.



examples of goodness.<sup>63</sup>

Whereas in Ad Uxor. Tertullian is content to rely more or less exclusively on this argument of "relative good", in his later theses on marriage, he turns to the context of Paul's statement that it is better to marry than to burn. So, in De Exh. Cast., 3, 6, he writes:-

Nam et cum de uiduis et innuptis definiit, uti nubant, si continere non possunt, quia melius sit nubere quam uri, conuersus ad alteram speciem - nuptis autem denuntio, inquit, non quidem ego, sed dominus - ista ostendit ex translatione personae suae in domini id quod supra dixerat non ex domini persona, sed ex sua pronuntiasset. (Melius est nubere quam uri.)

This emphasis on the two-fold nature of authority is pressed to extremes in De Monog., 3, 5f.:-

Quid nunc, si omnem indulgentiam nubendi de suo, id est de humano sensu accommodat, ex necessitate qua diximus, quia melius sit nubere quam uri ? Denique conuersus ad alteram speciem dicendo: Nuptis autem denuntio, non ego, sed Dominus, ostendit illa quae supra dixerat non dominicae auctoritatis fuisse, sed humanae aestimationis. At ubi ad continentiam reflectit animos: Volo autem uos sic esse omnes. Puto autem, inquit, et ego spiritum Dei habeo, ut si quid indulserat ex necessitate, id spiritus sancti auctoritate reuocaret.

In his exposition of the text in De Exh. Cast., 3, 7, Tertullian states that the words are applicable only to those who were single or in widowhood at the time of their conversion. This restriction is not stated by Paul. When Tertullian mentions later on in the same chapter<sup>64</sup> that the text applies to unmarried people and widows, he omits any reference to their date of conversion:-

.... capitulo .... quod proprie ad innuptos et uiduos spectat ...

It may be that, by omitting this idea, he is correcting his earlier error, or has forgotten that he has made such a distinction.

Tertullian's exegesis of 1 Cor. 7:9 provides a further example of a development in his ideas - and it is an extremely interesting one. In Ad Uxor.,<sup>65</sup>

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63. This example of the possession of one eye is used again in De Monog., 3, 5.

64. See De Exh. Cast., 3, 10.

65. Ad Uxor., 1, 3, 3f..

Tertullian says:-

Quod denique scriptum est, melius nubere quam uri, quale hoc bonum est, oro te, quod mali comparatio commendat, ut ideo melius sit nubere, quia deterius est uri ? Atenim quanto melius est neque nubere neque uri.

The idea here would seem to be that of Paul. Marriage is better than passion.

By the time Tertullian writes De Exh. Cast., his tone is beginning to change. He writes:-

... quale bonum ostendat quod melius est poena ... <sup>66</sup>

The phrase quod melius est poena is re-iterated in De Monog., 3, 4. <sup>67</sup> The idea is that marriage seems to be an alternative to poena. But where does the concept of "punishment" arise in the word uri ?

For an elucidation of this point it is necessary to turn to the only other work in which the text is used. In De Pud., 1, 16, the comment is made:-

Nimirum propter continentiam incontinentia necessaria est, incendium ignibus extinguetur.

Here a further implication is found in Tertullian's exegesis. The inclusion of the words incendium and ignis suggests that he has taken literally Paul's word πυροδοθαι. The climax of Tertullian's thought on the text is a combination of the ideas of punishment and burning in a literal sense, and it is to be found in De Pud., 16, 15f.:-

Innuptis quoque et uiduis bonum esse dicit exemplo eius perseuerare, si uero deficerent, nubere; quia praeest nubere quam uri. Quibus, oro, ignibus deterius est uri, concupiscentiae an poenae ? Atquin si fornicatio habet ueniam, non erit concupiscentia eius. Apostoli autem magis est poenae ignibus prouidere. Quod si poena est quae urit, ergo ueniam non habet fornicatio, quam manet poena.

Tertullian's exegesis of this text shows a fine example of the development of his ideas from his early writings to those influenced by the New Prophecy.

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66. De Exh. Cast., 3, 7.

67. The full context is:-

Denique cum dicit ( sc. apostolus ): Melius est nubere quam uri, quale id bonum intelligendum, quod melius est poena ?

In Ad Uxor. he is prepared to accord with Paul's view that to marry is better than to be aflame with passion. But as marriage becomes a more crucial issue in his debate with his Catholic opponents at Carthage, the "burning" becomes more and more literal. He sees in Paul's word *πυροῦσθαι* an indication of the fires of hell, which serve as a useful threat against those who oppose his theories.

It is in respect of second marriage that a further example of the development in Tertullian's thought can be seen. In Ad Uxor., 1,7,2f., he refers to 1 Cor.7:27ff.:-

Obligatus es ... matrimonio: ne quaesieris solutionem; solutus es matrimonio: ne quaesieris obligationem. Nam etsi non delinquas renubendo, carnis tamen pressuram subsequi dicit.

Tertullian says that this text advocates the acceptance of the opportunity of continence, and encourages Christians to be reluctant to restore what God has put asunder, since the death of a marriage partner clearly shows God's will that the remaining partner should be finished with marriage. It is to be noted that here Tertullian merely advises - nothing more.

The same text is quoted in De Exh. Cast., 4,1, and the first point which Tertullian makes is that it is uttered by Paul on his own authority, and is not based on any divine precept. 1 Cor.7:25 supports this.<sup>68</sup> However, when Paul realises that he has spoken rather extravagantly, says Tertullian, he is eager to moderate what he has just allowed. So he adds:-

... θλιψιν δὲ τῇ σαρκὶ ἔξουσιν οἱ τοιοῦτοι, ἐγὼ δὲ ὑμῶν  
φείδομαι ... ὁ κενὸς συνεσταλμένος ἐστίν ... ἵνα καὶ οἱ  
ἔχοντες γυναῖκας ὡς μὴ ἔχοντες ᾧσιν ...<sup>69</sup>

Such expressions advise against marriage. How much more strict will be Paul's attitude towards second marriage.

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68. Περὶ δὲ τῶν παρθένων ἐπιταγὴν Κυρίου οὐκ ἔχω, γνώμην  
δὲ δίδωμι ὡς ἡλεημένος ὑπὸ Κυρίου πιστὸς εἶναι

69. 1 Cor.7:28f..

In De Monog., Tertullian is opposed to second marriage in every circumstance except one. If a man is loosed from his wife before his conversion to the faith, he could re-marry ( a Christian woman ) and she would count as his first wife. It is this interpretation which Tertullian places on 1 Cor.7:27f. in De Monog.,11,9ff., and he argues that Paul is thinking in terms of recent converts. <sup>70</sup> Once again, he refers to 1 Cor.7:28f. to show that Paul moderates his advice, but this time his language is a little more severe:-

Et ita ( sc. apostolus ) reuocat quod permisit.

Compare this with Tertullian's words in De Exh. Cast.,4,3:-

Per haec enim docens, cur non expediat nubere, dissuadet ab eo, quod supra indulserat.

The tone has noticeably changed.

The same chapter of 1 Cor. provides Tertullian with a second important text in his discussion of second marriage. This is 1 Cor.7:39f.:-

Ἡ συνῆ δέδεταί ἐφ' ὅσον χρόνον ἔσῃ ὁ ἀνὴρ αὐτῆς·  
ἐὰν δὲ κοιμηθῇ ὁ ἀνὴρ, ἐλευθέρα ἐστὶν ᾧ θέλει  
γαμηθῆναι, μόνον ἐν Κυρίῳ. μακαριωτέρα δὲ ἐστὶν  
ἐὰν οὕτως μύνη, κατὰ τὴν ἐμὴν γνώμην· δοκῶ δὲ καὶ γὰρ  
πνεῦμα Θεοῦ ἔχειν.

In De Exh. Cast.,4, Tertullian compares the advice given by Paul in this text with his permission of second marriage in 1 Cor.7:25f.. The latter is Paul's own human authority, whereas the former, which enjoins continence, is based on the authority of the Holy Spirit. In De Monog.,11,3, Tertullian refers to an objection made by the psychici, to the effect that this text gives them the liberty to enter into second marriage, and even multiple marriage. It would appear that this objection is in fact a valid one, and

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70. A discussion on Tertullian's views on mixed marriages follows in a few lines.

it may well be that the Catholics used it to oppose the position adopted in De Exh. Cast.. The emphasis which Tertullian lays upon a correct exposition of this text would suggest that the issue is at the centre of the debate. Before he expounds what he considers to be Paul's intended meaning, he appeals to rhetoric for support. He asks a series of questions which presuppose that Paul could not have permitted second marriage in the way that the Catholics think, since such a permission would be completely opposed to Paul's position everywhere else:-

Si enim secundas nuptias permittit, quae ab initio non fuerunt, quomodo affirmat omnia ad initium recolligi in Christo ? 71 Si uult nos iterare coniugia, quomodo semen nostrum in Isaac 72 semel marito auctore defendit ? Quomodo totum ordinem ecclesiae de monogamis disponit, 73 si non haec disciplina praecedit in laicis, ex quibus ecclesiae ordo proficit ? Quomodo in matrimonio adhuc positos a fructu matrimonii auocat, dicens in collectum esse tempus, 74 si per mortem matrimonio elapsos iterum in matrimonium reuocat ?

Tertullian's exegesis of the passage in question revolves round the presupposition that the women addressed by Paul are recent converts, and he claims support for this from the frequent references in this chapter to conversion, and to Paul's attitude to his readers, as if they are unsure of their conduct now they are Christians. Hence, the phrase tantum in Domino is seen to refer to marriage between Christians; 75 and the woman who was a pagan at the time of her conversion and who marries a Christian brother, may look on him as her first husband. He is her first husband after her conversion. The original Greek text supports this interpretation. 76

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71. See Eph.1:9.

72. See Rom.9:7 and Gal.4:28.

73. See 1 Tim.3:2.

74. See 1 Cor.7:29.

75. This interpretation occurs also in Adu. Marc.,5,7,8.

76. Tertullian's words are:-

Sciamus plane non sic esse in Graecolauthentico, quomodo in usum exiit per duarum syllabarum aut callidam aut simplicem euersionem: Si autem dormierit uir eius. ( De Monog.,11,11 ).

The Greek given in the best texts is κοιμηθη which Tertullian condemns. Suggestions have been made that the original reading was κοιμηται or εδν δε κεκοιμηται. For a fuller discussion, see P.de Labriolle, La Crise.pp.385ff.; A. d'Alès, La Théologie de Tertullien. p.241.

This exegesis has already been applied to the phrase tantum in Domino in Ad Uxor., 2, 3f., where Tertullian advises his wife to marry a Christian, if she wishes to re-marry after his death. He emphasises the absolute necessity for her to marry a fellow Christian, since marriage to a pagan would present her with innumerable problems. A husband who had not been converted to the faith would not understand the habits and practices of his wife. He would force her to divide her loyalties. He would put temptations in her path. <sup>77</sup> Ad Uxor. ends with a glowing description of Christian marriage. <sup>78</sup>

The difference between Tertullian's exegesis of the text in Ad Uxor. and in De Monog. is obvious. In the former work, he admits the possibility of numerous marriages, provided that they are contracted tantum in Domino. He does not stress the fact that the partner must have been married before conversion to make the subsequent marriage in Domino valid. In the latter work, his emphasis is altogether different. Here he stresses the possibility of second marriage only if the first marriage has been contracted before conversion. His application of 1 Cor. 7:39 is therefore much more definite and emphatic. The text does not support the Catholics' argument of multiple marriage. The implications of tantum in Domino are not expounded in De Exh. Cast.. The only use of the text is to illustrate that, although Paul allows remarriage, he prefers continence, and this preference can claim the authority of the Holy Spirit. <sup>79</sup> It is clear that the problems raised by the text for Tertullian's newly adopted views force him to re-assess his earlier exegesis, and to change his emphasis of its implications.

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77. In this context, Tertullian cites 1 Cor. 15:33:-

... φθείρουσιν ἡθὴν χρῆσταν ὁμιλίαις κακαῖς

78. See Ad Uxor., 2, 8, 6ff..

79. See De Exh. Cast., 4, 4.

In De Monog., 11, 13, Tertullian concludes his exegesis of 1 Cor. 7:39f.

with the words:-

Haec erit interpretatio capituli istius de hoc examinanda, an et tempori et causae, et tam exemplis et argumentis praecedentibus quam et sentiis et sensibus subsequentibus, et in primis an ipsius apostoli et consilio proprio congruat et instituto; nihil enim custodiendum est quam ne diuersus sibi deprehendatur.

Two examples from the following chapters will suffice to show how he applies these exegetical principles:-

a) The opponents of Tertullian's views on marriage obviously use Paul's words in Rom. 7:2f. in support of their argument in favour of remarriage. <sup>80</sup>

Tertullian's reply is that the words of Paul must be taken in context. It is not legitimate to take one text by itself, and from this to draw conclusions. The whole passage of which it is part must be examined. Therefore, having cited Rom. 7:2f., he adds the warning:-

Sed et sequentia recognosce, quo sensus iste, qui tibi blanditur, euadat. He then cites Rom. 7:4ff., and from the whole, argues that Paul prohibits second marriage. In doing so, he places a different emphasis on the Scriptural passage than the one intended. Paul's concern is with the Christians' relation to the law, not with the legitimacy of second marriage. <sup>81</sup>

b) Tertullian concludes his exegesis of Paul, <sup>82</sup> by arguing that even if the apostle permits remarriage generally, this permission has to be understood in accordance with the policy he follows in other situations, when the circumstances of the times lead him to act against his established norms. Paul rebukes the Galatians who wish to live according to the law, <sup>83</sup> yet he himself circumcises

80. Tertullian discusses the text in De Monog., 13, 2. His words:-

Sed et sequentia recognosce, quo sensus iste, qui tibi blanditur, euadat.

show that the text was used by his opponents. The Greek is:-

ὁ ἄνθρωπος, γὰρ ὑπανδρὸς γυνὴ τῷ ζῶντι ἀνδρὶ δεδεταί νόμῳ· ἐὰν δὲ ἀποθῆνῃ ὁ ἄνθρωπος, κατάρχεται ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου τοῦ ἀνδρός. ἄρα οὖν ζῶντος τοῦ ἀνδρός μοιχαλὶς χρηματίζει, ἐὰν γένηται ἀνδρὶ ἑτέρῳ· ἐὰν δὲ ἀποθῆνῃ, ὁ ἄνθρωπος βελευθέρη ἐστὶν ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου, τοῦ μὴ εἶναι αὐτῆν μοιχαλίδα γενομένην ἀνδρὶ ἑτέρῳ.

81. Paul's point is that the law is only binding during a person's lifetime.

82. In De Monog., 14.

83. See Gal. passim.

Timothy,<sup>84</sup> and also brings into the Temple men with shaven heads.<sup>85</sup> His actions, however, have reasons, and are necessary

... ut omnibus omnia fieret quo omnes lucrifaceret,<sup>86</sup> parturiens illos, donec formaretur Christus in ipsis.<sup>87</sup>

The idea of the temporary nature of Paul's permission in relation to second marriage leads Tertullian to discuss the whole concept of the development of discipline. The influence of the New Prophecy is most visible here. Christ abrogates the laws of Moses: why could not the Paraclete abrogate the indulgences of Paul?<sup>88</sup>

It would appear that Tertullian has conceded his argument, by admitting that Paul could have allowed second marriage, even if only temporarily. However, he cleverly uses the disadvantage to justify the authority of the new revelation of stricter codes of conduct which, he claims, the New Prophecy provides.

### iii) Other New Testament Material

Although Tertullian relies heavily on Paul's teaching, he uses a large number of other New Testament passages to support his arguments.<sup>89</sup> Some of these reveal a development in his thought and exegesis. One, Matt.26:41, has already been discussed above.<sup>90</sup>

A second text which is significant in an examination of Tertullian's changing understanding of Scripture is Luke 20:35f.:<sup>91</sup>

οἱ δὲ καταξιωθέντες τοῦ δόξασθαι ἐκείνου τυχεῖν καὶ τῆς ἀποδοτέως

84. See Acts 16:3.

85. See Acts 21:20ff..

86. See 1 Cor.9:22.

87. See Gal.4:19.

88. See earlier in this thesis, pp.28ff. For the idea of progressive revelation.

89. These include parts of Matt.6, which show Christ's desire that his followers be self-sufficient.

90. See earlier, pp.102ff..

91. Cf. Matt.22:30; Mk.12:25.



τῆς ἐκ νεκρῶν οὔτε γαμοῦσιν οὔτε γαμίζονται . . . .

In Ad Uxor., Tertullian advises his wife not to re-marry, if he dies first.

He is eager to assure her that this advice is not based on jealousy:-

Ceterum Christianis saeculo digressis ( sicut ) nulla restitutio nuptiarum in die resurrectionis repromittitur, translatis scilicet in angelicam qualitatem et sanctitatem, proinde sollicitudo nulla, quae de carnis zelo uenit. Etiam illa, quam septem fratribus per successionem nupsisse uoluerunt, neminem tot maritorum resurrectionis die offendet, nec quisquam illam confusus expectat.<sup>92</sup>

By the time he writes De Monog., his new conviction that remarriage is forbidden leads him to emphasise the continuation between the married state on earth and that in heaven. He admits that in heaven there is no marriage as such, but he is not prepared to <sup>admit</sup> the dissociation of the partners which he has pronounced earlier.<sup>93</sup> So, in De Monog., 10,5f., he writes:-

Si autem in illo aeuo neque nubent neque nubentur, sed erunt aequales angelis, non ideo non tenebimur coniugibus defunctis, quia non erit restitutio coniugii ? Atquin eo magis tenebimur, quia in meliorem statum destinamur, resurrecturi in spiritale consortium, agniture tam nosmetipsos quam et nostros . . . . Ergo qui cum Deo erimus, simul erimus, dum omnes apud Deum unum . . . .: . . . . magis non separabit quos coniunxit Deus, quam in ista minore uita separari uetat.

This exegesis of Luke 20:35f. is followed by the conclusion that a woman who re-marries after the death of her husband is committing adultery, for she has one husband in the flesh and another in the spirit. This is unius feminae in duos uiros conscientia.<sup>94</sup> The climate has obviously changed since the time of the advice to his wife. No longer is remarriage a possibility: it now involves adultery.

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92. Ad Uxor., 1,1,5f..

93. In the passage from Ad Uxor. cited above.

94. Tertullian almost reaches this conclusion in De Exh. Cast.. In chapter 9, he argues that monogamy is similar to fornication, since both involve sexual intercourse. He adduces Matt.5:28 as evidence. In chapter 11, he speaks of a man who remarries as having two wives - one in the flesh, the other in the spirit. The identification of second marriage and adultery is only a short step from these arguments.

It would seem that Tertullian has chosen to ignore the implications of Christ's reply to the Sadducees <sup>95</sup> that marriage has no place in heaven. By such a statement, Christ avoids the issue raised by the Sadducees, but Tertullian's desire to ignore this reply would raise the serious problem of the woman's relationship to her husbands in the after-life. This problem is complicated by his assertion that adultery is the only status which may be attached to remarriage. The extremes to which the exegesis of Luke 20:35f. leads him cannot be upheld. The influence of Tertullian's involvement in the New Prophecy, and his fervent desire to support his arguments by an appeal to Scripture, are his down-fall here, forcing him to reverse his earlier opinion in Ad Uxor. <sup>96</sup>

### 3. Tertullian's Use of Pagan Examples

The preceding exposition shows quite clearly that Tertullian relies to a large extent upon Scripture for the defence of his beliefs. It will also have become evident that he uses Scripture to support his changing convictions, rather than as a source of them. He moulds Scripture into the interpretation which he wishes to place on it, rather than lets Scripture speak for itself. Such an approach to exegesis could only result in discrepancies.

However, it would be wrong to assume that Tertullian's heavy reliance on Scripture leads him to exclude all other potential bases of support. He is the first to realise that the more support which can be adduced in an argument, the

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95. The Sadducees had asked Christ which, of the woman's seven husbands, would be regarded as her husband in the resurrection. ( See Luke 20:27ff.)

96. Tertullian appeals to the text at the very end of De Exh. Cast.:-

Unde praesumendum est hos qui intra paradisum recipi uolent, tandem debere cessare ab ea re, a qua paradisus intactus est.

It is only clear from the text itself what practice is referred to here.

The text is also used in De An., 37,4 and Adu. Marc., 4,38,4f. to show that there is no marriage where there is no death. In De Cult. Fem., 1,2,5, it is used to prove that women, as well as men, will receive the angelic state. In De Resurr., 62 it is adduced to provide evidence that men will rise, clothed in flesh.

more convincing that argument becomes. Hence, he is prepared to augment his appeal to Scripture by an appeal to the examples of non-Christians. In his three treatises on marriage, he uses most convincingly, as a basis for his convictions, a comparison between the actual customs of the heathen and the behaviour expected of a Christian. So, in Ad Uxor., 1,6,3, he says:-

Durum plane et arduum satis continentia sanctae feminae post uiri excessum dei causa, cum gentiles satanae suo et uirginitatis et uiduitatis sacerdotia perferant.

He goes on to expand this idea by giving numerous examples of "virgins" and "widows" who minister to the gods - including the Vestal Virgins, the virgins of Juno, those at Delphi, and the widows of the African Ceres.<sup>97</sup> The latter, he says, have no contact at all with men, and even refuse to kiss their own sons. They persevere in widowhood. Such examples of virtue can only set a challenge for Christians:-

Haec diabolus suis praecepit, et auditur. Prouocat nimirum dei seruos continentia suorum, quasi ex aequo contine(a)nt etiam gehennae sacerdotes.

In De Exh. Cast., 13, 1ff., Tertullian calls these examples testimonium, and expands their number.<sup>98</sup> Dido and Lucretia are two women who preferred to die, rather than to marry again. In De Monog.,<sup>99</sup> the list is expanded further.

Two points may be noted in Tertullian's appeal to these non-Christian examples:-

a) In Ad Uxor., the appeal is merely one of a number of arguments in favour of continence, but in the two later treatises on marriage, it is

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97. These examples are to be found in Ad Uxor., 1,6,4.

98. Tertullian refers to the wife of the Flamen who must be married only once; the same law applies to the Flamen himself, and to the Pontifex Maximus; He also mentions the Virgins of Apollo, Minerva, Diana, and the celibate priests of the Egyptian Bull; Dido and Lucretia were prepared to die rather than remarry.

99. Tertullian adds that only a woman married once may crown Fortuna Muliebris and Mater Matuta.

found at the very end. The impression is received that Tertullian uses the appeal more and more as the climax of his arguments, expanding the list of examples as his thoughts become more determined. Scripture shows the way to the right conduct on the question of marriage and remarriage, but the final support lies in the attitude of those who do not belong to the faith. If they can remain virgins and continent, then they put to shame the Christian who claims that such a task is impossible. If the heathen persevere for the sake of their gods, surely a Christian can do so for the sake of the true God. Here is a trace of Tertullian's increasing rigorism.

b) Tertullian is often reluctant to admit that the heathen possess any truth at all, but this is one of the occasions when he abandons this belief temporarily. The relationship between the heathen and the Christians is expressed nicely in De Monog., 17, 1f., where Tertullian rounds up his discussion on the excuse provided by Christ's reference to "the infirmity of the flesh"<sup>100</sup> with the words:-

Habebunt plane Christo quod allegent speciosum priuilegium, carnis usquequaque imbecillitatem. Sed hanc iudicabunt iam non Isaac monogamus pater noster, nec Ioannes aliqui Christi spado, nec Iudith filia Merari, 101 nec tot alia exempla sanctorum. Solent ethnici iudices destinari.

The implication is that the examples from Jewish and Christian tradition have been supplemented, perhaps even superseded, by those from heathen custom. Scripture, therefore, is forced into a secondary role. However, I think there is a further implication. The heathen put the Catholics to shame, and, in so doing, confirm the position of the followers of the New Prophecy. Both condemn a lax standard of behaviour. Both support the other in the correct attitude to marriage.

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100. See Matt. 26:41.

101. See Jud. 16:16.

B. MONOGAMY AND THE CLERGY

It is Tertullian's conviction that the clergy should not be digamists. In Ad Uxor., 1,7,4f., he bases this conviction on the teaching of Paul, the law of the Church, and the Roman Pontifex Maximus:-

Quantum detrahant fidei, quantum obstrepant sanctitati nuptiae secundae, disciplina ecclesiae et praescriptio apostoli declarat, cum digamos non sinit praesidere, cum uiduam adlegi in ordinem nisi uniuiram non concedat. Tota illa ecclesiae candida de sanctitate conscribitur. Aram enim dei mundam proponi oportet. ( Ceterum ut ) sacerdotium uiduitatis, et caelibalium est apud nationes, pro diaboli scilicet aemulatione: regem saeculi, Pontificem Maximum, rursus nubere nefas est.

The references to Paul's teaching on this subject are 1 Tim.3:2; Tit.1:6, and 1 Tim.5:9f.. The manner in which Tertullian supports his argument is interesting. Scripture, Church discipline, and heathen custom point in the same direction.

This somewhat brief excursus is enlarged in De Exh. Cast., 7,1ff., where the concern is with the essential harmony between the Old Testament and the New in the issue of remarriage:-

Cur autem de pristinis exemplis non ea potius agnoscamus, quae cum posterioribus communicant de disciplina et formam uetustatis ad nouitatem transmittunt ? Ecce enim in uetere lege animaduerto castratam licentiam saepius nubendi. Cautum in Leuitico: " Sacerdotes mei non plus nubent." .... Inde igitur apostolus plenius atque strictius praescribit unius matrimonii esse oportere qui allegant(ur) in ordinem sacerdotalem. <sup>102</sup> Usque adeo quosdam memini digamos loco defectos.

The argument continues that what is expected of a member of the clergy is expected of the laity also, since it is from the laity that the clergy are chosen. The problem is raised as to which passage in Leviticus Tertullian is referring, since there is no such text. In De Monog., 7,7, he refers to what seems to be the same text:-

Denique prohibet eadem ( sc. lex ) sacerdotes denuo nubent.

The nearest thing to such a text occurs in Lev.21:7, where priests are forbidden to marry harlots and divorcees. <sup>103</sup> In Lev.21:13f., the High

102. See 1 Tim.3:2 and Tit.1:6.

103. The Septuagint version is:-  
και γυναικα πορνην και βεβηλομένην ου λήγουνται  
αυτῆς, ὅτι  
αυτῆς ἔστι κυρίῳ τῷ θεῷ αὐτοῦ.



C. DIVORCE

The question of divorce is of vital importance to Tertullian for two main reasons. Firstly, Marcion seizes upon apparent discrepancies between Christ's teaching and the Mosaic law to support his theory of two gods.<sup>106</sup> Secondly, a Christian's attitude to marriage and remarriage is influenced by his idea of divorce. Tertullian's main exposition of divorce is to be found in Adu. Marc., 4, 34, where he concludes that Christ is in absolute agreement with Moses.<sup>107</sup> Deut. 24:1 allows divorce on the grounds of adultery, and Christ's statement in Matt. 19:8f. makes the same exception.<sup>108</sup>

A. d'Alès has noted a faulty exegesis of Deut. 24:1 in Tertullian's explanation of the law of repudium. Tertullian restricts the law to the case of adultery, whereas the original Hebrew brings to mind, in the words of d'Alès

"l'idée d'un défaut physique, sens mieux conserve par la Vulgate, propter aliquam foeditatem." <sup>109</sup>

The reason for this faulty exegesis is attributed to Tertullian's desire to find the Old and New Testaments in complete agreement, against Marcion's attempt to separate them. So, in Adu. Marc., 4, 34, 7, he writes:-

Habes itaque Christum ultro uestigia ubique creatoris ineuntem tam in permittendo repudio quam in prohibendo; habes etiam nuptiarum, quoquo uelis latere, prospectorem, quas nec separari uult prohibendo repudium nec cum macula haberi tunc permittendo diuortium.

However, in his treatises on marriage, it is not so crucial to emphasise to such an extent the essential harmony between Christ and Moses. In fact, it

106. See Adu. Marc., 4, 34.

107. Tertullian's conclusion is based on a consideration of relevant Scriptural texts, including Deut. 22:28f.; 24:1; Matt. 5:32; 19:3ff.; Luke 16:16ff.

108. λέγει αὐτοῖς, "Ὅτι Μωϋσῆς πρὸς τὴν σκληροκαρδίαν ὑμῶν ἐπέτρεψεν ὑμῖν ἀπολύσαι τὰς γυναῖκας ὑμῶν. ἀπ' ἀρχῆς δὲ οὐ γέγονεν οὕτως. λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅτι ὅς ἐν ἀπολύσει τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ μὴ ἐπὶ πορνείᾳ καὶ γαμήσει ἄλλην, μοιχᾶται.

109. La Théologie de Tertullien. p. 463.

is possible to support arguments in favour of the New Prophecy by appealing to the inconsistency between Christ and Moses. So, in De Monog.,9,1, he says:-

( sententiae ) .... quas Dominus emisit in repudii retractatu, quod permissum aliquando iam prohibet, inprimis quia ab initio non fuit sic, 110 sicut matrimonii numerus, tum quia quos Deus coniunxit homo non separabit, scilicet ne contra Dominum faciat. Solus enim ille separabit qui et coniunxit. Separabit autem non per duritiam repudii, quam et exprobat et compescit, sed per debitum mortis.

The illegal nature of divorce is shown by Christ's words in Matt.5:32. 111 A divorced woman will not be able to marry legitimately. Tertullian goes on to define adultery as being committed when, for any reason, the "two in one flesh" are separated and there is a union with a third party. The logical conclusion is that a woman is prohibited from marrying again whether her husband is alive or dead:-

Nihil Deo interest, uiuo an mortuo uiro nubat. 112

1 Cor.6:18 is appealed to as support, although Tertullian fails to notice that Paul is referring to fornication rather than adultery. 113 The phrase in Matt.5:32 παρεκτός λόγου πορνείας which earlier has given him the basis for his argument that Christ and Moses are in agreement, 114 is dismissed with the words:-

... ne necessitas uel occasio tertiae concarnationis irrumpat, et soli causae permittens repudium, si forte praeuenerit cui praecauetur. 115

The whole point of the prohibition of divorce is to stop adultery.

Tertullian, therefore, consistently emphasises the indissolubility of marriage, with the result that he is eventually led, in his defence of the principles of the New Prophecy, to the conclusion that even death cannot break

110. See Matt. 19:8.

111. (ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν) ὅτι πᾶς ὁ ἀπολύων τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ παρεκτός λόγου πορνείας ποιεῖ αὐτὴν μοιχευθῆναι, καὶ ὅς ἐάν ἀπολελυμένην γάμῃσιν, μοιχᾶται.

112. De Monog., 9, 5.

113. φεύγετε τὴν πορνείαν. πᾶν ἁμάρτημα ὃ ἐάν ποιήσῃ ἄνθρωπος ἔκτος τοῦ σώματος ἐστίν. ὃ δὲ πορνεύων εἰς τὸ ἴδιον σῶμα ἁμαρτάνει.

114. See Adu. Marc., 4, 34, 7.

115. De Monog., 9, 7.



the marriage-bond. <sup>116</sup> He manipulates Scripture to this end.

SUMMARY

The above chapter has been concerned with the Scriptural support used by Tertullian in his argumentation on marriage and divorce. In his discussion on the issues, he demonstrates his ability to interpret texts to fit in with his thoughts of the moment. The impression is received that as he becomes more eager to defend the principles of the New Prophecy, he appeals in a more desperate way to Scripture. Where once he has been content to make a brief reference, he is later forced to draw out previously unmentioned implications. It is noticeable that this sense of urgency leads him to an increasing number of inconsistencies in his exegesis, and forces him to base his arguments on sometimes false premises. Any support is used - even the heathen, whom Tertullian, on other occasions, can regard as possessing little. The germ of Ad Uxor. is frequently elaborated, re-assessed, and re-emphasised in his later works on marriage.

At the same time as the dependence on the examples of the heathen becomes more noticeable, the emphasis on "the law of the Church" is being driven into the background. In Ad Uxor., 1,7, Tertullian appeals to the tradition of the Church to justify his claim that the members of the clergy should be monogamous. However, his increasing involvement in the New Prophecy results in his disenchantment with the policies of the Catholics, and he cannot make such an appeal so forcefully.

Tertullian draws his Scriptural texts from both the Old and New Testaments, although his understanding of the relationship between the two varies according to the occasion. By far the greatest appeal is made to Paul, although the interpretation placed on some of the texts alters as the influence of the New Prophecy predominates. One of the most frequent errors of which Tertullian is guilty is that of interpreting a text out of its original setting. Such

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116. See De Monog., 9.

carelessness becomes more apparent in the later treatises, and results, undoubtedly, from Tertullian's desire to find support for his argumentation in Scripture.

Finally, Tertullian's exegesis is revealed as literal. He prefers to find concrete analogies and types in Old Testament figures and incidents, rather than to allegorise them. His literalism is most evident in his maxim:-

Negat Scriptura quod non notat. <sup>117</sup>

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117. See later, p. 282.

CHAPTER SEVEN

REPENTANCE AND THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

Tertullian's views on the efficacy of repentance and the forgiveness of sins present a clear example of the inconsistency between his attitudes as a Catholic and those he adopts as a follower of the New Prophecy. The main works for study in this context are De Paen. and De Pud., which reflect the attitudes of the period in which they were written.<sup>1</sup> The former is concerned, as the title suggests, with the necessity for and the validity of repentance. The tone of the work would indicate that it is addressed to catechumens,<sup>2</sup> and passing remarks would confirm this.<sup>3</sup> Tertullian's aim is to prepare his readers for the important step of baptism and he shows little interest in justifying repentance Scripturally, De Pud., on the other hand, could hardly be more different. The severity and urgency of the work are evident almost immediately. The purpose of its writing is to vehemently oppose the Edict which Tertullian says has been put out by the episcopus episcoporum<sup>4</sup> to grant pardon to the sins of adultery and fornication. To Tertullian, such an exhibition of moral laxity is intolerable. Throughout the work, he realises that what he is saying contradicts his earlier opinions in De Paen.<sup>5</sup> Hence, one of his major concerns is to provide Scriptural support both for his change of opinion, and for the arguments which he proposes. Naturally Scripture plays a far more vital role in this work than in his earlier writing on the same subject. However, there are enough

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1. See the introduction of this thesis, pp. 17f..

2. See especially, chapters 5 and 6, where the concern seems to be with the necessary attitudes towards baptism.

3. See, for example, De Paen., 7, 1:-

Hucusque, Christe domine, de paenitentiae disciplina seruis tuis dicere uel audire contingat, quousque etiam delinquere non oportet et audientibus: uel nihil iam de paenitentia nouerint, nihil eius requirant.

4. See De Pud., 1, 6. The identity of this Church leader is uncertain. For the different views on the subject, see above, p. 9, n. 41.

5. See especially, De Pud., 1, 11ff., where Tertullian uses Paul's description of growth of understanding in 1 Cor. 13:11 to justify his change of opinions.

texts which appear in both works to make a comparison of the uses to which they are put a valid and valuable exercise. These are discussed first in this chapter, together with any occurrences of their use in other works. Next, an analysis is made of texts found in De Pud. to which a changing interpretation is applied from previous occasions on which the texts are used. This is followed by a summary of texts used in De Pud. to support the arguments of the New Prophecy and which do not occur elsewhere in Tertullian's extant works. The chapter closes with a section on Tertullian's use of Scripture in the context of his views on the Power of the Keys.

A. AN ANALYSIS OF TEXTS WHICH RECEIVE DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS IN DE PAEN. AND DE PUD.

1. Luke 15:3ff.

In De Paen., 8, 4f., Tertullian appeals to the parables of the lost coin and the lost sheep to furnish examples from Scripture of Christ's willingness to pardon:-

Quid illa similitudinum dominicarum argumenta nobis uolunt ? Quod mulier dragma perdit et requirit et repperit, ( et ) amicas ad gaudium inuitat, nonne restituti peccatoris exemplum est ? Errat et una pastori ouicula, sed grex una carior non erat; una illa conquiritur, una pro omnibus desideratur, et tamen inuenitur et humeris pastoris ipsius refertur: multum enim errando laborauerat.

Tertullian uses these two parables ( as also that of the prodigal son ) to show that repentance is possible. God, represented by the woman and the shepherd, takes delight in the restoration of a lost sinner. Although Tertullian does not specifically indicate that he is thinking of second repentance for sinners, there can be very little doubt that this is so, for the whole tenor of the writing points in this direction. The constant recurrence of the second person singular in the passage from which this extract is taken presupposes that Tertullian has in mind the Christian in general.

In De Pud., 7, 2f., his interpretation of the parables has changed. Taking the context in which Christ's parables are uttered, Tertullian lays down the

principle that they were intended as an answer to the mutterings of the Pharisees regarding Christ's relationship with the heathen. The principle he proposes is interesting:-

Praescribimus enim ex naturae disciplina, ex lege auris et linguae, ex mentis sanitate ea semper responderi quae prouocantur ( id est ad ea quae prouocant ). Prouocauit, ut opinor, quod Pharisaei publicanos et peccatores ethnicos admittentem Dominum et cum illis de uictu communicantem / indignati mussitabant. Ad hoc Dominum pecudis perditae restitutionem, cui alii configurasse credendum est quam ethnico perdito, de quo agebatur, non ( de ) Christiano, qui adhuc nemo ?

Tertullian's argument is completely contradictory to his earlier statement in De Paen., 8. He goes on to argue that if Christ had regarded the sheep as representative of the Christian sinner, he would not have answered the mutterings of the Pharisees which it had been his intention to refute. As for the customary analogy of "flock" with the "members of the Church", he argues that God is lord of all - Christians and heathen alike. Therefore, all mankind is the flock of God. Furthermore, Christ's parable was intended to draw a startling contrast between the Jews and the heathen. The Pharisees ( the Jews ) felt themselves too righteous to repent. Christ wished to show that he preferred the salvation of one heathen by repentance, to the salvation of the Jews by righteousness.

Similarly, the parable of the lost coin was called forth in the same context. The customary analogies of "the house" to "the Church", and "the lamp" to "God's word" must not be regarded as the only ones acceptable. The whole world is a house. The heathen are in darkness, and God's grace enlightens him. The Christian, on the other hand, is already enlightened. Tertullian also adds the argument that only one loss and one restoration is noted in these parables. If they had been intended to refer to Christians' second repentance, a second loss and restoration would have been mentioned.

An analysis of Tertullian's arguments so far will not come amiss. First of all, the principle which he lays down at the beginning of the chapter, namely that any interpretation must take into account the context of the passage in question, is a valid one. Luke's intention seems to be to contrast the Israelites as the chosen people and the outcasts who foreshadow the Gentiles. Tertullian brings this contrast to the forefront in his treatment of the parables in De Pud.

Secondly, he seems to regard repentance as the key to these parables. In fact, careful consideration of the parables reveals that the initiative is taken by God ( represented by the "seeker" ) rather than by those who were lost. The inability of the sheep and the coin to repent may suggest that repentance is a gift of God, granted after the sinner has been found.<sup>6</sup> In this case, Tertullian is misguided in his attempts to use these parables as examples of the efficacy of repentance. "Jesus justifies his attitude to the outcast by claiming that it is also God's attitude, that God's merciful love does not wait for the penitence of the sinner, but takes the initiative to bring about his restoration."<sup>7</sup> In De Pat., 12,6, Tertullian acknowledges this initiative taken by God, and identifies it with patientia:-

... erroneam ouem patientia pastoris requirit et inuenit ( nam impatientia unam facile contemneret, sed laborem inquisitionis patientia suscipit ) et humeris insuper aduehit baiulus patiens peccatricem derelictam.<sup>8</sup>

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6. See G.W.H. Lampe's commentary on Luke 15:3ff., in Peake's Commentary on the Bible, par.730f.

7. G.B. Caird, Saint Luke: London: 1963.p.180.

8. There are three other interpretations which Tertullian places on these parables:-

a) In De Praesc. Haer., 11,4 and 12,3, Tertullian's discussion on Matt.7:7 — ζητείτε, και εύρήσετε leads him to emphasise that once an item which has been lost is found, the searching stops. The parable of the lost coin proves this. So it is with belief. There is no scope for speculation once belief is established. Also, the parable shows the location of the search. The search for knowledge must be confined to the Rule of Faith.

b) In De Resurr., 34,2, Tertullian shows, from the parable of the lost sheep, that, just as the whole sheep was rescued, so the whole man, body and soul, will be resurrected.

c) In Adu. Marc., 4,32,1f., Tertullian's concern is to show that the parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin can have no application to the Christ of the theories of Marcion. He who sought the lost was he to whom the lost belonged.

Returning now to De Pud.,7, we can notice a different treatment of the parables. Tertullian goes on to temporarily allow the argument of his opponents, namely, that the parables do in fact refer to the Christian sinner, but he argues that this does not mean that repentance in respect of adultery and fornication is allowed. The statement of the texts that the sheep and the coin "have perished"<sup>9</sup> does not imply a reference to sinners who are "dead" as a result of adultery and fornication. The sense is less absolute:-

Bene interpretaberis parabolam uiuentem adhuc reuocans peccatorem ... Quo ore mortuum restitues in gregem ex parabola eius auctoritate, quae non mortuum pecus reuocat ?

However, as regards the adulterer and the fornicator, they are immediately branded as "dead" as soon as their sin has been committed. The parables do not allow for the restoration of such men. Indeed, the parable mentions the loss of the drachma - only a small coin. This represents only a small sin, not a huge one like adultery or fornication. In no way can the parables support the argument of his opponents, says Tertullian.

## 2. Luke 15:11ff.

The parable of the prodigal son offers further evidence of God's forgiveness. It is used by Tertullian in the same contexts as the ones in which he has used the parables of the lost coin and the lost sheep. In De Paen.,8,6, he writes:-

Illum etiam mitissimum patrem non tacebo qui prodigum filium reuocat et post inopiam paenitentem libens suscipit, inmolans uitulum praeopimum conuiuio gaudium suum exornat: quidni ? filium enim inuenerat quem amiserat, cariorem senserat quem lucri fecerat.

The implication that Tertullian draws from this parable is that the father is God who is prepared to receive his straying son. The father will receive back the wanderer only

... si paeniteas ex animo, si famem tuam cum saturitate mercennariorum paternorum compares, si porcos immundum relinquant pecus, si patrem repetas uel offensum: Delinqui, dicens, pater, nec dignus ego iam uocari tuus.<sup>10</sup>

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9. Tertullian's word is perisse.

10. De Paen.,8,8.

Tertullian obviously implies that second repentance is permitted, provided that it is accompanied by a contrite heart. It is to be noted that, in this chapter, there is no mention of the elder brother of the parable. The main concern is with the father's joy at the return of the repentant son. Again, as in the case of the earlier parables, Tertullian seems to have missed the point of the parable, in his desire to prove that repentance is the reason for the father's acceptance of the son. The father's welcoming compassion precedes the son's confession, for it begins while the son is still afar off.<sup>11</sup> Hence, the element of repentance is overplayed by Tertullian.

In De Pud., 8 and 9, the parable is discussed once more. Tertullian's intention is to show that the son does not represent the Christian sinner. He wishes to oppose the generally accepted view that the elder son represents the Jew, and the younger son represents the Christian sinner. To do this, he offers a commentary upon the parable. Although the Jew can be called "the elder son" because of the priority of his adoption, the words

Ecce quot annis tibi seruo et praeceptum tuum numquam praeteriui<sup>12</sup>

cannot be applied to a Jew because the Jew has been a constant transgressor of God's law.<sup>13</sup> Tertullian has missed the whole point of these words. Christ was clearly intending to show the self-righteousness of the Jews. The irony was that the words of the elder brother were obviously untrue. Similarly, Tertullian comments that the words

Tu semper mecum es, et omnia mea tua sunt<sup>14</sup>

could not apply to God's words to the Jew because the Jews had been pronounced as "apostate sons".<sup>15</sup>

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11. See Luke 15:20.

12. De Pud., 8,4 - a citation of Luke 15:29.

13. Tertullian also adds allusions to Is.6:9; 29:21; Jer.20:7f..

14. De Pud., 8,5 - a citation of Luke 15:31.

15. Tertullian cites Is.1:2ff., in which God is portrayed as regretting the up-bringing of his people, who have forsaken him.



In fact, again the point of the parable has been missed. The opportunity is still available for the Jews to adopt the correct attitude to God.

Tertullian states that it would have been more fitting to regard the Jew as the "younger son", who, having squandered God's substance, is now an inhabitant of an alien country. However, such an analogy is not permissible. Another interpretation must be sought. The intention with which the parable was told is the same as that of the parables of the lost coin and the lost sheep - to oppose the mutterings of the Pharisees. Furthermore, assuming that the parable did represent the Christian by the "younger son", then the whole system of salvation would be overthrown. Many a Christian, knowing that he will be received back, would not hesitate to squander what he has received in baptism. The whole purpose of Christ's life must be taken into consideration to determine the meaning of the parable. Christ came to save that which "had perished".<sup>16</sup> Tertullian continues in De Pud., 9, 13:-

Quid perit hominum, quis labat de ualetudine, nisi qui Deum nescit? Quis saluus ac sanus, nisi qui Deum nouit? Has duas species de genere fraternas haec quoque signabit parabola.

Tertullian then goes on to expound his understanding of the parable. The heathen has squandered what he has been given, namely

substantiam in Deo patre census et sapientiae et naturalis agnitionis in Deum. He has squandered this substance by succumbing to the allurements of the world, resulting in a decline in moral standards and a perversion of knowledge. However, on seeing the more enviable position of others, he remembers his father, God, and returns to him. The "garment" he receives is that of the condition of Adam before the Fall, the "ring" is the seal of baptism, and his "participation in the feast" represents his admission to the Eucharist.

In such an interpretation of the parable, the "envy of the elder brother" is to be seen as signifying the envy of the Jew over the salvation of the heathen.

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16. Cf. Matt. 18:11.

The train of Tertullian's argument is now made plain:-

Et utique Iudaeus ad primam statim uocationem Christiani gemit, non ad  
secundam restitutionem. <sup>17</sup>

It must be noted that Tertullian's interpretation of this parable is quite in keeping with the original intention of the parable. However, the lengths to which he is prepared to stretch his interpretation are spurious. Second repentance was far from the forefront in the original purpose of the parable.

#### SUMMARY

The contradiction between the two exegeses of the parable in De Paen. and De Pud. is obvious. The former accepts the implications of the parable as allowing the second repentance of a Christian sinner. The latter does not. Tertullian goes on, in De Pud., 10, to provide arguments from Scripture to show that the heathen's repentance is more fittingly signified than is the repentance of Christians. The heathen, unlike Christians, has not abused the opportunity of penitence. Scripture supports this conclusion. <sup>18</sup>

In connection with the parable of the prodigal son, Tertullian offers two interesting interpretations, one of which he rejects in favour of the other. What is interesting about them is that they both tend towards allegory. From Tertullian's approach in De Pud., 9, it would seem that the Catholics interpreted the parable allegorically, whilst, as a follower of the New Prophecy, he saw it as his task to replace this interpretation with one more befitting his arguments.

According to Tertullian's re-creation of the Catholic interpretation ( if this may be regarded as a true reflection ), each aspect of the parable had an allegorical counterpart. The son ( representing the Christian ), after wandering from the father ( God ), squanders the substance he has received ( in baptism ). Stripped of his goods, he hands himself over to the prince of the

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17. De Pud., 9, 19.

18. For example, Jonah preached repentance to the Ninevites; Christ's death was to redeem heathen on their repentance; John preached repentance to the heathen; Christ assumed the repentance of the Sidonians and the Tyrians if they had seen his work ( Matt. 11; 21 ) etc..

world ( the devil ) and is given the role of looking after the swine ( i.e. of serving unclean spirits ) until he recovers his senses and returns to the father who gives him back his former clothing ( the robe of the Holy Spirit ), and who returns the ring ( the sign and seal of baptism ). Tertullian adds the comment:-

et rursus illi mactabitur Christus. <sup>19</sup>

This seems to be a direct allusion to the slaying of the fatted calf, and is most probably a suggestion that the prodigal is again permitted to assist at the sacrifice of the Eucharist. <sup>20</sup>

Tertullian sees the implication of this exegesis as allowing all types of sinners to be forgiven. As a follower of the New Prophecy, he could no longer accept this conclusion. Hence, he is forced to reject it and to replace it with another. However, he is unable to avoid the assistance provided by allegory.

The son ( representing the heathen ) squanders the substance ( natural wisdom and understanding of God ) which he has received from the father ( God ). <sup>21</sup> Having squandered his goods, he hands himself over to the prince of this world and is set in charge of swine

ut familiare id daemonum pecus pasceret. <sup>22</sup>

He soon becomes discontented when he sees others working for the father and receiving divine bread in abundance. Therefore, he decides to return home, and he receives again his former garment ( the condition of Adam before the Fall ), the ring ( the sign and seal of baptism - given after interrogation <sup>23</sup> ) for the first time, after which he feeds upon the "fatness" of the Lord's body ( in the Eucharist ).

The major, if not the only, reason, for this complete change in exegesis is Tertullian's involvement in the New Prophecy, and his desire to propagate a far more stringent code of conduct which he believes is beholden upon Christians as a result of the revelations of the Paraclete.

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19. De Pud., 9, 11.

20. See W.P. le Saint, Tertullian: Treatises on Penance, p. 228, n. 238.

21. See 1 Cor. 1:21a: ἐπειδὴ γὰρ ἐν τῇ σοφίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ἔγνω ὁ κόσμος

22. De Pud., 9, 15.

23. A reference to baptismal interrogation in the Church.

διὰ τῆς σοφίας  
τοῦ θεοῦ...

3. Ezek.33:11

Εἰπὸν αὐτοῖς Ζῶ ἐγώ, τάδε λέγει κύριος οὐ βούλομαι τὸν θάνατον τοῦ ἁσεβοῦς ὡς τὸ ἀποστρέψαι τὸν ἁσεβῆ ἀπὸ τῆς ὁδοῦ αὐτοῦ καὶ Ζῆν αὐτόν. ἀποτροφῆ ἀποστρέψατε ἀπὸ τῆς ὁδοῦ ὑμῶν· καὶ ἵνα τί ἀποθνήσκετε, οἶκος Ἰσραὴλ;

In De Pud., 18, 12, Tertullian indicates that the Catholics may have appealed to this text for justification of their practice of granting pardon to the major sins:-

Quid, si et hic respondere concipias, adimi quidem peccatoribus uel maxime carne pollutis communicationem, sed ad praesens, restituendam scilicet ex paenitentiae ambitu, secundum illam clementiam Dei, quae mauult peccatoris paenitentiam quam mortem ? Hoc enim fundamentum opinionis uestrae usquequaque pulsandum est.

Tertullian is not overwhelmed by the implications of this text which might threaten to overthrow his thesis in De Pud.. He comments that if repentance had been a viable option for a sinner after baptism, Paul - with whom Tertullian is dealing in this particular section - would have made it completely clear that the sinner had been condemned only temporarily and conditionally. In fact, the apostle makes no such suggestion, and it must be understood that any sinner who has committed a capital sin after baptism may not be accepted again into the Church. Appealing to the case of Paul himself, who admits that he has obtained mercy because he acted ignorantly, in unbelief, <sup>24</sup> Tertullian continues in De Pud., 18, 17:-

Ita clementia illa Dei malentis paenitentiam peccatoris quam mortem ad ignorantes adhuc et incredulos spectat, quorum causa liberandorum uenerit Christus, non qui iam Deum norint et sacramentum didicerint fidei.

However, Tertullian does realise that he is in danger of contradicting his own argument. If he takes the text to refer to all sins, he has to admit that repentance and forgiveness are impossible for all who sin in any way after baptism. Hence, he must draw a distinction between the more serious sins with which his concern lies here, and the lighter sins which he admits may be forgiven after baptism:-

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24. See 1 Tim.1:13.

Quod si clementia Dei ignorantibus adhuc et infidelibus competit, utique et paenitentia ad se clementiam inuitat, salua illa paenitentia, specie post fidem, quae aut leuioribus delictis ueniam ab episcopo consequi poterit aut maioribus et inremissibilibus a Deo solo. <sup>25</sup>

The text itself cannot support such a division. Its implications are therefore strained by Tertullian's desire to find in the words confirmation of his view that serious sins may not be forgiven.

The exegesis which Tertullian gives the text in De Pud. must be compared with his exegesis of it in his earlier writings. Eight occurrences must be noted:-

a) De Orat., 7, 1

Tertullian is here discussing the clause of the Lord's Prayer which is concerned with the forgiveness of sins, and in this context, he says:-

Exomologesis est petitio ueniae, quia qui petit ueniam, delictum confitetur. Sic et paenitentia demonstratur acceptabilis Deo, quia uult eam quam mortem peccatoris.

There can be no doubt that Tertullian sees penitence as bringing about the forgiveness of all sins, no matter what the nature of these sins may be.

b) De Paen., 4, 1f.

The different attitudes of De Paen. and De Pud. are clearly visible in this fourth chapter of De Paen., and one of the texts upon which this opposition is based is Ezek. 33:11. The first few words of the chapter are as follows:-

Omnibus ergo delictis seu carne seu spiritu, seu facto seu uoluntate commissis qui poenam per iudicium destinauit, idem et ueniam per paenitentiam spondit dicens ad populum: Paenitere et saluum faciam te.<sup>26</sup> Et rursus: uiuo, inquit, dicit dominus et paenitentiam malo quam mortem. Ergo paenitentia uita est, quae praeponitur morti.

There can be no mistaking Tertullian's argument here. Repentance leads to the forgiveness of all sins. No distinction is drawn between more serious sins and

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25. De Pud., 18, 18.

26. See Ezek. 18:30, 32.

lesser sins. In fact, the lack of distinction is stressed. The text of Ezek.33:11 is seen as indicating, as in De Orat., that all sins may be forgiven, whatever their nature. I would suggest, however, that the difference between these two passages and the arguments in De Pud. is not as great as may first be imagined. In De Orat.,7 and De Paen.,4, Tertullian is arguing that all sins can be forgiven, but the essential point to notice is that they will be forgiven by God. In De Pud.,Tertullian never seriously challenges this position. The aim of De Pud. is to show that the Church does not have the power to forgive the more serious sins. There is no question of God's inability or reluctance to forgive them. However, that being so, there is still a great difference between the interpretations placed on Ezek.33:11 in Tertullian's writings. In De Pud.,18, Tertullian seems to lose sight of the basic presupposition that it is God who alone can forgive sins of a serious nature, and he is led to conclude that any sinner who commits a capital sin after baptism has no hope of salvation, since Ezek.33:11 only applies to those who have committed such sins before they accepted the Christian faith. This interpretation completely transgresses the implications of the text. In De Pud.,18, Tertullian replaces the thought contained in Ezek.33:11 that God will willingly offer forgiveness to those who repent with the thought that no forgiveness will be possible for those who have committed grave sins, because the Church is not in a position to offer such forgiveness. It is assumed that since the Church cannot forgive these sins, death must follow. God, as the ultimate source of forgiveness, seems to have sunk into oblivion.

c) Adu. Marc.,2,8,1

Tertullian's aim in this chapter is to show that the Fall was in no way

brought about at the instigation of God. Man was entirely free, and therefore any digression from good must be attributed to him alone. The only restriction which God placed on man at the outset was that he should live virtuously.

Tertullian continues:-

Ita non in mortem institutum hominem probat qui ( et ) nunc cupit in uitam restitutum, malens peccatoris paenitentiam quam mortem.

This allusion to Ezek.33:11 must be seen as a general reference to repentance in the case of any sin, and not just of sins of a less serious nature.

d) Adu. Marc., 2, 13, 5

This section takes as its theme the divine justice, and in the closing lines of the chapter, Tertullian is eloquently reconciling the love of God with the need to fear him:-

Usque adeo iustitia etiam plenitudo est diuinitatis ipsius, exhibens deum perfectum, et patrem et dominum, patrem clementia dominum disciplina, patrem potestate blanda dominum seuera, patrem diligendum pie dominum timendum necessarie, diligendum, quia malit misericordiam quam sacrificium, et timendum, quia nolit peccatum, diligendum, quia malit paenitentiam peccatoris quam mortem, et timendum, quia nolit peccatores sui iam non paenitentes.

The emphasis of these lines is clearly that God prefers mercy, repentance, and dutiful affection. There is again no distinction drawn between the sins for which repentance is acceptable, and those for which it is not. Repentance is acceptable on every occasion.

e) Adu. Marc., 4, 10, 3f.

This passage offers conclusive evidence that, before his involvement in the New Prophecy leads him to the extreme position of De Pud., Tertullian makes no distinction between forgiveable and unforgiveable sins.

The theme of the chapter is that Christ, who forgave sins, must be regarded in the same tradition as the God of the Old Testament, who also forgave sins. Tertullian goes on to recount some of these Old Testament examples:-

Lego et Nathan prophetam agnoscenti David delictum suum in Uriam discisse: et dominus circumduxit delictum tuum et non morieris; 27 proinde et Achab regem, maritum Iezabel, reum idolatriae et sanguinis Nabuthae, ueniam meruisse paenitentiae nomine, 28 ( et ) Ionathan, filium Saulis, resignati ieiunii culpam deprecatione delesse. 29 Quid de ipso populo retexam, totiens delictorum indulgentia restituto ? Ab eo scilicet deo, qui mauult misericordiam quam sacrificium et peccatoris paenitentiam quam mortem.

This is a complete contradiction of the position Tertullian adopts in De Pud.. Tertullian here admits that David, who was guilty of adultery and murder, received forgiveness; that Ahab, who was guilty of idolatry and murder, received pardon also. Murder, adultery, and idolatry are all regarded in De Pud. as sins for which penance is unacceptable. The only chance a sinner will have of being forgiven for such capital sins is at God's judgement seat.

f). Adu. Marc., 4, 32, 2

In this chapter, Tertullian's aim is to show that the shepherd who sought after the lost sheep and the woman who searched for her lost coin<sup>30</sup> are representative of God and Christ. The only person to search after something is the person to whom the article belongs. Tertullian concludes the chapter with the words:-

Atque adeo exultare illius est de paenitentia peccatoris, id est de perditione recuperatione, qui se professus est olim malle peccatoris paenitentiam quam mortem.

The main concern of the chapter is to refute the Marcionite argument that these parables have reference to Marcion's Christ. Tertullian's argument that only the person to whom the articles belong can go and search for them is of course a false one. He is not concerned to identify the "lost sheep" or the "lost coin" as he does in De Paen., 8 and De Pud., 7f.. However, suffice it to point out here that he sees no problems concerning the repentance offered by

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27. See 2 Sam. 12:13.

28. See 1 Kings 21:29.

29. See 1 Sam. 14:43ff..

30. See Luke 15:3ff..



the sinner represented by the parables, and it would seem as though the sinner might be heathen or Christian, as the lost sheep and the lost coin are interpreted as applicable to "man" in general.

g) Adu. Marc.,5,11,2

Tertullian's argument here is that the title "Father of mercies"<sup>31</sup> belongs properly to the Creator, and he goes on to give examples from the Old Testament to show God's mercy. The examples he uses are, with the addition of Hezekiah,<sup>32</sup> those found earlier in the passage from Adu. Marc.,4,10, cited above. The comment is added:-

malens scilicet paenitentiam peccatoris quam mortem, utique ex misericordiae adfectu.

The same remarks apply as were made in relation to Adu. Marc.,4,10. Repentance is acceptable for the capital sins of murder, adultery, and idolatry.

h) Scorp.,1,8

The phenomenon of martyrdom posed problems for the early Christians,<sup>33</sup> and in this section, Tertullian is dealing with some of the paradoxes created by persecution and martyrdom:-

Sic is occidet, qui saluum facere debebit? Semel Christus pro nobis obiit, semel occisus est, ne occideremur. Si uicem repetit, num et ille salutem de mea nece expectat? An deus hominum sanguinem flagitat, maxime si taurorum et hircorum recusat? Certe peccatoris paenitentiam manuult quam mortem. Et quomodo non peccatorum desiderat mortem? 27

Little importance may be placed on this citation of Ezek.33:11. It is merely adduced for rhetorical purposes, mainly to symbolise the problems posed by martyrdom for the simple Christian believer. It would be wrong, I think, to draw conclusions from it about the way in which Tertullian thinks of the efficacy of repentance.

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31. 2 Cor.1:3.

32. See 2 Kings,20:3ff.

33. See later in this thesis, pp.239ff..

SUMMARY

The arguments of Tertullian in De Pud. are complicated and at times seemingly contradictory. His main concern seems to be with the sins that can and cannot be forgiven by the Church, since he does acknowledge that sins which the Church may not forgive, God actually does forgive.<sup>34</sup> However, often the thought of this ultimate divine forgiveness appears to fall into the background, and consequently, passages of Scripture need re-interpretation on occasions. If Tertullian had remembered that God could offer forgiveness for sins which the Church could not, the quotation of Ezek.33:11 would have presented no real problems. God's preference for the repentance of a sinner, rather than his death, could have been lifted to a higher plane than the Church, and could have been taken as a reference to the repentance necessary at the judgement seat. As it is, Tertullian's lack of precise distinction between sins to be forgiven by God and sins to be forgiven by the Church leads him to impose arbitrary interpretations on the text.<sup>35</sup> His desire to see the text as referring to those capital sins committed before baptism leads him to adopt an extreme position, for he loses sight of his distinction between capital and less serious sins. He applies the text to all sins, thus denying the validity of all repentance. The logical conclusion of Tertullian's reasoning<sup>36</sup> would seem to be that no sins at all can be forgiven, either by the Church, or even by God.

This arbitrary interpretation is necessitated by Tertullian's extreme position as a follower of the New Prophecy. There is no indication that he thinks of the text in this way in his earlier writings. In none of the occurrences noted above, is a distinction drawn between sins which can be

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34. See especially, De Pud., 3,3; 3,5; 18,8.

35. See especially, De Pud., 18,17f..

36. Especially in De Pud., 18,12f..

forgiven and those which cannot. If we assume that in De Pud.,<sup>18</sup> Tertullian wishes to use Ezek.33:11 to show that capital sins cannot be forgiven after baptism, no interpretation approaching this position can be found in any of his earlier writings. Indeed, in all the passages cited above, the implication is that all sins can be pardoned if the sinner is penitent, even capital sins. <sup>37</sup>

Thus the position adopted by Tertullian in De Pud. can be seen to be completely contradictory to his earlier exegesis of Ezek.33:11, and indeed, the interpretation of the text in De Pud. can be assessed as being in discord with his arguments in the treatise as a whole.

4. Rev.2:18ff.

Καὶ τῷ ἄγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Θυατείροις ἐκκλησίας γράψον, ... ἄλλὰ ἔχω κατὰ σοῦ ὅτι ἄφεις τὴν γυναῖκα Ἰσαβελ, ἣ λέγουσα ἑαυτὴν προφῆτιν, καὶ διδάσκει καὶ πλανᾷ τοὺς ἑμοὺς δούλους πορνεῦσαι, καὶ φαγεῖν εἰδωλόθυστα. καὶ ἔδωκε αὐτῇ χρόνον ἵνα μετανοήσῃ, καὶ οὐ θέλει μετανοήσαι ἐκ τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς. ἴδοὺ βάλλω αὐτὴν εἰς κλίνην, καὶ τοὺς μοιχεύοντάς μετ' αὐτῆς εἰς θλίψιν μεγάλην, ἔαν μὴ μετανοήσουσιν ἐκ τῶν ἔργων αὐτῆς.

These words from the Apocalypse are used in both De Paen. and De Pud.,

in the context of the efficacy of repentance:-

a) De Paen.,8,1

This reference to Rev.2:18ff. occurs amongst a number of references to the Apocalypse:-

Id si dubitas, euolue quae spiritus ecclesiis dicat: desertam dilectionem Ephesiis inputat, <sup>38</sup> stuprum et idolothytorum esum Thyatirenis exprobrat, <sup>39</sup> Sardos non plenum operum incusat, <sup>40</sup> Pergamemos docentes peruersa reprehendit, <sup>41</sup> Laudicenos diuitiis fidentes obiurgat: <sup>42</sup> et tamen omnes ad paenitentiam commonet, sub comminationibus quidem. Non comminaretur autem non paenitenti, si non ignosceret paenitenti....

37. Cf. Adu. Marc.,4,10; 5,11.

38. See Rev.2:4.

39. See Rev.2:20.

40. See Rev.3:2.

41. See Rev.2:14f..

42. See Rev.3:17.

Of these several references to the Spirit's warnings to the various churches, the most important one for our purposes is the warning to the church at Thyatira about the toleration of fornication and eating things sacrificed to idols. In De Paen., Tertullian emphasises the possibility of repentance and forgiveness. Both sins may be forgiven if penitence is forthcoming. The situation is somewhat altered in De Pud..

b) De Pud., 19, 1ff.

Tertullian admits that at first sight the passage in Rev. 2 appears to favour the argument of the Catholics that fornication may be forgiven:-

Quasi in Apocalypsi manifeste fornicatione posuerit paenitentiae auxilium, ubi ad angelum Thyatirenorum Spiritus mandat....

This apparent harmony of John's words with the Catholic position about penitence necessitates the emphasis that it is inconceivable to suppose that one apostle could be in disagreement with another. Paul refused repentance to capital sins. <sup>43</sup> John must have done the same. Tertullian's words in this context are worth citing:-

Totius itaque sacramenti interest nihil credere ab Iohanne concessum quod a Paulo sit denegatum. Hanc aequalitatem Spiritus sancti qui obseruauerit, ab ipso deducitur in sensus eius.

The implication of these words is that the Holy Spirit is consistent, and that this consistency will only be evident to those who are guided by him. Naturally, Tertullian would regard the followers of the New Prophecy as guided by the Spirit, and it is his commonly asserted belief that they have a superior knowledge of Scripture. <sup>44</sup>

The answer given by Tertullian to the problem posed by the reference to repentance in connection with fornication is to insist that the woman became a sinner before she was baptised into the Christian faith. Hence, repentance would be possible in that, at baptism, she would acknowledge the error of her former,

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43. Tertullian deals with Paul's views in De Pud., 13ff..

44. See De Resurr., 63, 7ff; Adu. Prax., 2, 1. For a discussion on this belief, see above, pp. 29ff..

pre-Christian ways. He argues that her case can be compared with that of the heathen, because prima paenitentia allows the sins of both, committed before baptism, to be forgiven. Even if this argument is not acceptable to the Catholics, there is still no possibility, according to Tertullian, of using this passage from Rev. to condone second repentance. Rev.2:22 recognises the possibility of doing penance, but it does not indicate that the Church may grant absolution for adultery. There is nothing to stop the woman doing public penance, although forgiveness may not be granted to her by the Church.

The two opposing arguments of De Paen. and De Pud. are again reflected in the interpretation of this passage from the Apocalypse. The exegesis of it in De Paen.,<sup>8</sup> allows for the possibility of penitence and absolution. There is no hint of this penance receiving no absolution. In De Pud., the emphasis is different. Whereas earlier Tertullian is not forced to mention the position of the Church in the granting of absolution, nor to mention the distinction between pre- and post-baptismal sins, in De Pud. his cause makes such emphases more essential. So, he argues that forgiveness is only possible provided that the sins were committed before baptism. - at least, as far as the Church's power to absolve is concerned.

B. AN ANALYSIS OF TEXTS TO WHICH A DIFFERENT INTERPRETATION IS APPLIED IN DE PUD. FROM ONES GIVEN IN EARLIER WRITINGS.

1. Luke 7:36ff.

In these verses, Luke describes the washing of Christ's feet by the woman who had brought with her ointment for the purpose.<sup>45</sup> Tertullian uses this incident on two occasions, and, although the use he makes of it differs, a development in his thought can be seen from the one usage to the other:-

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45. This event is also recorded in Matt.26:6ff.; Mk.14:3ff.; Jn.11:2.

a) Adu. Marc., 4, 18, 9

Tertullian is systematically analysing Luke's gospel, in order to show that the Old Testament and the New are in harmony. The incident of the woman and her ointment is taken up as a further proof of this harmony, as well as of the solid nature of Christ's body:-

Diximus de remissa peccatorum. Illius autem peccatricis feminae argumentum eo pertinebit, ut cum pedes domini osculis figeret, lacrimis inundaret, crinibus detergeret, unguento perduceret, solidi corporis ueritatem, non phantasma inane tractauerit, et ut peccatricis paenitentia secundum creatorem meruerit ueniam, praeponere solitum sacrificio. Sed et si paenitentiae stimulus ex fide acciderat, per paenitentiam ex fide iustificata ab eo audiit: fides tua te saluam fecit, qui per Abacuc pronuntiarat: iustus ex fide sua uiuet. 46

It will be seen that Tertullian's concern here is primarily with a refutation of Marcion's doctrine of two dispensations, and thus, the main accent falls on the harmony between the two Testaments. However, the impression is given that Tertullian sees no problem in the incident of the woman and her ointment for his theories of repentance and forgiveness. For him, she is forgiven. There are no limitations to that forgiveness. The fact that she was a sinner and had faith in Christ was enough to ensure her forgiveness. The emphasis falls on her faith, which was the main reason for her salvation.

b) De Pud., 11, 1ff.

Tertullian's aim here is to show that any favour Christ may have shown to sinners must not be regarded as normative in the Church:-

Si uero et factis aliquid tale pro peccatoribus edidit Dominus, ut cum peccatrici feminae etiam corporis sui contactum permittit lauanti lacrimis pedes eius et crinibus detergenti et unguento sepulturam ipsius inauguranti, .... nihil ex hoc aduersariis confertur, et si iam Christianis ueniam delictorum praestitisset. Nunc enim dicimus, soli Domino hoc licet, hodie potestas indulgentiae eius operetur. Ad illa tamen tempora, quibus in terris egit, hoc definimus nihil aduersum nos praeiudicare, si peccatoribus etiam Iudaeis uenia conferebatur. Christiana enim disciplina a nouatione testamenti et, ut praemisimus, a redemptione carnis id est Domini passione censetur. Nemo perfectus ante repertum ordinem fide, nemo Christianus ante Christum caelo resumptum, nemo sanctus ante Spiritum sanctum de caelo repraesentatum ipsius disciplinae determinatorem.

The comments of W.P. le Saint upon this passage may be briefly noted here.

He points out that the Christian Church began its existence only after the ascension of Christ into heaven, and that, since the exclusion of Christians from pardon for serious sins was inaugurated by the revelations of the Paraclete in the New Prophecy, it makes no difference, Tertullian argues, what examples of forgiveness are to be found in the New Testament narrative before this time. Such instances cannot be regarded as precedents for the new code of conduct applicable under the New Prophecy. <sup>47</sup>

In the light of Tertullian's statements in this chapter of De Pud., it is legitimate, I think, to see a development in his attitude to the incident of the woman and her ointment. In Adu. Marc., 4, 18, 9, he is prepared to admit that the woman's repentance and the Lord's forgiveness were valid, in that they were quite in keeping with the Creator's original dispensation. He places no limits on their validity, and the implication which one may fairly draw from this passage is that, just as Christ granted forgiveness to the woman as a result of her faith, so too he will grant forgiveness to anyone whose faith leads to penitence. In De Pud., however, the tone has changed. Limitations have been placed on the validity of Christ's forgiveness. It is only applicable to Christ's own times, and there seems to be an underlying suggestion that even Christ's forgiveness cannot really match up to the forgiveness which can be granted by the Paraclete. Tertullian's desire to emphasise the importance of the Paraclete leads him, I would suggest, to undermine the value <sup>of</sup> Christ's forgiveness. Christ's role seems to be of secondary importance to that of the Paraclete revealed recently in the New Prophecy. In drawing this conclusion, Tertullian is forced to alter, or at least superimpose new ideas on, his earlier interpretation of the account of the woman and her ointment. ✓

## 2. Acts 15:28f.

In De Pud., 12, 4, Tertullian quotes this text which refers to the Apostolic

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47. See Tertullian: Treatises on Penance. pp. 236f., n. 301f..

Decree of the Council of Jerusalem, as follows:-

Visum est, inquit, Spiritui sancto et nobis nullum amplius uobis adicere pondus quam eorum a quibus necesse est abstineri, a sacrificiis et a fornicationibus et sanguine. A quibus obseruando recte agetis uetante uos Spiritu sancto.

Tertullian adds the comment in De Pud.,12,5:-

Sufficit et hic seruatum esse moechiae et fornicationi locum honoris sui inter idololatriam et homicidium. Interdictum enim sanguinis multo magis humani intellegemus.

This text from Acts is used by Tertullian as support for his argument that adultery and fornication are to be added to idolatry and murder as non remissibilia. Furthermore, he seizes upon the opportunity of emphasising that what the Holy Spirit proposed in apostolic days has been confirmed once more in the recent revelation of the Paraclete.-In De Pud.,12,9ff., he says:-

Sed non leuiter nobiscum pactus Spiritus sanctus, etiam ultro pactus, quo magis honorandus. Sponsionem eius nemo dissoluet nisi ingratus, iam nec recipiet quae dimisit nec dimittet quae retinuit. Nouissimi testamenti semper indemutabilis status est, et utique recitatio decreti consiliumque illud cum saeculo desinet.... Hinc est, quod neque idololatriae neque sanguini pax ab ecclesiis redditur.

Tertullian's argument that the Decree proves that idolatry, murder, and adultery are irremissible is invalid, because it is based on an uncertain reading of the text, <sup>48</sup> on possible anachronism, <sup>49</sup> and on the assumption that such sins would be irremissible by the Church, if they were committed. <sup>50</sup>

In his understanding of the Decree, Tertullian follows the Western tradition which saw in it a prohibition of the three capital sins. <sup>51</sup> The Eastern tradition,

48. I reproduce the textual apparatus on Acts 15:28f., from the British and Foreign Bible Society's *Η Καιρη Διαθηκη*: London: 1958<sup>2</sup>:-  
ἔδοξεν γὰρ τῷ Πνεύματι τῷ Ἁγίῳ καὶ ἡμῖν μηδὲν πλέον ἐπιτίθεσθαι ὑμῖν βέρος πλὴν τούτων τῶν ἐπιτάγας, ἀπέχεσθαι εἰδωλοθύτων καὶ αἵματος καὶ πλικτῶν καὶ πορνείας· ἐξ ὧν διατηροῦντες ἑαυτοὺς εὖ πράξετε.  
ἔρρωθς.  
29. καὶ πνικτων δ<sup>1</sup> A\* B 614 al co; R ] κ. πνικτου E pm it vg<sup>s,cl</sup>  
(vg<sup>w</sup> om καὶ et uncis includit π) S: om D d Ir Tert<sup>pt</sup> Cyr Ephr Ambst  
Aug [καὶ πορνείας] om Or<sup>pt</sup> vg (B\*) Vig Gaud: add καὶ οὐ μὴ θέλετε εαυτοῖς  
γινεσθαι ετερω μη ποιειν (ποιειτε vg (D) Ir Cyr) D (64 al) d p sy<sup>h</sup> sa  
Ir Tert Cyr [πράξετε] add φερομενοι εν τω Αγιω Πνευματι D d Ir<sup>lot</sup> Tert.

49. The Church may have placed a different understanding on the allusions to idols and blood in the text, from that originally intended.

50. See W.P. le Saint, Tertullian: Treatises on penance. p.238, n.308.

51. See Cyprian, Ad Quir., 3, 119.



on the other hand, regarded the Decree as a dietary regulation to which was added a prohibition of fornication.<sup>52</sup>

There are, however, two occasions when Tertullian may be thinking of the text in this latter sense, and these are worthy of note:-

a) Apol.,9,13

Erubescat error uester Christianis, qui ne animalium quidem sanguinem in epulis esculentis habemus, qui propterea suffocatis quoque et morticinis abstinemus, ne quo modo sanguine contaminemur uel intra uiscera sepulto.

Tertullian is pointing out a number of heathen practices which involve killing and eating the slain victims. In contrast, Christians refuse to eat blood at all.

W.P. le Saint sees in this passage a direct usage of Acts 15:29.<sup>53</sup> If this could be confirmed, then a change in Tertullian's understanding of the text could be asserted. However, I would doubt that this passage is directly dependent on the text, since the inclusion of the phrase suffocatis....abstinemus would not be induced by Tertullian's reading of the text which we know from its citation in De Pud.,12 did not contain this phrase. It would seem more fitting to regard the passage in Apol.,9 as dependent rather on the Jewish laws of Lev.17-28 than on the specific text of Acts 15:29.

b) De Monog.,5

W.P.le Saint cites this section as one in which Tertullian again uses Acts 15:29. He does not, however, pin-point a specific passage.<sup>54</sup> The only few lines which seem to qualify are the following, in De Monog.,5,3:-

Et adeo in Christo omnia reuocantur ad initium, ut et fides reuersa sit a circumcissione ad integritatem carnis illius, sicut ab initio fuit, et libertas ciborum et sanguinis solius abstinentia, sicut ab initio fuit, et matrimonii indiuiduitas, sicut ab initio fuit, et repudii cohibitio, quod ab initio non fuit, et postremo totus homo in paradisum reuocatur, ubi ab initio fuit.

Presumably, the phrases et libertas ciborum et sanguinis solius abstinentia are the ones in which le Saint wishes to see dependence on Acts 15:29. Such dependence is unproven, in my opinion, except for the fact that Tertullian clearly indicates

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52. See the references given by W.P.le Saint, Tertullian: Treatises on Penance, p.238, n.308.

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid.

that this abstinence from blood dates from the Christian era rather than from the Jewish law. In this respect, the text of Acts 15:29 may be in his mind - but concrete proof is not forthcoming.

If the two occurrences mentioned in Apol., 9, 13 and De Monog., 5, 3 could be regarded as induced by Acts 15:29, it would be legitimate to conclude that Tertullian's understanding of the text in De Pud., 12 differs from his earlier views. In De Pud., he sees the text as referring to abstinence from murder, whereas earlier he may have regarded it as merely a reference to dietary regulations. If there is indeed such a development in his understanding of the text, this development can only be precipitated by his desire to see in the text support for his arguments on second repentance. However, such a conclusion remains uncertain.

3. Is. 52:11 ( cf. 2 Cor. 6:17 )

Ἀπόσπῃτε ἀπόσπῃτε ἐξέλθατε ἐκεῖθεν καὶ ἀκαθάρτου μὴ ἔπτεσθε,  
ἐξέλθατε ἐκ μέσου αὐτῆς ἀφορίσθητε, οἱ φέροντες τὴν  
σκεύην Κυρίου.

This text is cited in De Pud., 18, 3f. following a reference to Prov. 6:32ff. <sup>55</sup>  
which Tertullian takes to signify that there can be no possible atonement for adultery. Anxious to allay the suggestion that this text could be regarded as referring to a heathen, he adds:-

Hoc si de ethnico putaueris dictum, certe de fidelibus iam audisti per Esaiam: Excedite de medio eorum et separamini et immundum ne attigeritis. <sup>56</sup>

This latter text is quoted by Paul <sup>57</sup> in connection with his argument that the faithful should not marry unbelievers, thus bringing themselves into contact with the unclean influences of heathen ethics and religion. It is

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55. Tertullian cites this as:-

moechus autem per indigentiam sensuum perditionem animae suae acquirit, dolores et dehonestationes sustinet. Ignominia autem eius non abolebitur in aeuum. Plena enim zeli indignatio uiro non parcat in die iudicii.

56. De Pud., 18, 4.

57. See 2 Cor. 6:17.

noticeable that this is not the sense in which Tertullian understands the text here. He transposes the original prophetic exhortation for the Israelites to leave behind the captivity of Babylon by regarding it as a reference to the necessity for Christians to avoid the adulterer. He seems to take the text as being addressed to Christians, and it would appear that *de medio eorum* refers to the adulterers.

This usage of the text is extremely different from the other occasions on which Tertullian refers to it:-

a) Adu. Marc., 3, 22, 2

Tertullian is here talking about the apostolic preaching. The apostles did not preach the "other god" of Marcion, but preached the same God whose Scriptures they were fulfilling. The text which Tertullian cites in this context is Is. 52:11, which he quotes in full, and his citation is interspersed with comments, as follows:-

... diuertite, diuertite, in clamat Esaias, excedite illinc et inmundum ne attigeritis - blasphemiam scilicet in Christum - excedite de medio eius - utique synagogae - separamini, qui dominica uasa portatis.

The phrase utique synagogae refers to the withdrawal from the obligations of Judaism by the apostles; <sup>58</sup> the phrase blasphemiam scilicet in Christum may best be seen as a reference to Jewish reluctance to accept Christ as the Messiah. <sup>59</sup> This interpretation is far removed from that in De Pud., 18.

b) Adu. Marc., 5, 18, 6

Tertullian is here intent on showing the harmony between Paul and the Old Testament. His argument is that much of Paul's thought is directly

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58. In the first part of the chapter, Tertullian seems to emphasise the relation of the apostles to the Jews.

59. This appears to fit into the context better than to regard the phrase as a reference to pagan idolatry and lack of faith.

influenced by the prophets and the Psalms. Commenting on the words in Eph.5:11, which he regards as Pauline, Tertullian says:-

... nolite communicare operibus tenebrarum - cum iusto enim iustus eris et cum peruaerso peruerteris, et: auferte malum de medio uestrum, et: exite de medio eorum et inmundum ne adtingeritis; separamini, qui fertis uasa domini.

Tertullian seems to be taking the text of Is.52:11 in the context of moral standards. He regards it as harmonious with Paul's own moral standards that Christians should avoid evil. Again, however, there is no specific reference to adultery.

c) De Cor.,10,7

Talking about the relation between wearing the crown and idolatry, Tertullian appeals to the aposle's command to flee idolatry in 1 Cor.10:14.<sup>60</sup> He goes on to refer to 2 Cor.6:15:-

Quae communio Christo et Beliae ? Et ideo fugite longe. longum enim diuortium mandat ab idolatria ....

The last sentence may well be an allusion to the citation of Is.52:11 in 2 Cor.6:17. If this is so, then it is obvious that Tertullian is thinking of this text in the context of idolatry, and certainly not of adultery as in De Pud.

The four occurrences of the text throughout Tertullian's writings indicate an important change in his understanding of the text, as he becomes increasingly influenced by the principles of the New Prophecy. De Pud. contains an exegesis of the text which is nowhere preceded in earlier writings - the application of this text to adultery. Such an application was not in the mind of Isaiah or Paul, and consequently one must admit that Tertullian is placing upon the text implications which are not found in it. This is created by his desire to find Scriptural support for his arguments in De Pud.

60. Διοπερ, <sup>2</sup> ἀγαπητοί μου, φευγετε ἀπο τῆς εἰδωλολατρίας.

breathy  
accents

4. Ps.1:1

Μακάριος ἄνθρωπος, ὃς οὐκ ἐπαρεύθη ἐν βουλῇ ἁσεβῶν  
καὶ ἐν ὁδῷ ἁμαρτωλῶν οὐκ ἔστη  
καὶ ἐπὶ καθέδραν λοιμῶν οὐκ ἐκάθισεν,

In the same section as that in which he cites Is.52:11, <sup>61</sup> Tertullian

appeals to Ps.1:1 in order to re-assert his view that adultery may not gain forgiveness:-

Habes statim in psalmis: Beatum uirum, qui non abierit in consilio impiorum nec in uia peccatorum steterit et in cathedra pestilentiae non sederit.

This is evidently taken by Tertullian to apply to the Christian's avoidance of the adulterer. This is an unusual application of the text, matched only by the exegesis of it in De Spect.,3. Three other instances may be noted also:-

a) De Spect.,3,3ff.

In a section in which Tertullian is exhorting his fellow-Christians to avoid heathen spectacles, such as the circus and the theatre, he admits in 3,1 that there is no specific Biblical prohibition of going to these shows. However, this is not to say that Scripture has nothing at all to state on the topic in a less direct manner. So, he appeals to the text of Ps.1:1:-

Sed inueniens ad hanc quoque speciem pertinere illam primam uocem Dauid: Felix uir, inquit, qui non abiit in concilium impiorum et in uia peccatorum non stetit et in cathedra pestium non sedit.

Tertullian's exegesis of the text is worth quoting in full:-

Nam etsi iustum illum uidetur praedicasse, quod in concilio et in concessu Iudaeorum de necando Domino consultantium non communicauit, late tamen semper scriptura diuina diuiditur, ubicumque secundum praesentis rei sensum etiam disciplina munitur, ut hic quoque non sit aliena uox a spectaculorum interdictione. Si enim pauculos tunc Iudaeos impiorum concilium uocarit, quanto magis tantum conuentum ethnici populi? Minus impii ethnici, minus peccatores, minus hostes Christi quam tunc Iudaei? Quid quod et cetera congruunt. Nam apud spectacula et in cathedra sedetur et in uia statur; uias enim et cardines uocant balteorum per ambitum et discrimina popularium per proclium; cathedra quoque nominatur ipse in anfractu ad consessum situs. Itaque contrario infelix qui in quodcumque concilium impiorum abierit et in quacumque uia peccatorum steterit et in quacumque cathedra pestium sederit generaliter dictum intellegamus, cum quid generaliter, etiam specialiter, interpretari capit.

The exegetical principles put forward in this passage are discussed later. 62

61. I.e. De Pud.,18,4.

62. See pp. 263ff. Ps.1:1 had already been applied to the context of games and shows; cf. Clement of Alexandria, Paedag.,3,11. Tertullian takes up this usage and applies it to his own ends.

What is more important here is the very unusual nature of the exegesis. It shows the ingenuity which Tertullian can summon to aid in order to defend his views, and it is worth noting that De Spect. is one of his earliest works.<sup>63</sup> Moreover, it is uninfluenced by the New Prophecy. However, the desperate characteristic features of much of Tertullian's later exegesis is evident here. It is fair to conclude that his exegetical principles are adapted to suit the nature of his arguments. Tertullian is a man to defend rigidly the position he is putting forward, and will always go to great lengths to prove his arguments. De Spect. sets the precedent, in this section at least, for the spirit of desperation which is to seize Tertullian completely in his defence of the principles of the New Prophecy.

b) De Spect., 27, 4

This is a passage containing an allusion to the exegesis given above in De Spect., 3:-

Non ergo fugies sedilia hostium Christi, illam " cathedram pestilentiarum" ipsumque aerem qui desuper incubat scelestis uocibus constupratum ?

No further comment need be made.

c) Adu. Marc., 2, 19, 2f.

Tertullian has been speaking about the goodness of God's law, and he continues by appealing to the worthy precepts of the prophets, amongst which he cites several texts from the Psalms. One of these is given as:-

non abire in concilium impiorum nec stare in uia nec in cathedra pestilentium sedere.<sup>64</sup>

Tertullian adds the comment:-

Sed ubi ? Vide quam bonum et iocundum habitare fratres in unum.....<sup>65</sup>

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63. See the introduction to this thesis, p.17.

64. Adu. Marc., 2, 19, 2.

65. See Ps.133:1.

The implication is that Tertullian is understanding the text of Ps.1:1 in the way in which the Psalmist intended, namely, as an exhortation to flee wickedness. This would seem to be the only occurrence of the text in his writings in which he gives a more or less "orthodox" interpretation.

d) Adu. Marc.,4,42,8.

Tertullian's aim here is to demonstrate that Christ's body was no phantom, as Marcion would have it believed. The Crucifixion and the after events would make no sense, if the body of Christ was unreal. For instance, how could Joseph of Arimathea have asked for the body, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in the <sup>66</sup> sepulchre, if the body had been unreal? This was the Joseph who had not agreed to the plans of the Jews to kill Christ:-

... ille Ioseph, qui non consensuerat in scelere Iudaeis, beatus uir, qui non abiit in consilio impiorum et in uia peccatorum non stetit et in cathedra pestium non sedit.

This reference to Ps.1:1 is probably induced by the idea of consilium found in Luke 23:50 - Joseph was a member of the council which had condemned Christ to death. Hence, the "ungodly", "sinners", and "scornful" seem to refer to the council of the Jews. Once again, this is a rather unusual interpretation of the text.

The above discussion has shown, among other things, that Tertullian's interpretations of the text of Ps.1:1 are not consistent. He applies the text to the avoidance of shows by Christians, to the avoidance of adulterers, to the disagreement of Joseph with the plans of the Jewish councillors, and more naturally, to the avoidance of evil in general. These interpretations show a capacity to manipulate Scripture for a defence of argumentation.

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66. See Luke 23:50ff.

5. Ps.18:26f. ( In the Septuagint, Ps.17:26f.)

μετὰ ὀπίου ὀσιωθήση  
καὶ μετὰ ἀνδρὸς ἀθώου ἀθῶος ἔση  
καὶ μετὰ ἐκλεκτοῦ ἐκλεκτὸς ἔση  
καὶ μετὰ στρεβλοῦ διαστρέψει.

This is another text which Tertullian uses to show that adultery cannot be forgiven, in De Pud., 18,5. He takes the text as a warning to Christians to avoid the adulterer.<sup>67</sup> Besides this occurrence of the text, there are two others. In both, there is no mention of adultery:-

a) Adu. Marc., 5,18,6

In Adu. Marc., 5,18,5, Tertullian turns to a discussion about the figurative language of Paul, and the first text he deals with is that of Eph.4:8 which he cites as:-

captiuam duxit captiuitatem.

His desire is to show this text is not concerned with a physical conflict, but with a spiritual one, and it is not to be interpreted as indicating a conflict between Paul's system and a previous one ( to coincide with Marcion's system of the two gods ). Indeed, there is a great harmony between Paul's statement and the Old Testament, since it was the Scriptures which had provided Paul with his language in this context:-

Agnoscere igitur iam et armaturam et militiam eius spiritalem, si iam didicisti esse captiuitatem spiritalem, ut et hanc illius agnoscas, uel quia et captiuitatis huius mentionem de prophetis apostolus sumpsit, a quibus et mandata: deponentes mendacium loquimini ueritatem ad proximum quisque, et: irascimini et nolite delinquere - ut ipsis uerbis, quibus psalmus, exponeret sensus eius -; sol non occidat super iracundiam uestram; nolite communicare operibus tenebrarum - cum iusto enim iustus eris et cum peruerso peruerteris, ....

This citation of Ps.18:26f. is an abbreviated version of that in De Pud., 18. The interesting point here is that the precept, and the others with which it appears, is applied merely to general moral demands, rather than to a specific

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67. Tertullian does not add a comment specifically to this text.



demand to avoid adultery. Indeed, the next few lines go on to deal with avoidance of evil, and avoidance of drunkenness, and thus there is no emphasis on the special sin of adultery, since Tertullian's arguments do not require such a specification.

b) De Exh. Cast., 10, 3ff.

In the later treatises on marriage, the idea of adultery and fornication is always to be found hovering under the surface of Tertullian's arguments. It is, therefore, surprising, given the unusual application of this text in De Pud., 18, that there is no hint of such an exegesis in these later treatises on the subject of marriage. As it is, the text occurs only once, and the context in which it is placed is not specifically concerned with adultery. Tertullian is arguing that prayers are efficacious only if the conscience of the worshipper is clear. A guilty conscience prevents a man from walking in Christ's way:-

Oratio de conscientia procedit: si conscientia erubescat, erubescit oratio. Spiritus deducit orationem ad deum: si spiritus reus apud se sit conscientiae erubescens, quomodo audebit orationem deducere ab alia rea, qua erubescens et ipse suffunditur? Sanctus minister etenim est, et prophetica uox ueteris testamenti: Sancti eritis, quia deus sanctus,<sup>68</sup> et rursum: Cum sancto sanctificaberis, et cum uiro innocenti innocuus eris et cum electo electus. Debemus enim ita ingredi in disciplina domini, ut deo dignum fructum, non secundum carnis squalentes concupiscentias.

The implications of these words are summarised at the beginning of the next chapter:-

Si haec obfusio, etiam cum in unis nuptiis res carnis exercitur, spiritum sanctum auertit, quanto magis, cum in secundo matrimonio agitur?

Tertullian is claiming that marriage, in itself, is enough to hinder spirituality. Hence, his reference must not be seen merely in relation to adultery. As one of the sins which may accompany marriage, adultery could be at the back of Tertullian's mind, but it is not to adultery that he explicitly refers in this passage. Thus, the exegesis of Ps. 17:26f. in De Pud., 18 is unique in its precise application to adultery.

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68. See Lev. 11:44f.; 19:2; 20:7.

6. Ps. 59:16ff. ( In the Septuagint, Ps. 49:16ff.)

τῷ δὲ ἁμαρτωλῷ εἶπεν ὁ θεός  
"Ἴνα τί σὺ. διηγῶ τὰ δικαιώματά μου  
καὶ ἀναλαμβάνεις τὴν διαθήκην μου διὰ στόματός σου;  
σὺ δὲ ἐμίσησας παιδείαν  
καὶ ἐξέβαλες τοὺς λόγους μου εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω.  
εἰ ἐθέλεις κλέπτῃν, συνέτρεχες κύτῳ,  
καὶ μετὰ μοιχῶν τὴν μερίδα σου ἐτίθεις.

This is the final text which Tertullian draws on in this section of his appeal to the Old Testament to show that aversion to adultery is long-standing.

So, in De Pud., 18,6, he says:-

Et alibi: Peccatori autem dicit Dominus, ut quid tu exponis iustificationes meas et adsumis testamentum meum per os tuum? Si uidebas furem, currebas cum eo et cum adulteris portionem tuam ponebas.

This text speaks explicitly of the low regard in which adulterers are held.

Tertullian uses the latter part of the text briefly in De Spect., 15,8 to show that complete rejection of a practice demands the breaking of contact with those who take part in it. He is speaking specifically of shows in this passage:-

Nobis satis non est, si ipsi nihil tale facimus, nisi et talia factitantibus non conferamur. Si furem, inquit, uidebas, concurrebas cum eo ....

Christians themselves do not enter heathen games: they should not attend them either. An interesting point here is that Tertullian proposes the precept that disagreement with a view demands complete separation from those who hold and practise this view. Perhaps there can be seen an early hint of Tertullian's disapproval of the Catholics and his dissociation from them in his later times.<sup>69</sup>

7. 1 Cor. 5:5

... παραδοῦναι τὸν τοιοῦτον τῷ Σατανᾷ εἰς ὄλεθρον  
τῆς σαρκός, ἵνα τὸ πνεῦμα σωθῆ ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ  
τοῦ Κυρίου.

In De Pud., 13,23ff., Tertullian's understanding of this text which he reads as:-

...in interitum carnis ut spiritus saluus sit in die Domini

seems to be influenced by his involvement in the New Prophecy. He comments on spiritus as follows:-

69. For a discussion on Tertullian's relations, as a follower of the New Prophecy, to the Catholics, see above, pp. 12f..

Superest igitur ut eum spiritum dixerit, qui in ecclesia censetur, saluum id est integrum praestandum in die Domini ab immunditiarum contagione eiecto incesto fornicatione. <sup>70</sup>

This conclusion is forced on Tertullian, because, to assume that spiritus refers to the man himself, seems to undermine his whole doctrine of the resurrection of the flesh, although he recognises earlier, in De An., 58, that it is possible for the soul to receive chastisement after death, before its re-union with the body on the day of judgement. Lest his doctrine of the resurrection be impaired, Tertullian transfers the idea of spiritus to the Church.

In Adu. Marc., 5, 7, 2, Tertullian comments on this text to show the harmony between the Old and the New Testaments:-

..... sed cum eum damnat dedendum satanae, damnatoris dei praeco est. Viderit et quomodo dixerit: in interitum carnis, ut spiritus saluus sit in die domini, dum et de carnis interitu et de salute spiritus iudicabit et auferri iubens malum de medio creatoris frequentissimam sententiam commemorauerit.

There is no indication that Tertullian is thinking here of the spirit as belonging to the Church. The way he talks of a judicial process implies that it is the spirit of the man that is to be saved.

This is an excellent example of Tertullian's manipulation of Scripture to fit in with the arguments which he adopts as a follower of the New Prophecy.

#### 8. 1 Cor. 5:5 and 1 Tim. 1:20

The Greek text of 1 Cor. 5:5 has already been quoted on the previous page.

The Greek of 1 Tim. 1:20 reads as follows:-

ὧν ἑστίν Ὑμέναιος καὶ Ἀλέξανδρος, οὓς παρέδωκα τῷ  
Σατανᾷ ἵνα παιδεύωσιν μὴ βλασφημεῖν.

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70. De Pud., 13, 25.

In his discussion of 1 Cor.5:5 in which Paul orders the incestuous man to be handed over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, Tertullian adduces the example of Hymenaeus and Alexander, who too were handed over to Satan

ut emendarentur non blasphemare.

Tertullian argues that, since their blasphemy was irremissible in this world and the next, the incestuous sinner could not receive pardon either. Tertullian's comment on 1 Tim.1:20 is interesting:-

Sed et si dixit: Tradidi eos satanae, uti disciplinam acciperent non blasphemandi, de ceteris dixit, qui illis traditis satanae id est extra ecclesiam proiectis erudiri haberent blasphemandum non esse. Sic igitur et incestum fornicatorem non in emendationem, sed in perditionem tradidit satanae, ad quem iam super ethnicum delinquendo transierat, ut discerent fornicandum non esse.<sup>71</sup>

The implication which Tertullian draws from 1 Tim.1:20 is that when Paul handed over the two men to Satan he was excommunicating them from the fellowship of the Church, in order to encourage others. Tertullian seems desperate to shy away from the suggestion that the task of Satan was merely reformatory. If he admits that blasphemy may be forgiven, he has to admit that adultery and fornication may be forgiven too.

This evasion seems desperate. Firstly, the text of Matt.12:31 indicates it is only blasphemy against the Holy Spirit which cannot be pardoned. All other blasphemy - even that against Christ himself - is pardonable. Paul, in 1 Tim.1:20, does not specify the kind of blasphemy which the two men have committed, and thus, Tertullian takes it as the most serious kind of blasphemy.

Secondly, in De Fuga,2,7, the text of 1 Tim.1:20 is given a different interpretation. In this passage, Tertullian's argument is that Satan has the authority of God to punish, humble, to buffet. One instance he gives is that mentioned in this text:-

Nam et ipse apostolus Phygellum et Hermogenem tradidit satanae, uti emendentur, ne blasphement.

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71. De Pud.,13,21.

Tertullian appears to have confused the men with those of 2 Tim,1:15, but the phrases clearly imply that it is 1 Tim.1:20 which he has in mind. The impression he gives is that he is thinking of the actions of Satan in this instance as purely reformatory. The lack of comment on the unforgiveable nature of the blasphemy would support this conclusion.

It would seem that when Tertullian writes De Fuga he regards Satan's possession of Hymenaeus and Alexander as necessitated by God's desire for reform. By the time he comes to write De Pud., the need for a change of interpretation has been brought about by his argumentation on behalf of the New Prophecy. The text is used as a support for his view that adultery - and worse still, incest - is unforgiveable. <sup>72</sup>

C. AN ANALYSIS OF TEXTS USED IN DE PUD., AND NOWHERE ELSE, TO SUPPORT THE PRINCIPLES OF THE NEW PROPHECY.

This reference to Tertullian's use of 1 Cor.5:5 forms a nice bridge to an analysis of texts which are used only in De Pud., and which are given unusual - often untenable - interpretations in the cause of a defence of the arguments of the New Prophecy. The first passage which may be considered is the one from which this verse is taken, and its relation to a second Pauline passage:-

1. 1 Cor.5 and 2 Cor.2

De Pud.,13 - 17 is concerned with the problem of whether the man to whom Paul offers forgiveness in 2 Cor.2 is the incestuous man whom he has previously condemned in 1 Cor.5. If such an identification could be proven - and it would appear that this is attempted by the Catholics <sup>73</sup> - then, it could be legitimately argued that Paul was in favour of offering forgiveness to the

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72. In Rev.21:8, the murderers, fornicators, idolaters etc. are condemned to the lake of fire. In De Pud.,19,7ff., Tertullian takes this text as referring to those who have committed these sins after baptism. The text does not allow this distinction. Earlier, in De Fuga,7,2; 9,3; Scorp.,12,11, Tertullian has applied the text to the cowardly.

73. See De Pud.,13,1, where Tertullian says:-

Reuera enim suspicantur apostolum Paulum in secunda ad Corinthios eidem fornicatori ueniam dedisse, quem in prima dedendum satanae in interitum carnis pronuntiarit,...

fornicator and the incestuous sinner. Naturally enough, Tertullian sees the threat which this identification would pose to his arguments that adultery and fornication ( not to speak of incest ) could not be forgiven by the Church.

Tertullian's main arguments against this identification may be briefly noted here:-

a) There is no mention in 2 Cor.2 of fornication or incest. Paul's more lenient tone obviously implies a lesser sin.

b) Paul asks from the guilty man no forms of penance which would be demanded of a fornicator or adulterer by the Church.

c) Paul's exhortation to the Corinthians to "assure" this man of "love" presupposes that the sinner has been welcomed back into the community of the Church. However, 2 Thess.3:14f. shows that it is possible to love a sinner and still not communicate with him. This is the treatment prescribed for a fornicator in this passage of 2 Thess.. Moreover, incest is a far more heinous sin than even fornication, and hence, the incestuous man is removed from the brethren's love altogether. Thus, Paul cannot be speaking of the same man in 2 Cor.2 as in 1 Cor.5.

d) The Catholics wish to understand "the destruction of the flesh" mentioned in 1 Cor.5:5 merely as a reference to "correction by penance" rather than "destruction". Tertullian opposes this, as has been shown above, by an appeal to 1 Tim.1:20. He adds the example of Paul himself, who was buffeted by an angel of Satan.<sup>74</sup> In this latter case, there is no question of a sinner being corrected. Neither example can be regarded as having reference to penitence of any kind. Similarly, Paul's words in 1 Cor.5:5 cannot be taken as referring to correction by repentance.

e) The word *ἐπιτίμια* in 2 Cor.2:6 shows that he was thinking of a lesser offence than the one which he "condemned" in 1 Cor.5:4f..

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74: See 2 Cor.12:7.

f) 1 Cor. chastises many individuals. The forgiveness granted in 2 Cor.2 may be intended for one of these sinners, rather than the incestuous man.

g) The brethren are told to "mourn" for the fornicator,<sup>75</sup> which proves that he is dead. He cannot be brought back to life by pardon. Tertullian seems to be thinking of spiritual and physical death.

h) In 1 Cor.4:18 - 5:8, Paul condemns incest absolutely, whilst he is content merely to threaten pride. It is more fitting to suppose that, when Paul actually grants forgiveness in 2 Cor.2, it is to pride rather than to incest to which he is referring.

i) In 2 Cor.2:7, the apostle grants forgiveness, lest the sinner be "devoured"<sup>76</sup> by excessive sorrow. However, an incestuous man must be regarded as having been devoured already.

j) Satan already possessed the incestuous man, therefore there was no need for him to be pardoned lest he be lost to the community by the wiles of Satan.<sup>77</sup>

k) The incestuous man was condemned absolutely: the proud man's sentence was held in abeyance. Hence, Paul could only grant indulgence in the latter case, especially as he was not in the habit of reversing such decisions. Tertullian here appeals to Paul's words in Gal.2:18.<sup>78</sup> Paul loved chastity, and it is inconceivable that he would have been prepared to forgive such a serious sin as incest, once he had condemned it.

De Pud., 15 - 17 is concerned with the elaboration of this consistency in the Pauline epistles.

The only other extensive use of texts involving the punishment of the incestuous man occurs in Adu. Marc., 5,7,2, where Tertullian's concern is to

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75. See 1 Cor.5:2.

76. The word is καταποθῆ.

77. See 2 Cor.2:11.

78. εἰ γὰρ ἂν κατέλυσα ταῦτα πάλιν οἰκοδομῶ, παραβέτην ἑμαυτὸν συνιστάνω.

show the close harmony between Paul's condemnation of the incestuous man and the Old Testament laws which forbade incest. <sup>79</sup> Paul's words in 1 Cor.5:1ff. are characteristic of an avenging God, and even though the man's spirit may be saved, judgement is being passed.

The completely different contexts and purposes of these passages in De Pud. and Adu. Marc. make any profound comparisons valueless. Hence, there are no extant passages in Tertullian's writings in which there is an indication as to whether he would have favoured the identification of the man who was forgiven in 2 Cor.2 with the incestuous man of 1 Cor.5 before his sympathies with the New Prophecy leads him to make the identification impossible. The exegesis of other Church writers gives Tertullian no support. <sup>80</sup>

2. Rev.22:14f.

Μεκάριοι οἱ πλύνοντες τὰς στολὰς αὐτῶν, ἵνα ἔσται ἡ ἐξουσία αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον τῆς ζωῆς καὶ τοῖς πυλῶσιν εἰσέλθωσιν εἰς τὴν πόλιν. ἔξω οἱ κύνες καὶ οἱ φαρμακοὶ καὶ οἱ πόρνοι καὶ οἱ φονεῖς καὶ οἱ εἰδωλολάτραι καὶ πᾶς φιλῶν καὶ ποιῶν ψεῦδος.

Tertullian adduces this text in De Pud.,19,9 where he adds the comment:-

Illorum est enim foras dari qui intus fuerunt.

Again, the distinction between pre-baptismal and post-baptismal sins is imposed upon a Scriptural text which originally contained no such distinction.

3. 1 Jn.1:5ff.

Καὶ ἔστιν αὕτη ἡ ἀγγελία ἣν ἀκηκόαμεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀναγγέλλομεν ὑμῖν, ὅτι ὁ θεὸς φῶς ἐστὶν καὶ ἔκστα ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεμίαν. Ἐὰν εἴπωμεν ὅτι κοινωνίαν ἔχομεν μετ' αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν τῷ σκότει περιπατῶμεν, ψευδόμεθα καὶ οὐ ποιοῦμεν τὴν ἀλήθειαν. Ἐὰν δὲ ἐν τῷ φωτὶ περιπατῶμεν ὡς αὐτὸς ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ φωτὶ, κοινωνίαν ἔχομεν μετ' ἀλλήλων καὶ τὸ αἷμα Ἰησοῦ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ καθαρῖζει ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἁμαρτίας.

79. See especially, Lev.18:8.

80. A. d'Alès, La Théologie de Tertullien.p.481,n.4, points out a number of passages in which other Church writers disagree with Tertullian's exegesis. Included are the exegesis given by Augustine in Contra Ep. Parmen.,3,1,3, and by Ambrose in De Paen.,1,17.



This text seems to support the Catholic argument that fornication can be forgiven.

The idea expressed in *καὶ τὸ αἷμα Ἰησοῦ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ καθαρίζει ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πλῆθους ἁμαρτίας* suggests that forgiveness of any sin, however serious, may be granted. Tertullian's premise necessitates that the idea of forgiveness be confined to pre-baptismal sin, and this is how he chooses to interpret the text here. Christ's blood frees from sin only if that sin is committed before baptism. The passage in 1 Jn. pre-supposes that it is only those who walk in the light who are cleansed from sin, in the sense of "remain clean" from sin:-

Haec est enim uis dominici sanguinis, ut quos iam ( a ) delicto mundarit et exinde in lumine constituerit, mundos exinde perstare, si in lumine incedere perseuerauerint. 81

4. 1 Jn. 1:8ff.  
ἐάν εἰπώμεν ὅτι ἁμαρτίαν οὐκ ἔχομεν, ἐαυτοῦς πλανώμεν καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἡμῖν. ἐάν ὁμολογῶμεν τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν πιστὸς ἔστιν καὶ δίκαιος, ἵνα ἀφῆ ἡμῖν τὰς ἁμαρτίας καὶ καθάρσιν ἡμῶν ἀπὸ πλῆθους ἀδικίας. ἐάν εἰπώμεν ὅτι οὐχ ἁμαρτήκαμεν, ψεύστην ποιοῦμεν αὐτὸν καὶ ὁ λόγος αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἡμῖν. Τεκνία μου, τὰῦτα γράφω ὑμῖν ἵνα μὴ ἁμαρτήτε. καὶ ἐάν τις ἁμαρτή, παράκλητον ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν πατέρα, Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν δίκαιον.

Tertullian's argument is somewhat impaired by the existence of these verses, since they clearly acknowledge that sins can be forgiven. His avoidance of the inevitable conclusion is arbitrary. He cites 1 Jn.1:8f., and adds the comment:-

Numquid ab immunditia ? Aut si ita est, ergo et ab idololatria ?

The reference is to his translation of ἀδικίας by iniustitia. He cannot successfully avoid the implication that the text advocates the forgiveness of all sins, and so he is reduced merely to a rhetorical retort against the Catholic contradiction if they take this text as a warrant for forgiving adultery in spite of their unwillingness to forgive idolatry. Tertullian argues that immunditia includes idolatry as well as adultery. But this does not obliterate the over-riding realisation that there is to be found in this text Biblical support for the forgiveness of all sins.

81. De Pud., 19, 13.

Similarly, the following verses support his opponents' arguments effectively, and the only way open to Tertullian to pursue his case is to adduce evidence in 1 Jn. to the contrary, which he duly does. He has to turn to 1 Jn.3:3ff..

5. 1 Jn.3:3ff.

καὶ πᾶς ὁ ἔχων, τὴν ἐλπίδα ταύτην ἐπ' αὐτῷ ἑγνίξαι ἑαυτὸν καθὼς ἐκεῖνος ἁγνός ἐστιν. πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν καὶ τὴν ἀνομίαν ποιεῖ, καὶ ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐστὶν ἡ ἀνομία. καὶ ὁδοῦτε ὅτι ἐκεῖνος ἐφανερώθη ἵνα τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἄρῃ, καὶ ἁμαρτία ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἐστίν. πᾶς ὁ ἐν αὐτῷ μένων οὐχ ἁμαρτάνει. πᾶς ὁ ἁμαρτάνων οὐχ ἑώρακεν αὐτὸν οὐδὲ ἔγνωκεν αὐτόν. τεκνία μὴδεὶς πλανᾷτω ὑμᾶς. ὁ ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην δικαίος ἐστίν, καθὼς ἐκεῖνος δικαίος ἐστίν. ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἐκ τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστίν, ὅτι ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ὁ διάβολος ἁμαρτάνει. εἰς τοῦτο ἐφανερώθη ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἵνα λύσῃ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ διαβόλου. πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἁμαρτίαν οὐ ποιεῖ, ὅτι σπέρμα αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ μένει. καὶ οὐ δύναται ἁμαρτάνειν, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ γεγέννηται. ἐν τούτῳ φανερόν ἐστιν τὰ τέκνα τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τὰ τέκνα τοῦ διαβόλου. πᾶς ὁ μὴ ποιῶν δικαιοσύνην οὐκ ἐστίν ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ ὁ μὴ ἠγαπῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ.

Tertullian takes up the whole of this section to support his argumentation. The fact that Christ appeared in order to take away sins <sup>82</sup> is understood as evidence for the belief that that sins are not to be committed after baptism. Baptism puts an end to the works of the devil <sup>83</sup> provided that no sin is committed thereafter. The words πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἁμαρτίαν οὐ ποιεῖ <sup>84</sup> show that no sin can be forgiven after baptism. Similarly, πᾶς ὁ μὴ ποιῶν δικαιοσύνην, οὐκ ἐστίν ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ <sup>85</sup> indicates that there can be no security offered to the sinner.

Tertullian mentions the seeming contradictions in 1 Jn., in that half of the work suggests that sins may be forgiven, whilst the other half suggests the opposite view. To escape from the implications of this division, Tertullian

82. See 1 Jn.3:5.

83. See 1 Jn.3:8.

84. See 1 Jn.3:9.

85. See 1 Jn.3:10.

applies to 1 Jn. the distinction which he himself is making between lesser and more serious sins. There are some sins which are unavoidable, and for which pardon is an absolute necessity, otherwise no-one would be saved: but there are other sins which cannot be forgiven. Christ will not intercede with God a second time.

In order to justify this, he appeals to 1 Jn.5:16,<sup>86</sup> in which two types of sins are clearly emphasised, although there is no indication, in fact, of what these distinctions involve. John merely points out that there are some sins unto death, and some sins which are not unto death. Jeremiah confirms this,<sup>87</sup> argues Tertullian.

The conclusion which is drawn at the end of De Pud.,19, is this:-

Ita nihil iam superest quam aut neget moechiam et fornicationem mortalia esse delicta, aut inremissibilia fatearis, pro quibus nec exorare permittitur.<sup>88</sup>

6. Heb.6:1

... ἐπὶ τὴν τελειότητα φερώμεθα, μὴ πάλιν θεμέλιον καταβαλλόμενοι μετανόιας ἀπὸ νεκρῶν ἔργων, καὶ πίστεως ἐπὶ θεόν, ...

Tertullian regards Heb. as the work of Barnabas,<sup>89</sup> and he cites this verse as an allusion:-

Monens itaque discipulos omissis omnibus initiis ad perfectionem magis tendere nec rursus fundamenta paenitentiae iacere ab operibus mortuorum ....<sup>90</sup>

He takes the text as ruling out the possibility of second repentance, although, in fact, it is the perpetration of sins after baptism which is condemned by the text, rather than second repentance.<sup>91</sup>

7. Lev.13:12ff.

ἂν δὲ ἐξανθοῦσα ἢ λέπρα ἢ ἄλλο ἐν τῷ δέρματι, καὶ καλύψῃ ἢ λέπρα πᾶν τὸ δέρμα τῆς ἀφῆς ἀπὸ κεφαλῆς ἕως ποδῶν καὶ ὅλην τὴν ὄρασιν τοῦ ἱερέως, καὶ ὄφεται ὁ ἱερεὺς καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐκάλυψεν ἢ λέπρα πᾶν τὸ δέρμα τοῦ χρωτός, καὶ καθαριεῖ αὐτὸν ὁ ἱερεὺς τὴν ἰσθήν, ὅτι πᾶν μετέβαλεν λευκόν, καθαρὸν ἐστίν. καὶ ἢ ἂν ἡμέρα ὄφθῃ ἐν αὐτῷ χρῶς ζῶν, μιανθήσεται, ...

86. 'Εάν τις ἴδῃ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ἁμαρτάνοντα ἁμαρτίαν μὴ πρὸς θάνατον, λίτῆσει, καὶ δώσει αὐτῷ ζῶν, τοῖς ἁμαρτάνουσιν μὴ πρὸς θάνατον. ἔστιν ἁμαρτία πρὸς θάνατον, οὐ περὶ ἐκείνης λέγω ἰνὰ ἐρωτησῆ. πᾶσα ἀδικία ἁμαρτία ἐστίν, ...

87. Tertullian argues that Jeremiah was told by God not to pray for people committing mortal sin. Perhaps the allusion is to Jer.14:11.

88. De Pud.,19,28.

89. See De Pud.,20,2.

90. De Pud.,20,3.

91. See W.P. le Saint, Tertullian: Treatises on Penance.p.278, n.608.

Tertullian appeals to the Old Testament to prove that his arguments are confirmed there. This text from Lev.13 is used unconvincingly, for Tertullian sees in it support for his view that adultery may not be forgiven:-

Conuersum enim hominem de pristino carnis habitu in candorem fidei, quae uitium et macula aestimatur in saeculo, et totum nouatum mundum uoluit intellegi, qui iam non sit uarius, non sit de pristino et nouo aspersus. Si uero post abolitionem in uetustatem aliquid ex illa reuixerit, rursum in carne eius quod emortuum delicto habebatur immundum iudicari nec expiari iam a sacerdote. Ita moechia de pristino recidiua et unitatem noui coloris, a quo fuerat exclusa, commaculans immundabile est uitium. 92

This argument falls down, because in the closing section of the text, which Tertullian cites as:-

Qua uero die uisus fuerit in eiusmodi color uiuus, inquinatus est 93

there is no specific reference to the incurable nature of the leprosy, and thus, the analogy of the impossibility of forgiveness of capital sins is untenable.

Tertullian's desire to find Scriptural support for his views has again led him to make vital assumptions which the text cannot support.

#### 8. Lev.14:36ff.

Tertullian paraphrases the account of the house infested with stain or disease and its cleansing, and it is interesting to note how he ingeniously harmonises the reference in Lev.14:37 94 to the red and the green spots with his theories about the seriousness of certain sins. The green and red spots, which betray the infested nature of the house, can be compared with the "deadly and bloody passions" which bring destruction, and which are represented in the Apocalypse by the horsemen on their red and green steeds. 95

Tertullian allegorises the cleansing of the infested house in terms of the Christian's attitude to repentance, as follows:-

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92. De Pud., 20, 7.

93. De Pud., 20, 6.

94. καὶ ὁψεται τὴν ἀφῆν, καὶ ἴδου ἡ ἀφῆ ἐν τοῖς τοίχοις τῆς οἰκίας, κοιλιάς χλωροῦσας, ἢ πυρρῆγούσας, καὶ ἡ ὄψις αὐτῶν ταπεινότερά τῶν τοίχων.

95. See Rev. 6:4ff..

Oportet enim, cum peruenitur ad summum sacerdotem Patris Christum, de domo hominis nostri in tempore hebdomadis auferri omnia impedimenta prius, ut munda sit quae remanet domus, caro et anima, ut ubi introierit eam sermo Dei et inuenerit maculas ruboris et uiroris, extrahi statim et abici foras sensus mortiferos et cruentos ( nam et Apocalypsis uiridi equo mortem, russeo autem praeliatorem imposuit ), praeque illis politos et in compaginem aptos et firmos substrui lapides, quales in Abrahae ( filios ) fiunt, <sup>96</sup> ut ita homo habilis Deo sit. <sup>97</sup>

The free-ranging nature of Tertullian's thought is evident here. From Lev.14, he draws a comparison with the impossibility of repentance for capital sins, using ideas gleaned from Rev.6 and Matt.3:49, the latter being adduced, no doubt, on account of the similarity in subject matter between stones and the building of a house. He then goes on to draw the analogy between the entry of the priest into the infested house and the cleansing processes, set into motion by the ritual of baptism. Once the cleansing process of both the house and the Christian has taken place, no further cleansing is necessary. Baptism marks the final opportunity for forgiveness. As the contaminated stones are discarded, <sup>98</sup> so too the Christian sinner is handed over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh. <sup>99</sup>

9. Lev.19:20ff.

Verse 20 reads as follows:-

αὕτη καὶ ἐάν τις κοιμηθῆ μετὰ γυναικὸς κοίτην σπέρματος καὶ αὕτη οἰκέτις διαπεφυλαγμένη ἀνθρώπῳ καὶ αὕτη λύτρωσις οὐ λελύτρωται ἢ ἐλευθερία οὐκ ἔδοθη αὕτη ἐπισκοπὴ ἔσται αὐτοῖς· οὐκ ἀποθνήσκονται, ὅτι οὐκ ἀπὸ λευθερώθη . . . .

Tertullian uses this text to again emphasise that there can be no forgiveness of sins of a serious nature committed after baptism. A female slave, who has not yet been freed by her master, even though she has been promised in marriage, may commit adultery, and may receive forgiveness for it. However, as soon as she has been given her freedom, her adultery becomes unforgiveable. So too, the heathen,

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96. See Matt.3:9; Luke 3:8.

97. De Pud.,20,10.

98. There may be a secondary allusion to the rejection of the Jews by God, induced by the reference to the raising up from stones of children of Abraham.

99. See 1 Cor.5,5.

once he has received his freedom in Christ ( in baptism ), can expect no forgiveness for the serious sins which he commits after this time.

D. AN ANALYSIS OF TERTULLIAN'S USE OF SCRIPTURE IN HIS DISCUSSION OF THE CHURCH'S POWER TO FORGIVE SINS.

In De Pud., 21, Tertullian turns to the question of whether the Church has the power to forgive sins, and he discusses the nature of the Power of the Keys.

The first distinction which he draws is that between the doctrina ( synonymous with disciplina ) of the apostles and their potestas. Their doctrine is the moral teaching they have received from God and which has been handed on to their successors. Their power is a charismatic gift which has been granted to them alone for their own personal ministry by the Spirit.

Hence, Tertullian answers the question, "Who has the power to forgive sins?" with the comment:-

Hoc solius ipsius est. Quis enim dimittit delicta, ni solus Deus ? 100

and he continues:-

Et utique mortalia, quae in ipsum fuerint admissa et in templum eius ? Nam tibi quae in te reatum habeant etiam septuagies septies iuberis indulgere in persona Petri. 101

Three types of sins are delineated:-

- a) mortal sins committed against God
- b) personal sins which may be forgiven by the individual
- c) lesser sins ( peccata leuia ) for which the intervention of the Church is necessary before they can be forgiven.

In this argumentation, the text of Matt. 16:18 plays a most important role, and the interpretation it receives in De Pud., 21 may be compared with those it receives in other parts of Tertullian's writings.

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100. De Pud., 21, 2. The reference is to Mk. 2:7; Luke 5:21.

101. De Pud., 21, 2f..

The section in De Pud., 21 in which the text is cited may be reproduced quite fully here:-

De tua nunc sententia quaero, unde hoc ius ecclesiae usurpes. Si quia dixerit Petro Dominus: Super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam, tibi dedi claves regni caelestis, uel: quaecumque alligaueris uel solueris in terra, erunt alligata uel soluta in caelis, idcirco praesumis et ad te diriuasse soluendi et alligandi potestatem, id est ad omnem ecclesiam Petri propinquam ? Qualis es, euertens atque commutans manifestam Domini intentionem personaliter hoc Petro conferentem ? Super te, inquit, aedificabo ecclesiam meam, et: dabo tibi claves, non ecclesiae, et: quaecumque solueris uel alligaueris, non quae soluerint uel alligauerint. 102

The implications of this passage are fascinating. The whole tenor of Tertullian's has changed from view-points expressed in previous writings. Here, the Power of the Keys is regarded as being the personal gift, granted to Peter alone, and one which cannot be passed on to his successors. He alone can forgive sins. The Church does not possess this power. A comparison of this thought with earlier exegesis of the text will be conclusive in its assessment of the changing nature of Tertullian's use of Scripture, under the influence of the New Prophecy:-

1. De Praesc. Haer., 22, 4

Tertullian's concern in this chapter is with the authority of the regula. It cannot be invalidated by the argument that the apostles did not know all things, or that they did not pass all things on to other people. One of the arguments that Tertullian uses to refute these objections is this:-

Latuit aliquid Petrum, aedificandae ecclesiae petram dictum, claves regni caelorum consecutum et soluendi et allegandi in caelis et in terris potestatem ? The reference here is obviously to Matt. 16:18f.. There is no indication that Tertullian sees the Power of the Keys as belonging specifically to Peter and to no-one else. Indeed, the tenor of the whole section emphasises the willingness of Christ to reveal all things to his disciples, and Tertullian's implicit argument wishes to conclude that, because the disciples were in full possession of the facts, they were only too eager to pass on all things completely. If this is the direction

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102. De Pud., 21, 9f..

of Tertullian's argument, it may well be fair to assume just as there was no with-holding of information by the disciples, so there was no refusal to pass on any powers which might have been received. The emphasis on ecclesia in this citation would enhance this conclusion.

## 2. Scorp., 10,8

The subject of this treatise is the correct attitude to persecution, and in this chapter, Tertullian is arguing that it is false to say that, because we are to confess God in heaven, it is legitimate to deny God on earth. The testing of a Christian takes place on earth. There will be no testing in heaven. In fact, the way to heaven lies open to the Christian:-

Nam etsi adhuc clausum putas caelum, memento claves eius hic dominum Petro et per eum ecclesiae reliquisse, quos hic unusquisque interrogatus atque confessus feret secum.

The conclusion that one tends to draw from this statement is that confession results in the opening of the way to heaven. Although Tertullian does use the words confiteor and its derivatives in the sense of "confession of one's sins",<sup>103</sup> there seems little doubt that in this passage it refers to the acknowledgement of Christ. However, although the allusion to Matt.16:18f. has nothing to offer in relation to Tertullian's thoughts on the repentance of the sinner, it does help in an understanding of his thoughts on Peter's power in relation to the Church. At the time of writing Scorp., Tertullian regards the power invested in Peter as a power invested in the Church. No distinction is drawn between a universal privilege to the members of the Church and a personal gift to Peter. Peter's gift is passed on through him to the Church, and especially to those members of the Church undergoing torture and who, as a result, have confessed their faith.

It seems that Tertullian's involvement in the New Prophecy leads him to

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103. See De Paen., 8,9; 9,2; De Pud., 6,9 etc..



change his point of view about the nature of the power invested in Peter by Christ. He now sees the gift as a purely personal privilege. However, the point has been made that Tertullian is not contradicting his earlier statement about Peter's power to forgive sins belonging to the Church as a whole. <sup>104</sup>

The passage is to be taken as referring, not to Peter's power of forgiving sins, but to his possession of the keys to heaven, and to his ability to allow Christians inside.

In spite of this attempt to explain away the apparent contradiction in Tertullian's thought, there must surely be seen a limiting of the text, which once has been applied to the whole Church, and in De Pud. is restricted to Peter alone.

Having stated this conclusion in De Pud., Tertullian then goes on to argue that the power granted to Peter has, in fact, been passed on - not to the Church of the psychics, but to the Church of the spiritual men:-

Quid nunc et ad ecclesiam et quidem tuam, psychice ? Secundum enim Petri personam spiritualibus potestas ista conueniet, aut apostolo aut prophetae .... Et ideo ecclesia quidem delicta donabit, sed ecclesia spiritus per spiritalem hominem, non ecclesia numerus episcoporum. Domini enim, non famuli est ius et arbitrium; Dei ipsius, non sacerdotis. <sup>105</sup>

The Church, therefore, has the power to forgive sins - at least the true Church has. The kind of sins which Peter was allowed to forgive is restricted, in De Pud., 21, 14f., to lesser sins, since Christ's privilege only applied to sins which were committed against Peter himself. <sup>106</sup> This is a further example of Tertullian's principle that what Scripture does not assert, it denies. <sup>107</sup>

This whole section of De Pud. is full of inconsistencies. Peter's power is one moment personal, the next passed on to the Church of the Spirit. The true Church has the power to forgive capital sins, then the power of Peter is restricted

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104. See A. d'Alès, La Théologie de Tertullien.p.217; E. Flesseman-van Leer, Tradition and Scripture in the Early Church.p.154; E. Altendorf, Einheit und Heiligkeit der Kirche.p.38, suggests that the passage in Scorp. is anti-gnostic.

105. De Pud., 21, 16f..

106. Tertullian is clearly thinking of Matt.18:21f.

107. See later, p. 282.

to lesser sins.

W.P.le Saint suggests that to a great extent the two conceptions of the Church which Tertullian has in mind in this chapter are responsible for the inconsistencies.<sup>108</sup> They disagree. It is rather that the Catholics place before Tertullian a Scriptural text which appears to support their case, and, indeed, which Tertullian has himself used in the way in which they wish to understand it. Consequently, he is forced to find a fresh interpretation which will not merely not conflict with his arguments, but will confirm them. So a new light is shed on the text. Peter's power is personal. It does not belong to the Church as a whole.

Yet another example of the inconsistencies into which Tertullian, as a follower of the New Prophecy, is led, and which seem to characterise his treatment of the subject of forgiveness of sins.

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108. Tertullian: Treatise on Penance. p. 268.

CHAPTER EIGHT

FASTING

Eusebius cites Apollonius on Montanus as follows:-

οὗτός ἐστιν . . . . ὁ νηστείας νομοθετήσας . . .<sup>1</sup>

Tertullian himself states:-

propter hoc nouae prophetiae recusantur; non quod alium deum praedicent Montanus et Priscilla et Maximilla, nec quod Iesum Christum soluant, nec quod aliquam fidei aut spei regulam euertant, sed quod plane doceant saepius ieiunare, quam nubere. 2

It is obvious from these statements that fasting played an important role in the New Prophecy. Tertullian writes his treatise, De Iei., to express his indignation at what seemed to him to be Catholic indulgence and laxity. He represents the Catholics as holding an obligatory Easter fast. Apart from this, all other fasts were voluntary. He admits that Catholics held "stations" or semi-fasts on Wednesdays and Fridays which sometimes were extended to the Sabbath, but these too were a matter of devotion rather than precept.<sup>3</sup> Although the bishop had the authority to pronounce fast-days, this seems, in fact, to be a rare occurrence.

As a follower of the New Prophecy, Tertullian could no longer uphold these Catholic practices. The New Prophecy established fast-days of its own. The movement's followers refused to cease their "stations" at the ninth hour, as the Catholics did;<sup>4</sup> they introduced "xerophagies" on which they did not eat meat or fruit, nor drink wine.<sup>5</sup> The treatise, De Iei., is written to justify these innovations.

It will now be enlightening to discover how Tertullian appeals to Scripture to justify this change in attitude towards fasting. This search for Scriptural justification is particularly interesting in the light of Tertullian's earlier

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1. H.E., 5, 18, 2.  
2. De Iei., 1, 3.  
3. See De Iei., 2.  
4. See De Iei., 1, 4.  
5. Ibid..

statement in De Cor., 3, 4ff., in which he admits that fasting on specific occasions finds no Scriptural warrant. Its authority, along with that of several other Church practices,<sup>6</sup> depends on tradition, and Tertullian's aim is to prove that tradition, confirmed by custom, is a legitimate source of authority, when Scriptural support is lacking. Although the matter at issue is the wearing of the crown, Tertullian turns to the practices of the Church in general to show that these are not based on definite Scriptural foundations:-

Dei dominico ieiunium nefas ducimus uel de geniculis adorare. Eadem immunitate a die Paschae in Pentecosten usque gaudemus .... Harum et aliarum eiusmodi disciplinarum si legem exoptules scripturam, nullam leges. Traditio tibi praetendetur auctrix et consuetudo confirmatrix et fides obseruatrix .... His igitur exemplis renuntiatum erit posse etiam non scriptam traditionem in obseruatione defendi, confirmatam consuetudine, idonea teste probatae tunc traditionis ex perseuerantia obseruationis.

De Cor. reveals only a slight influence of the New Prophecy.<sup>7</sup> The extremes to which Tertullian is led in later works are, therefore, not evident here. Furthermore, the issues which were to pre-occupy Tertullian as a follower of the New Prophecy are not yet highlighted.

De Iei., on the other hand, bears all the traces of an extremely vehement writing in defence of Tertullian's newly acquired principles. The contrast between the two works is emphasised by the following passage from De Iei., 3:- Having just cited numerous texts with which the Catholics oppose the stand-point of the New Prophecy, Tertullian goes on:-

Itaque nos hoc prius affirmare debemus quod occulte subrui periclitatur, quantum ualeat apud deum inanitas ista, et ante omnia, unde ratio ipsa processerit hoc modo promerendi deum. Tunc enim agnosceretur obseruationis necessitas, cum eluxerit rationis auctoritas a primordio recensendae.<sup>8</sup>

Hence, De Cor. denies any recourse to Scripture for the defence of fasting on particular occasions: De Iei. sets out to establish such a defence, and to refute the charge of novelty laid against the views of the New Prophecy on the subject.

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6. These include the rituals of baptism, and the Eucharist.

7. In De Cor., 1, 4, Tertullian says:-

.. martyria recusare meditentur qui prophetias eiusdem spiritus sancti respuerunt.

8. De Iei., 3, 1.

The necessity of finding supporting texts leads Tertullian to search the Scriptures painstakingly, and he bases much of his argumentation in De Iei. on texts and examples from both the Old and New Testaments. A close study of a number of these texts may be of great value in an understanding of Tertullian's developing attitude to Scripture:-

A. Gen.2:16f. and 3:1ff.

The incident of Adam's fall is used on several occasions by Tertullian for a wide variety of purposes. God's law forbidding Adam to eat from the tree is seen as a precedent for the other laws which God was to impose upon men;<sup>9</sup> Adam's sin is reckoned as a crude form of heresy;<sup>10</sup> the fact that Adam only tasted of the tree once is seen as an indication that monogamy is the will of God.<sup>11</sup> However, a further interpretation is placed on the tasting of the fruit in De Iei.,3,2:-

Acceperat Adam a deo legem non gustandi de arbore agnitionis boni et mali, moriturus si gustasset ..... facilius uentri quam deo cessit, pabulo potius quam praecepto annuit, salutem gula uendidit. Manducauit denique et periit, saluus alioquin, si uni arbusculae ieiunare maluisset; ut iam hinc animalis fides semen suum recognoscat exinde deducens carnalium adpetitionem et spiritalium recusationem.

The implication of these words seems to be that Adam was a "spiritual" man before his fall, akin to the followers of the New Prophecy. After the fall, however, the animalis fides came to the fore. The expression animalis fides appears to indicate Tertullian's opinion of the faith of the Catholics. The fall of Adam was brought about by greed. If he had preferred to abstain, salvation would have been his. So it is with the Catholics. Their greed is their down-fall. The followers of the New Prophecy, on the other hand, recognise the reason for man's original fall, and prefer abstinence.

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9. See Adu. Iud.,2,2; Adu. Marc.,2,4,6.

10. See Adu. Marc.,2,2,7.

11. See De Monog.,17,5.

There would seem to be a development of this interpretation in De Pud.,16.

In this section, Tertullian is dealing with Paul's attitude to fornication:-

Si uis omnem notitiam apostoli ebibere, intellege, quanta secure censurae omnem siluam libidinum caedat et eradiceat et excaudicet, ne quidquam de reciduo fruticare permittat, aspice illum a iusta fruge naturae, a matrimonii dico pomo, animas ieiunare cupientem. De quibus autem scripsistis, bonum est homini mulierem non contingere; sed propter fornicationem unusquisque uxorem suam habeat; uir uxori et uxor uiro debitum reddat. <sup>12</sup>

The phrase a iusta fruge naturae is accompanied by the explanatory a matrimonii dico pomo. I suggest that Tertullian is thinking of the tree with its forbidden fruit in Gen.2 and 3. If this assumption can be upheld, there can again be seen the underlying idea of abstinence ( fasting ). The development from the interpretation placed on the text in De Iei.,3 is evident. Instead of a literal interpretation, Tertullian enlarges the concept into a figurative one.

It appears that Tertullian's understanding of the fall as caused by Adam's desire to eat, and his inability to fast, is influenced by his need to find in Scripture an early witness to the value and necessity of fasting.

B. Ps.51:17 ( In the Septuagint, Ps.50:19 )

θυσιάν τῷ θεῷ πνεῦμα συντετριμμένον,  
καρδίαν συντετριμμένην καὶ τεταπεινωμένην  
ὁ θεὸς οὐκ ἐξουθενώσεται.

This text is alluded to twice in De Iei. and once in Adu. Iud. The different applications given to the text are interesting.

1. Adu. Iud.,5,5

Tertullian is discussing the question of sacrifices. His argument is that earthly sacrifices are no longer valid for the Christian. Spiritual sacrifices, which were even foreshown in the Old Testament, have taken their place:-

Namque quod non terrenis sacrificiis sed spiritalibus deo litandum sit, ita legimus: ( sic scriptum est ) Cor contribulatum et humiliatum hostia deo est ...

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12. De Pud.,16,12f..

This is a loose paraphrase of Ps.51:17. The text is interpreted as a reference to the spiritual sacrifice expected by God of his faithful believers. Tertullian adds the comment:-

Sic itaque .... cor contribulatum acceptabile sacrificium deo demonstratur.

## 2. De Iei.,3,4

The argument here is that God himself actually commands fasting, and Ps.51:17 is adduced in support of this claim:-

Porro, cum et ipse ieiunium mandet et animam conquassatam proprie utique cibi angustiis sacrificium appellet...

The words animam conquassatam clearly correspond to the Septuagint's *καρδίαν συντετριμμένην*. The interesting point is Tertullian's gloss proprie utique cibi angustiis. The soul is conquassata as a result of having inflicted fasts upon itself. The idea of the "spiritual sacrifice" or "spiritual offering" of Adu. Iud.,5 has now changed direction. The broken and contrite spirit ( heart ) is no longer such out of humility, but out of physical hunger and discomfort.

## 3. De Iei.,16,1

The implication of the previous passage is found here also. Tertullian is refuting the Catholic claim that doing works of righteousness is more pleasing to God than eating the right food. Again, he appeals indirectly to Ps.51:17:-

Nam et si manuum opera iustitiae, non tamen sine sacrificio, quod est anima conflictata ieiuniis.

Once more, the desire to link fasting and sacrificium is apparent. The spiritual aspect of sacrificium has been forced into the background, and the sense of "going without" has come to the fore. The soul goes without food, and such a sacrifice is pleasing to God.

Again, the changing emphasis placed on yet another text may be seen as the result of Tertullian's desire to explore all possibilities of finding Scriptural support for his views on fasting. The two-fold implications of the word sacrificium makes the transition all the more easy.

C. Ps.78:25 ( In the Septuagint, Ps.77:25 )

ἄρτον ἁγγέλων ἔφαγεν ἄνθρωπος,  
ἐπισιτισμὸν ἀπέστειλεν αὐτοῖς εἰς πλησμονήν.

There are three occasions on which Tertullian seems influenced by this text:-

1. Adu. Iud.,3,13

This passage is a statement about Israel's wanderings in the wilderness, and the point is emphatically made that, in spite of the wonderful blessings which Israel enjoyed, she still forsook God:-

Nam Israel .... nec humanis passionibus contaminatus aut saeculi huius pastus sed angelorum panibus manna cibatus ....

The angelorum panibus is simply accompanied by the explanatory manna. There is no attempt to introduce any figurative interpretation. The phrase is reminiscent of Ps.78:25, and Tertullian's use of it is precisely that of the Psalmist.

2. Adu. Marc.,2,18,2

Tertullian is here defending as good some of the Old Testament laws which Marcion decried. Talking of the law of restricting man's food, <sup>13</sup> Tertullian says:-

Et si lex aliquid cibus detrahit et inmunda pronuntiat animalia, quae aliquando benedicta sunt, consilium exercendae continentiae intellege et frenos impositos illi gulae agnosce. quae, cum panem ederet angelorum, cucumeres et pepones Aegyptiorum desiderabat.

The phrase panem.... angelorum seems influenced by the text under examination.

However, unlike in Adu. Iud., there is no explanatory gloss. In spite of this, the meaning is clear. It can only refer to the manna received from heaven. Again, the application is a literal one, although the emphasis has changed. Tertullian is more concerned with the excessive appetite of the Israelites, in spite of their having been provided with heavenly food.

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13. Tertullian may be thinking of Deut.14:3ff..



3. De Iei.,5,3f.

The direction in which Tertullian's thought was moving in Adu. Marc.,2,18,2 is maintained here. Again, the reference is to Israel's wanderings in the wilderness, and more specifically to the concern of the people for their stomachs. The luxury of Egypt seemed to have been replaced by famine:-

Quis nos uescat carne ? Venerunt in mentem nobis pisces quos in Aegypto edebamus gratis, et cucumeres et pepones, et porri et cepe et allia. At nunc anima nostra arida, nihil nisi manna uident oculi nostri. <sup>14</sup> Ita et illis xerophagiae panis angelici displicebant, allium potius et cepe quam caelum fragrare malebant.

The interpretation of panis angelici is no longer purely literal. The word xerophagiae has been added. Tertullian develops the theme of Adu. Marc.,2,18,2 by saying that the Israelites were reluctant to participate in the partial fast necessitated by their restricted food supply. In Adu. Marc.,2,18, Tertullian condemned the large appetite of the Israelites; in De Iei.,5, he condemns it again. This time, however, he emphasises that, in their desire for garlic and onions, the people rejected the food of heaven. The implication is that the Catholics have made the same mistake. In the clause ita et illis xerophagiae panis angelici displicebant, the word et may be indicative that Tertullian is thinking of the similarity between the Israelites and the Catholics.

The idea of panis angelici can be seen to have undergone an enlargement from its use in Adu. Iud.,3,13 through Adu. Marc.,2,18 to De Iei.,5. Tertullian succeeds in introducing the idea of fasting into his understanding of the text.

D. Deut.8:12ff.

... μὴ φλογὼν καὶ ἐμπλησθεὶς καὶ οἰκίαις καλῆς οἰκοδομῆσαι  
καὶ κατοικήσεις ἐν λύταις καὶ τῶν βοῶν σου καὶ  
τῶν προβάτων σου πληθυνθέντων σου, ἀργυρίου καὶ  
χρυσίου πληθυνθέντος σου καὶ πάντων ὧν σου ἔσται,  
πληθυνθέντων σου ὑψωθῆς τῇ καρδίᾳ καὶ ἐπιλάθῃ  
κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ σου. . . .

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14. Num.11:4ff..

This passage is used by Tertullian on two occasions. There can be seen a development in the way he uses it.

1. Adu. Marc.,4,15,9ff.

Tertullian is expounding Christ's opposition to the rich in Luke 6:24,<sup>15</sup> and his aim is to show that, in spite of numerous advantages, riches bring with them great disadvantages. One of the passages he adduces to prove his point, and at the same time to show the harmony between the Old and New Testaments, is this one from Deut.,-and having cited numerous other texts to the same effect,<sup>16</sup> he concludes:-

Igitur et si tantummodo dehortantem a diuitiis ostenderem creatorem, non etiam praedamnantem diuites, etiam uerbo ipso quo et Christus, nemo dubitaret ab eodem adiectam in diuites comminationem per "uae" Christi, a quo ipsarum materiam, id est diuitiarum, dehortatio praecucurrisset.<sup>17</sup>

The whole emphasis which Tertullian places upon these texts from the Old Testament is that riches are condemned. He is content to use Deut.8:12ff. in this context only.

2. De Iei.,6,3f.

Tertullian's argument is that too much food makes a man forget God. He cites Deut.32:15<sup>18</sup> to prove this, and adds:-

Denique in eodem Deuteronomio eandem causam praecaueri iubens, ne, inquit, cum manducaueris et biberis et domos optimas aedificaueris, ouibus et bubus tuis multiplicatis et argento et auro extollatur cor tuum et obliuis caris domini dei tui.

He adds the explanatory sentence:-

praeposuit corruptelae diuitiarum edacitatis enormitatem, cui ipsae diuitiae procurant.

As in Adu. Marc.,4,15,9, Tertullian realises that the prime purport of the

15. πλὴν, οὐκ ὑμῶν τοῖς πλουσίοις, ὅτι ἄπέχετε τὴν παράκλησιν ὑμῶν.

16. As well as Deut.8:12ff., Tertullian cites Is.39:6; Jer.9:23f.; Is.5:14; Is.10:33; Ps.19:16f.; 22:11; Amos 6:1ff.; he also alludes to Is.3:16ff..

17. Adu. Marc.,4,15,13.

18. καὶ ἐφλεγεν Ἰακώβ καὶ ἐνεπλήσθη, καὶ ἀπελέκτισεν ὁ ἡγαπημένος, ἐλιπένθη, ἐπαχύνθη, ἐπλατύθη—

text is to condemn the rich. However, in De Iei., his intention is to condemn excessive eating and drinking, and he is led to bring into the foreground the clause cum manducaueris et biberis, and to exaggerate it out of all proportion. Such a treatment shows Tertullian's capacity for adapting a text to suit his own purpose, depending upon the subject with which he is dealing, and on the point he wishes to make.

E. Is.6:9f.

καὶ εἶπεν πορεύθητε καὶ εἰπὸν τῷ λαῷ τούτῳ Ἄκουζ  
ἀκούσατε καὶ οὐ μὴ συνᾶτε καὶ βλέποντες βλέψατε καὶ οὐ  
μὴ ἴδητε· ἐπαχύνθη γὰρ ἡ καρδία τοῦ λαοῦ τούτου,  
καὶ τοῖς ὠσίν αὐτῶν βάρυνται ἡκούσαν καὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς  
αὐτῶν, ἐκάρμυσαν, μήποτε ἴδωσιν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς, καὶ τοῖς  
ὠσίν, ἀκούσωσιν καὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ συνῶσιν καὶ ἐπιστρέψωσιν  
καὶ ἰσθῶσι αὐτοὺς.

This text is used by Tertullian on a number of occasions. <sup>19</sup> Sometimes he

merely alludes to it; sometimes he quotes it directly, although his citations are not consistently accurate. Two uses of the text are relevant here:-

1. Adu. Marc.,3,6,3

The discussion concerns the loss of understanding which the Jews have experienced at the hands of the Creator. Tertullian cites Is.29:14 and then this text. The interpretation which he gives it is to be noted. It is similar to the interpretation given to the text in other passages. <sup>20</sup> The Jews did not accept Christ, since they could not understand the importance of his life on earth.

2. De Iei.,6,4

There can be seen a rather different interpretation of the text in this section of De Iei.. Having just cited Deut.8:12ff, noted above, in his attempt to show that over-eating leads men to forget God, he continues:-

Praeposuit corruptelae diuitiarum edacitatis enormitatem, cui ipsae diuitiae procurant. Per illam scilicet incrassatum erat cor populi, ne oculis uideret et auribus audiret et corde coniceret adipibus obstructo, quas nominatim esui abstulit dedocens hominem saginae studere.

Over-eating not only led the Israelites to forget God. It also was responsible

19. See Apol.,21,16; Adu. Marc.,4,19,2; 4,31,4; 5,11,9; De Resurr.,33,3; De Pud.,8,6, as well as the two occurrences illustrated.

20. Cf. Jn.12:40; Acts 28:26f.; Apol.,21,16; Adu. Marc.,4,31,4; 5,11,9; De Pud.,8,6.

for their misunderstanding and rejection of God. Tertullian has taken the figurative expression ἐπιχύθη ἡ καρδίη and has transformed it into a literalism. The people's hearts have become thick because of the amount of fats which have been eaten. These fats were forbidden by God. This prohibition is probably the one mentioned in Lev.3:17. <sup>21</sup>

Once again, Tertullian's ability to adapt a text to his own ends is clearly shown. On one occasion, he can interpret a text figuratively; on another, he applies a literal exegesis. The point he is making determines his principle of exegesis.

F. Is.40:28

καὶ νῦν οὐκ ἔγνωσ ἐμὴ μὴ ἤκουσας; Θεὸς λιπώνιος ὁ Θεός  
ὁ κατασκευάσας τὰ ἄκρα τῆς γῆς, οὐ πεινᾷσεν οὐδέ κοπιᾷσει,  
οὐδέ ἐστὶν ἐξέυρεσις τῆς φρονήσεως αὐτοῦ.

This text is cited on two occasions, and alluded to once:-

1. Adu. Marc.,2,22,2

God never really wanted sacrifices as such to be made to him. What he preferred were the motivations that led to the sacrifice. Scripture supports this:-

Hoc ipsum uoluit intellegi, quod non sibi ea proprie exegisset. Non enim bibam, inquit, sanguinem taurorum, <sup>22</sup> quia et alibi ait: deus aeternus non esuriet nec sitiet.

The last quotation is obviously taken from Is.40:28 in the Septuagint version. Tertullian seems to take the text as signifying that since God neither hungers nor thirsts, the sacrifices offered to him are unnecessary.

2. Adu. Prax.,16,7

The Monarchians believed that God himself was born, suffered, and died. In

21. νόμιμον εἰς τὸν λιπῶνα εἰς τὰς γευεῖς ὑμῶν, ἐν  
πλήρη κατοικίᾳ ὑμῶν. πᾶν στέαρ καὶ πᾶν λίμα οὐκ ἔδιδε  
22. See Is.1:11; Ps.50:13.

his refutation of this doctrine, Tertullian appeals to Is.40:28 to show that the Father could not have come to earth and hungered, since the prophet clearly states that God does not hunger:-

Hinc igitur apparet error illorum. Ignorantes enim a primordio omnem ordinem diuinae dispositionis per Filium decucurrise, ipsum credunt Patrem et uisum et congressum et operatum et sitim et esuriam passum - aduersus prophetam dicentem: Deus aeternus non sitiet nec esuriet omnino:....

Here the text is used as a direct refutation of Patripassian doctrine.

### 3. De Iei.,6,7

Tertullian is again praising abstinence:-

Si enim deus aeternus non esuriet, ut testatur per Esaiam, hoc erit tempus, quo homo deo adaequetur, cum sine pabulo uiuit.

This is an allusion to Is.40:28, and the text is applied in a completely different situation. It is summoned in support of the principles of the New Prophecy. The emphasis is less on God's attributes, and more on man's initiative. The eternity of God seems to be regarded as an incentive for man to abstain from food. The implications are best taken as eschatological. I would suggest that there are more than slight undertones here. Tertullian is most probably thinking that the followers of the New Prophecy who fast frequently are nearer to participating in God's splendour than the Catholics who think rather more of their stomachs. Again, the exegesis and application of the text vary according to the context. <sup>23</sup>

### G. 1 Cor.13

In this chapter, Paul is extolling the virtues of Christian love, which, he says, is greater than faith and hope. Tertullian takes the gist of the chapter

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23. In De Iei.,15,1, Tertullian condemns the heretics on account of their perpetual fasting. He argues that the followers of the New Prophecy practise only limited fasting. No doubt, this is to refute any argument which the Catholics might make about the similarity between the New Prophecy and heretics.

and applies it to the over-indulgence of the Catholics, using irony as a device. The passage in question is De Iei., 17, 2f.:-

Si tibi lenticulam defruto inrufatam obtulero, statim totos primatus tuos uendes; apud te agape in caccabis feruet, fides in culmis calet, spes in ferculis iacet. Sed maioris est agape, quia per hanc adulescentes tui cum sororibus dormiunt. Appendices scilicet gulae lasciuiam atque luxuriae.

As in De Iei., 6, 4, Tertullian is arguing that over-indulgence has extreme side-effects. In De Iei., 6, he had accounted Israel's forgetfulness of God to an excess of food. Here, in De Iei., 17, he attributes moral laxity to the same cause. The implication is that, since the followers of the New Prophecy do not lay as much store on a full stomach as the Catholics do, their moral standards will be far superior.

#### SUMMARY

Six texts have been noted in which Tertullian sees support for his views on fasting. He applies them in ways dissimilar from interpretations given in earlier writings, except in the case of the less specific text, 1 Cor. 13, for which no previous occurrence is adduced. The influence of the subject matter with which Tertullian is dealing, and of the urgency he feels to support his arguments leads him to search for previously unexplored sources of Scriptural evidence. Consequently, often unusual applications are given to texts.

#### The Use of Biblical Incidents and Personalities

Tertullian is not content merely to cite Scriptural texts to support his case for more frequent fasting. He is extremely dependent on examples from both the Old and New Testaments to prove the necessity for and the efficacy of fasting. The reference to Adam's fall has already been noted in this context.<sup>24</sup> So has the experiences of the Israelites in the wilderness.<sup>25</sup> In both cases, greed

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24. See above, pp. 221 f.

25. See above, pp. 224 f.

had an adverse effect. From these two examples of greed, Tertullian turns, in De Iei., 6, to a consideration of the advantages of fasting. Again, he uses Biblical illustrations. Moses saw God's glory, heard God's voice, and understood God's law. This was because he had fasted for forty days and nights.<sup>26</sup> Elijah also fasted for a similar period and, as a result, heard God's voice<sup>27</sup> - a voice far friendlier than that which had called Adam in the garden after he had eaten the forbidden fruit.<sup>28</sup>

Not only does fasting enable a man to experience an intimate relationship with God, it also can be instrumental in gaining God's help in fighting off enemies. Tertullian gives the examples of how Israel achieved victory in battle as a result of fasting beforehand.<sup>29</sup> Fasting also achieves safety. Nineveh escaped from ruin;<sup>30</sup> if Sodom and Gomorrah had fasted, they too would have escaped ruin.<sup>31</sup> Ahab was spared because he fasted.<sup>32</sup> Hannah, the wife of Elkanah, was able to bear a child as a result of her fasting.<sup>33</sup>

Another advantage of fasting is that it enables the understanding of mysteries.<sup>34</sup> Anna, the prophetess, recognised the infant Lord, and preached many things about him. She is said to have fasted regularly. Tertullian adds the comment:-

ostendens, in quibus officiis adsideri ecclesiae debeat, et a nullis magis intellegi. Christum quam semel nuptis et saepe ieiunis.<sup>35</sup>

This is obviously New Prophecy propaganda.

Tertullian then goes on to give examples from the life and teaching of Christ.

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26. See De Iei., 6, 5; cf. Ex. 24:15ff..

27. See De Iei., 6, 6f.; cf. 1 Kings 19.

28. See Gen. 3:9.

29. See 1 Sam. 7:5ff. and 2 Kings 18f..

30. See Jon. 3.

31. This seems to have been Tertullian's own personal opinion.

32. See 1 Kings 21, especially, verses 27ff..

33. See 1 Sam. 1.

34. See later in this chapter.

35. De Iei., 8, 1; cf. Luke 2:36ff..

He consecrated his own baptism by fasting; <sup>36</sup> By his refusal to turn stones into bread, he clearly indicated his views that fasting is valid. <sup>37</sup> He taught that fasts are to be performed joyfully, <sup>38</sup> and that they are weapons in the spiritual fight. <sup>39</sup> Tertullian comments:-

Quid enim mirum, si eadem operatione spiritus iniquus educitur, qua sanctus inducitur? <sup>40</sup>

The implication here is that fasting is directly responsible for the possession of the Spirit, and a logical conclusion would be that Tertullian is thinking of the New Prophecy's claim that their more frequent fasting signifies the presence of the Paraclete among them. The subsequent passage would support this conclusion:-

Denique, ut in centurionem Cornelium necdum tinctum dignatio spiritus sancti cum charismate insuper prophetiae festinasset, ieiunia eius legimus exaudita. <sup>41</sup>

I would suggest that, in the example of Cornelius, Tertullian sees a valuable precedent for the New Prophecy. The centurion was granted the gift of the Holy Spirit. He fasted too, and his fasts were acceptable. In the same way, Tertullian seems to imply that the New Prophecy, with its belief in the possession of the Spirit and its celebration of fasts, is acceptable to God. This conclusion may be further supported, I think, by Tertullian's inclusion of the phrase cum charismate insuper prophetiae, which would seem to stress a most important characteristic shared by Cornelius and the New Prophecy. The centurion seems to be regarded as a follower of the New Prophecy, before its time.

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36. See Matt.4; Luke 4.

37. See Matt.4:3; Luke 4:3.

38. See Matt.6:16ff..

39. See Matt.17:21; Mk.9:29.

40. De Iei.,8,3.

41. De Iei.,8,4.



From absolute fasts, Tertullian turns, in De Iei.,9, to partial fasts, and attempts to explain their validity and necessity by an appeal to Scripture. He mentions Elijah, who was on one occasion offered bread alone, instead of his customary bread and flesh.<sup>42</sup> David's words in the Psalms are adduced too.<sup>43</sup> As for abstinence from wine, Samuel<sup>44</sup> and Aaron<sup>45</sup> and Paul<sup>46</sup> are to be considered here.

Tertullian then concentrates on the time limits that are to be imposed on stations. It seems as though some Catholics censured the New Prophecy's continuation of its stations past the ninth hour. Tertullian discusses the question of whether Peter is the authority behind such a time limit being imposed, and his conclusion is that Peter's example would show that prayer should be observed at all times of the day, but more especially at the third, the sixth, and the ninth hours.<sup>47</sup> This scheme is corroborated by Daniel who prayed three times a day.<sup>48</sup> Peter's example must be seen then as dependent on an earlier usage.

The New Prophecy, on the other hand, says Tertullian, can put forward a more fitting argument for the observation of stations up to the ninth hour. When Christ was put to death, the earth was covered in darkness from the sixth hour until the ninth hour,<sup>49</sup> and it is therefore fitting that the station should end when the earth was once again bathed in sunshine. However, there is another consideration which leads to the support of the argument for a later station. That is, Christians should fast until a late hour in order to commemorate Christ's burial by Joseph.<sup>50</sup>

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42. See 1 Kings 17:6, where the ravens brought Elijah bread and meat. In 1 Kings 19:5ff., Elijah receives only bread and water.

43. Tertullian cites Ps. 102:9:   
ὅτι σπρόδον ὡσεὶ ἄρτον ἔφαγον  
καὶ τὸ πόνιόν μου μετὰ  
κλάυσθός ἐκίβησεν

44. See 1 Sam. 1:11. Samuel is not to drink wine.

45. See Lev. 10:9. Aaron is forbidden to drink wine when he enters the tabernacle.

46. See Rom. 13:13, for Paul's dislike of drunkenness.

47. In Acts 10:9, Peter prays at the sixth hour. In Acts 3:1, Peter goes to the temple at the ninth hour. It was about the third hour, says Tertullian, that Peter and the apostles received the Holy Spirit; cf. Acts 2:13ff..

48. See Dan. 6:10.

49. See Matt. 27:45ff.; Mk. 16:33ff.; Luke 23:44ff.

50. See Matt. 27:57ff.; Mk. 15:42ff.; Luke 23:50ff.; Jn. 19:38ff..

However, Tertullian does not wish to rely merely on conjecture to support his theories. He attempts to provide Scriptural support to prove the antiquity of his beliefs. Moses prayed until late evening in order to defeat Amalek.<sup>51</sup> Joshua ordered the sun and moon to keep a station.<sup>52</sup> Saul ordered a fast until late evening.<sup>53</sup> Daniel speaks of an evening sacrifice.<sup>54</sup>

In De Iei., 15, Tertullian discusses Paul's attitude to food, and then in the following chapter, he reverts to Scripture to show examples of divine judgement upon the self-indulgent. He refers to the calamities which befell the house of Eli.<sup>55</sup> He refers to Sameas, who, in spite of having been prohibited by God from eating, rashly ate an old man's food and was killed by a lion.<sup>56</sup>

It is noticeable that Tertullian's dependence on Scripture is very great. Two points must be mentioned:-

a) Tertullian side-steps the issue at stake. He sees it as essential to prove the necessity for and the efficacy of fasting. He attempts to trace fasting back to its earliest source. Such argumentation is unnecessary, since both Catholics and the followers of the New Prophecy accepted these premises. What was at stake was not Scriptural support for the practice of fasting, but support for its frequency and time-limits.

b) Tertullian is so eager to find Scriptural warrant for fasting, that he is led to make false assumptions. He associates fasting with intimate experiences between the faithful and God, and with victory as a result of God's aid, etc..

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51. See Ex.17:8ff..

52. See Josh.10:12ff..

53. See 1 Sam.14:24ff..

54. See Dan.9:21.

55. See 1 Sam.4.

56. See 1 Kings 13.

He tends to presuppose that, if there had been no fasting, there would have been no such experiences or consequences. This argument would seem to be false, since there are occasions when Tertullian is only too eager to assert that God is won over by the motivations behind the practice rather than by the practice itself.<sup>57</sup> Tertullian's whole argumentation seems geared to the principle that, since the New Prophecy laid such emphasis on fasting, fasting must be shown to be the cause of possession of the truth, salvation, and intimate experience of God. His aim throughout is to prove the superiority of the practices of the New Prophecy over those of the Catholics, and if fasting was a direct cause of spiritual grace, then more frequent fasting proves that those who practise it must be more spiritually endowed.

#### The Example of Daniel

Tertullian refers to Daniel on several occasions throughout *De Iei.*, in order to support his theories about fasting.<sup>58</sup> On two of these occasions, there appears to be more wide-ranging applications of the Old Testament example:-

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57. See, for example, the passage cited above ( p.228 ) from *Adu. Marc.*, 2,22,2, where Tertullian stresses that the motivations behind fasting are the most important thing.

58. See *De Iei.*, 7,6f.; 9,2ff.; 10,3f..

1. De Iei., 7, 6f.

Tertullian has just been arguing that fasting produces victory, averts peril, and even causes child-birth in an indirect way.<sup>59</sup> In making the transition to Daniel, he states:-

Sed non modo naturae mutationem aut periculorum auersionem aut delictorum obliterationem, uerum etiam sacramentorum agnitionem ieiunia de deo merebuntur, He then goes on to mention Daniel's interpretation of the king's dream after a period of fasting.<sup>60</sup> He draws the conclusion that it was Daniel's fasting which was the cause of his God-given power to understand the significance of the king's dream. The logical direction which Tertullian's thought is taking is to tacitly infer that, since the followers of the New Prophecy fast frequently, they too will become the vehicles of God's power, enabling them to comprehend mysteries unknown to others.

Not only was Daniel the inspired interpreter of dreams, but also he received God's stamp of approval. Tertullian continues:-

Nam et angelus missus ad eum hanc statim professus est causam diuinae dignationis: ueni, inquit, demonstrare tibi, quatenus miserabilis es, ieiunando scilicet....

Tertullian sees Daniel's approval by God as arising directly from his self-discipline in fasting. Daniel's fasting, of course, was an outward manifestation of a correct relationship with God, but one gets the impression that Tertullian has pushed this premise to the back of his mind, and that he sees the element of fasting as the most important aspect of Daniel's example. Tertullian's implication is that, since Daniel received God's approval by fasting, so too will the followers of the New Prophecy, because they lay more emphasis on fasting than do the Catholics.

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59. See above, p.231.

60. See Dan.2.

Tertullian's insistence on the valuable nature of Daniel's fasting seems to suggest that he is disregarding all other aspects of Daniel's experiences, character and relationship with God, and is thinking of fasting merely as an end in itself, rather than as a manifestation of a spiritually profound attitude.

2. De Iei.,9,2ff.

The example of Daniel also serves to support Tertullian's claim that besides absolute fasts, there should be xerophagies. He cites the instance when Daniel and his companions preferred a diet of vegetables and water to the splendid feasts of the royal court. The result of this partial fasting was, according to Tertullian, a handsome appearance and spiritual acumen:-

*Dedit enim deus adolescentulis scientiam et intellegentiam in omni litteratura et Danieli in omni uerbo et in somniis et in omni sophia, qua hoc ipsum quoque saperet, quibus modis de deo impetraretur agnitio sacramentorum.*

The implicit analogy between Daniel and the followers of the New Prophecy seems self-evident here. By implication, Tertullian is stressing the superiority of the New Prophecy over the Catholics. Daniel had the power to understand literature; the followers of the New Prophecy claimed a better understanding of Scripture than the Catholics had. Daniel could understand mysteries; the followers of the New Prophecy understand God's purpose, especially in the realms of the more stringent discipline which he demands of his followers. Daniel understood dreams; the followers of the New Prophecy claimed to receive God's will by means of ecstasy and prophecy and visions.<sup>61</sup> Fasting is instrumental in the possession of such powers.

SUMMARY

Biblical examples serve Tertullian well in his desire to find support for his arguments that abstinence from food leads to a closer relationship with God, deeper spiritual insight, and a more disciplined outlook to life in general.

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61. Tertullian speaks of Daniel's vision in De Iei.,9,3; cf. Dan.10:1ff..

Of the examples he adduces, none is more greatly emphasised than that of Daniel, except perhaps that of Adam. Certainly, it would appear that, in the specific context of fasting, Daniel is of prime importance. The opportunity the incidents and powers in Daniel's life provide for a contrast between the Catholics and the followers of the New Prophecy is not wasted by Tertullian. He seems constantly to have in mind the superiority of the latter, in the spheres of discipline, attitude to God, and special knowledge.

CHAPTER NINE

PERSECUTION AND MARTYRDOM: THE VEILING OF VIRGINS

A. PERSECUTION AND MARTYRDOM

The writings of Tertullian reflect the constant struggle between the Church and the State in North Africa about the turn of the century. His numerous references and allusions to martyrdom and persecution indicate the crisis which faced Christians at this time.<sup>1</sup> Tertullian sees his task in this context as two-fold. Firstly, he recommends Christianity to the pagans in an attempt to dispel their fears and suspicions about the sect. Secondly, he advises his fellow-Christians on the reasons for and the correct attitudes towards persecution and martyrdom. Consequently, Tertullian frequently mentions the issues, and it is impossible to consult a restricted number of his works.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Throughout the first centuries of Christianity, the Church encountered opposition from the State. Persecutions were numerous. There were persecutions under Nero, under Domitian, and martyrdoms characterise the history of the early Church, especially, it would seem, in North Africa. The earliest extant witness to African Christianity, The Acts of the Scilli Martyrs, written about 180 A.D., refers to the condemnation of twelve Christians at Carthage on July 17th, 180 A.D.. Throughout the period in which Tertullian writes, there seems to have been sporadic outbreaks against the Christians. He addresses his Apol. to the magistrates at Carthage as a result of recent persecution ( see Apol., 1 ), and in De Spect., he implies that Christians were still undergoing persecution. ( see, for example, De Spect., 1; where he emphasises the common belief that Christians are always ready to die ). His Ad Mart. witnesses to persecution. In 202 A.D., a vigorous persecution of the Church began in Egypt and North Africa, and has been attributed to an edict of Septimius Severus, forbidding both Jews and Christians to make converts, and imposing the death penalty for disobedience. ( The existence of this edict and the initiative taken by Septimius Severus have been disputed. See the evidence collected by J.G. Davies, "Was the devotion of Septimius Severus to Serapis the cause of the persecution of 202-3 ?" JTS. N.S.v. 1954. pp.73ff.; W.H.C. Frend, Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church: Oxford: 1965. p.321, seems to accept the existence of the edict; R. M. Grant, Augustus to Constantine: London: 1971. p.122, does not. ) The Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis describes martyrdom in 203 A.D. ( see above, P. 43, and cf. De An., 55 ). Further outbreaks against the Christians are reflected in Ad Scap., Scorp., and De Fuga.
2. Works which include references or allusions to martyrdom include Apol., Ad Nat., Ad Mart., Ad Uxor., De Bapt., De Pat., De An., Scorp., Ad Scap., De Cor., De Fuga, De Iei., and De Pud.

The different aims of the relevant works must be taken into account in an understanding of Tertullian's views on the subject in hand. Some are apologetic,<sup>3</sup> some are addressed to Christians undergoing the threat of persecution, and offer advice,<sup>4</sup> and one is written to encourage imprisoned Christians in their time of testing.<sup>5</sup> As a result, Tertullian's approach and arguments vary. It is only to be expected that, in his apologetic writings, Tertullian places very little emphasis on the evidence of Scripture. To base his arguments on the Bible would hold very little or no validity for the pagans to whom he is writing. Hence, an exposition of his use of Scripture must be confined to the works addressed to Christians.<sup>6</sup> However, there is no necessity to adduce every text which Tertullian cites in his treatment of martyrdom and persecution, since many of his Scriptural references are of little relevance to a consideration of the influence of the New Prophecy on the development of his exegesis.

That the New Prophecy placed great store in its large number of martyrs is plain from the account of the anonymous writer cited by Eusebius. He mentions that the followers of the movement appeal to their numerous martyrs as a justification of the truth of their beliefs, and argues that such a conclusion cannot be drawn since other heresies have martyrs also. He states that the Christian martyrs avoid all contact with the martyrs of the movement.<sup>7</sup> Apollonius speaks of their martyrs also, although he is most uncomplimentary about them.<sup>8</sup> It is quite in keeping that a movement which emphasised the imminence of the end of the world, as the New Prophecy did, should have its martyrs. Indeed, the whole North African Church seems thoroughly permeated with

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3. Apol.; Ad Scap..

4. For example; see De Fuga; Scorp..

5. Ad Mart..

6. I do not intend to mention every passage of Scripture used by Tertullian in these works.

7. See Eusebius, H.E., 5, 16, 20ff..

8. See Ibid., 5, 18, 5ff., where Apollonius speaks of the so-called martyr Themiso exchanging imprisonment for wealth, and he accuses the martyrs of robbery.



tendency towards martyrdom,<sup>9</sup> no doubt influenced by the belief in the nearness of the Parousia. Tertullian himself is no exception to this characteristic.<sup>10</sup> Even before his involvement in the New Prophecy, his emphasis on the eschatological nature of Christian belief is evident. In his works, Tertullian sets out to show that martyrdom and persecution are the will of God. It is easier for him to assert this of martyrdom, than it is of persecution. The idea of martyrdom as the second baptism is stressed,<sup>11</sup> as is the removal of the martyrs to a more pleasant existence, enhanced by the knowledge that their death is on behalf of God. The glories of martyrdom are everywhere apparent in Tertullian's works.<sup>12</sup>

The justification for persecution is a more difficult task. Tertullian devotes a complete treatise to it.<sup>13</sup> In his exposition, Tertullian resorts to Scripture frequently. Several notable examples will serve to show the development of his thought, as he becomes involved with the New Prophecy, for *De Fuga* is written at a time when his sympathy towards the movement is evident.

a In *De Fuga*, 1,4, Tertullian explains that persecution is merely the iudicium of God. He continues:-

Hae etiam scalae quas somniat Iacob, aliis ascensum in superiora, aliis descensum ad inferiora demonstrantes.

The allusion is to Gen.28:12. This would seem to be rather a strange metaphor until consideration is given to the context, and to how Tertullian has reached such an exegesis.

Firstly, he has just likened the persecution of Christians to a fan which cleanses

dominicam aream, ecclesiam scilicet, confusum aceruum fidelium euentilans et discernens frumentum martyrum et paleas negatorum.

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9. W.H.C. Frend, *The Early Church*: London:1965.p.91, speaks of the African Church as "a Church of the martyrs".

10. Eschatological references occur, for example, in *De Spect.*,30; *De Orat.*,5; *De Cult. Fem.*,2,13; *De Monog.*,14.

11. See *De Pat.*,13,7; *De Bapt.*,16; *De Pud.*,22,9f..

12. The martyrs have the privilege of going straight to paradise ( see *De An.*,55 ); they may absolve and recommend ( see *Adu. Val.*,4; *Ad Mart.*,1; *De Pud.*,22).

13. *De Fuga*. In *Scorp.*, Tertullian deals with martyrdom.

This allusion would seem to be to Matt.3:12. <sup>14</sup> Then Tertullian mentions Jacob's dream and goes on to speak of persecution as a contest whose rewards are offered by God. The whole context of this passage is concerned with a sifting out of the faithful and the unfaithful, of the strong and the weak. The angels going up and down the ladder in Jacob's dream clearly represent for Tertullian those Christians who have undergone persecution without disgrace, without denying their faith. Conversely, the angels descending the ladder are those Christians who have given in to their persecutors.

Secondly, the evolution of this idea adds further light to its interpretation. I think we should look for its development in Adu. Marc.,3,24. Here, Tertullian is discussing the kingdom of God, and he refers to the manifestation of the heavenly city which had been witnessed in the East. This manifestation, says Tertullian, fulfils the prediction of the New Prophecy. <sup>15</sup> Tertullian's concern for the implications of the vision of the heavenly city leads him to discuss the destruction of the earth, and the judgement of the world. One of the references he uses is to Jacob's dream:-

Cum uero Iacob somniat scalas obfirmatas in terra ad caelum et angelos alios ascendentes alios descendentes et innixum desuper dominum, temere, si forte, interpretabimur scalis his iter ad caelum demonstrari, quo alii perueniant, unde alii decidant, \*\*\*\* <sup>16</sup> domini constitutum esse iudicium. <sup>17</sup>

It is only a short step for Tertullian to reconcile his idea of persecution as a means of judgement with the vision of the ladder from earth to heaven. De Fuga,1 provides us with the complete association of the two ideas.

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14. οὐ τὸ πτύον ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ, καὶ διακαθαρῆς τῆν ἄλωνα αὐτοῦ, καὶ συνἕξει τὸν σῖτον αὐτοῦ εἰς τῆν ἀποθήκην, τὸ δὲ ἄχυρον κατακαύσει πυρὶ ἁβέστῳ.

15. This vision is discussed later, pp. 46f..

16. The text is obscure at this point.

17. Adu. Marc.,3,24,9.

It is Tertullian's premise in De Fuga that to flee in the face of persecution is a disgrace. The words of Christ recorded in Matt.10:23 provide authority for a Christian to flee in such circumstances:-

ὅτι ἐν δὲ διώκωσιν ὑμᾶς ἐν τῇ πόλει ταύτῃ, φεύγετε εἰς τὴν ἑτέραν . . . .

There can be no doubt that this text was used as an excuse for flight. <sup>18</sup>

Tertullian himself has interpreted the text in this way. In Ad Uxor.,1,3,4,

in his discussions on Paul's statement that it is better to marry than to burn, <sup>19</sup>

Tertullian says:-

Etiam in persecutionibus melius ex permissu fugere de oppido in oppidum quam comprehensum et distortum negare.

His argument is that although flight is not the summum bonum, it is better than a denial of the faith.

By the time he writes De Cor., there seems to have been a development in Tertullian's thought. The work does reflect sympathies with the New Prophecy. <sup>20</sup>

The incident upon which he is commenting is the refusal of a soldier to wear a crown, and hence sentencing himself to certain death. His behaviour had obviously been criticised as rash: his eagerness for death had been condemned. Tertullian says of the critics who seem to have included some Christians:-

Plane superest, ut etiam martyria recusare meditentur qui prophetias eiusdem spiritus sancti respuerunt. Musitant denique tam bonam et longam pacem periclitari sibi. Nec dubito quosdam ( secundum ) scripturas emigrare, sarcinas expedire, fugae accingi de ciuitate in ciuitatem. Nullam enim aliam euangelii memoriam curant. Noui et pastores eorum in pace leones et in proelio ceruos. <sup>21</sup>

Tertullian is here expressing disgust at the cowardly behaviour of some Christians, and even some clergymen, in the face of persecution, who obviously looked to Scripture ( to Matt.10:23, no doubt ) for support for their actions. Tertullian's thought is clearly becoming more severe. In Ad Uxor.,1,3, he had

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18. See De Cor.,1,5; De Fuga,6,1.

19. See 1 Cor.7:9. This text is discussed above, pp. 152 ff..

20. See De Cor.,1,4. The passage is cited below.

21. De Cor.,1,4f..

accepted flight in persecution as a reasonable course of action, but now, in De Cor., he is beginning to look down on those who do not stand up for their convictions. Flight is still a possibility, but it is a despicable one.

The development of this harsh outlook to flight finds its culmination in De Fuga,6,1. Having just discussed the divine origins of persecution, Tertullian goes on to deal with some arguments that are put forward as authority for flight:-

"Immo" inquit " ( quia ). praeceptum adimpleuit fugiens de civitate in ciuitatem". Sic enim uoluit quidam , sed et ipse fugitiuus, argumentari, et qui proinde nolunt intellegere sensum Domini illius pronuntiationis, ut eam ad uelamentum timiditatis suae utantur,....

Tertullian, now involved in the New Prophecy, could not accept any longer the implication of Matt.10:23. He must expound the text and give its real meaning:-

Hoc in persona(s) proprie apostolorum et in tempora et in causas eorum pertinere defendimus ....

The context in which the passage occurs shows this most clearly. Christ told his disciples to go first of all to the house of Israel, and to preach to the Jews first, in order that the sons might receive the bread before the dogs.<sup>22</sup> Christ allowed his disciples the opportunity of flight in order that the gospel might be proclaimed to the extent to which he wished it to be. Christ's words non consummabitis ciuitates Israelis indicate that the command to flee was restricted to Judaea. But no command that shows Judaea to be the specific sphere for preaching can be said to apply to Christians, since the Spirit has been poured out upon all flesh.<sup>23</sup> The rejection of the gospel by the Jews meant that the apostles preached the message to the gentiles, and their words went out to the ends of the earth.<sup>24</sup> Since, therefore, the prohibition

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22. This is a reference to Matt.15:26.

23. The reference is to Joel 2:28. This passage is discussed above, pp. 80 ff..

24. See Ps.19:4.

against setting foot in the way of the gentiles has come to an end, why should not the command to flee, which was issued at the same time, have come to an end also ? From that time on, the apostles did not hesitate to suffer.<sup>25</sup> Thus, the command to flee was a temporary one. Tertullian goes on to show that this interpretation is compatible with other statements of Christ.<sup>26</sup> The teaching of the apostles agrees also.<sup>27</sup>

In De Fuga, flight in time of persecution is no longer a possibility. It is absolutely forbidden by God. Any allowance of it was merely temporary. Tertullian's use and interpretation of this text provides a fine example of how his involvement in the New Prophecy leads him to change his attitudes in certain respects.<sup>28</sup>

A further text is worthy of mention. This is Luke 8:18.<sup>29</sup> Tertullian's use of the text reflects the characteristics of his newly adopted beliefs. In De Fuga, 11, Tertullian is discussing the case of the clergy who have fled in times of persecution. He says that a bad shepherd ( implying a fleeing clergyman ) will be turned off the farm; the wages owed to him will be retained as compensation. Not only that, but the shepherd would be expected to give up some of his own savings also, for

qui habet, dabitur ei; ab eo autem, qui non habet, etiam quod uidetur habere auferetur.<sup>30</sup>

Tertullian adds that the Old Testament prophets ( Zechariah, Ezekiel and Jeremiah ) condemned the shepherd who left his flock vulnerable to the wild beasts.<sup>31</sup>

He continues:-

Si et Spiritum quis agnouerit, audiet fugitios denotantem.

This is a most obvious reference to the words of the Paraclete revealed in the

25. Paul, who once had let himself down in a basket, did not hesitate, at the end of his ministry to endanger his life by going to Jerusalem ( see Acts 9:25; 21:13 ).

26. Tertullian cites Matt. 10:32; 5:11; 10:22, etc..

27. The texts cited include 1 Thess. 5:14; Eph. 4:28; 1 Thess. 5:5; 1 Jn. 3:16; 4:18.

28. For a discussion of the exegetical principles involved here, see pp.

29. ὅς ἂν γὰρ ἔχη, δοθήσεται αὐτῷ. καὶ ὅς ἂν μὴ ἔχη,  
καὶ ὃ δοκεῖ ἔχειν ἀρθήσεται ἀπ' αὐτοῦ.

30. De Fuga, 11.2.

31.. See Zech. 13:7; Ezek. 34:2f.; Jer. 23:1f..

New Prophecy. It is quite clear that Tertullian's application of Luke 8:18 is inspired, in part, by a consideration of the Paraclete's condemnation of fugitives.

Two earlier applications of the text are interesting, and may shed light on the interpretation found in De Fuga, 11. Both occur in Adu. Marc.. The first is found in a passage already quoted quite fully, in which Tertullian is discussing the fall of Adam.<sup>32</sup> In this passage,<sup>33</sup> the sin of Adam is described in the words of 1 Cor. 2:14 as the natural man's failure to receive the things of God, and as a result<sup>he</sup> suffers the forfeiture of even that which he has. In Adam's case, the loss of the grace of paradise and the friendship of God followed. I pointed out that, in this passage in Adu. Marc., Tertullian appears to think of Adam before his fall as a spiritual man - a proto-type of the follower of the New Prophecy. After his fall, Adam became representative of the natural man - a type of the Catholic who has rejected the recent revelations of the Paraclete. It is only a short step to the development of the idea that Adam, in a state of incompleteness, having lost his spiritual qualities, represents the Catholic, from whom everything shall be taken. His former possession ( the spiritual graces ) shall be passed over to the follower of the New Prophecy, and more will be given besides.

The second reference to the text in Adu. Marc. occurs in 4, 19, 3f.. The argument centres on the possession of the right understanding of Scripture. Christ taught his hearers to hear with the ears of the heart. To anyone who would not listen, a threat of deprivation was issued:-

Si dignum sensum pronuntiationi accommodes pro sensu eius, qui auditui suscitabat, etiam dicendo: uidete, quomodo audiatis non audituris minabatur. Sane non minatur mitissimus deus, quia nec iudicat nec irascitur. Hoc probat etiam subiacens sensus: ei, qui habet, dabitur, ab eo autem, qui non habet, etiam quod habere se putat auferetur ei. Qui dabitur? Adiectio fidei uel intellectus uel salus ipsa. Quid auferetur? - Utique quod dabitur.

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32. See above, pp. 122f..

33. Adu. Marc., 2, 2, 6.

Here, there is no question of a monetary forfeit, as in De Fuga, 11. The forfeit is a spiritual one. Tertullian is speaking as a Catholic in opposition to the heretic Marcion. The emphasis on *adiectio fidei uel intellectus uel salus ipsa* is interesting, however, since it might be possible to see in this assertion of the superiority of the Catholics' spiritual qualities in relation to those of the heretics a foundation for the idea which Tertullian will develop later that the followers of the New Prophecy were spiritually better than the Catholics. The use of Luke 8:18 in a similar context in Adu. Marc., 2, 2 may support this hypothesis.

#### SUMMARY

Three texts have been studied to assess Tertullian's use and interpretation of Scripture in relation to his views on martyrdom and persecution. In an earlier chapter of this thesis, Tertullian's appeal to Rev. 6:9 to show the special treatment given to the souls of martyrs has been mentioned.<sup>34</sup> There is no doubt that Tertullian's involvement in the New Prophecy influences his understanding of the three texts discussed in this chapter, and in the case of Matt. 10:23, leads him to completely contradict earlier exegesis.

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34. See above, pp. 4-2f.

B. THE VEILING OF VIRGINS

In his Catholic treatise, De Orat., Tertullian devotes several pages to a discussion on whether virgins should wear the veil. His conclusion is that it is fitting for Christian virgins to cover their heads. Some years later, when his sympathy towards the New Prophecy has been aroused, he briefly mentions the subject again in De Cor., although he is concerned here, not with whether veiling is to be observed, but with the basis of the custom, as observed by the Jews. Still later, as a confirmed follower of the New Prophecy, he dedicates a whole treatise, De Virg. Vel., to the topic. A comparison of De Orat. and De Virg. Vel. shows that his point of view remains consistent throughout his life. In spite of the different aims of the treatises,<sup>35</sup> the conclusion he puts forward is the same. The fact that De Virg. Vel. contains additional material and more elaborate arguments can be explained by the realisation that this treatise is devoted entirely to the subject, and its aim is to treat the subject as exhaustively as possible.

Veiling itself does not appear to have been a vital issue in the Church's controversy with the New Prophecy, and it would seem fair to conclude that Tertullian is putting forward his own views, expressed as early as De Orat., as the normal practice in the movement. A closer examination of De Virg. Vel. reveals, I think, that the actual theme of veiling is of less importance than the motivations which lie behind the practice. Veiling fits in well with the general rules of discipline observed by women.<sup>36</sup> It is merely the outward manifestation of the correct attitude of a woman to men and to God. The fact that the female followers of the New Prophecy wear the veil shows their correct disposition towards God. This emphasis on the close relationship of a believer towards God and on a stricter discipline than that observed by the Catholics

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35. De Orat. is an exposition of the Lord's prayer, whilst De Virg. Vel. is a defence of the veiling of virgins, written with the desire also to justify the New Prophecy.

36. See De Virg. Vel., 9, where Tertullian mentions the discipline imposed on women by the Church.



was a central one in the New Prophecy, or at least, in Tertullian's version of it.

The Scriptural texts on which Tertullian relies for support are found, in most cases, in De Orat. and De Virg. Vel.. In fact, the former contains, in embryo, the main Scriptural arguments which Tertullian develops in De Virg. Vel.. In the one chapter in question in De Orat.,<sup>37</sup> he uses almost as many texts as in seventeen chapters in the latter work.<sup>37</sup>

The passages of Scripture which he uses for most of his support are the following:-

1. 1 Cor.11:3ff., in which Paul discusses veiling;<sup>38</sup>
2. Gen.2:23, from which Tertullian argues that Eve, although a virgin, is called "woman"; so Paul's view that women should be veiled applies to virgins too.<sup>39</sup>
3. Gen.6:1ff., from which Tertullian argues that the fall of the angels was brought about by virgins, and consequently, such dangerous faces should be covered.<sup>40</sup>
4. Gen.3:7, from which Tertullian argues that only the innocent ( i.e. girls who have not yet achieved puberty ) should remain unveiled, because as soon as Adam and Eve became wise, they veiled themselves.<sup>41</sup>
5. Gen.24:64f., in which Rebecca, on her betrothal, veils herself.<sup>42</sup>
6. Luke 1:26f., from which Tertullian argues, as in the case of Eve above, that Mary, although a virgin, is called "woman".<sup>43</sup>

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37. The subject is discussed in De Orat.,22, following an introduction in 21.

38. See De Orat.,21,2; 22, passim; De Virg. Vel.,4.

39. See De Orat.,22,1; De Virg. Vel.,5.

40. See De Orat.,22,5; De Virg. Vel.,7,2ff.; 11,2.

41. See De Orat.,22,8; De Virg. Vel.,11,2.

42. See De Orat.,22,10; De Virg. Vel.,11,3.

43. See De Virg. Vel.,6. This argument is not found in De Orat..

Of these passages, the only one which occurs in De Virg. Vel. and not in De Orat. is the last one - the reference to Mary. Its similarity in use to the reference to Eve as a virgin shows that it has been included in order to re-inforce Tertullian's argument. Wishing to show that the general term "woman" includes virgins, he adduces two passages in De Virg. Vel., whereas one had sufficed in De Orat..

In spite of the use of similar passages of Scripture in the two works, De Virg. Vel. contains additional material, and it is this which sets the tone of the treatise and which makes it so different from his earlier statement. Mention has already been made of the numerous texts which Tertullian uses in his defence and promotion of the New Prophecy.<sup>44</sup> Several of these texts are found in the opening chapter of De Virg. Vel., which contains a thoroughly systematic exposition of the nature and validity of the New Prophecy.<sup>45</sup>

There is one main aspect of Tertullian's argument in the work which has yet to be noted. This is his definition of the relationship between truth and custom. It would appear as though some people in the Church of Tertullian's day regarded veiling of virgins as illegitimate since it had become the regular practice in some churches to allow their virgins freedom from the veil. In De Virg. Vel., Tertullian's aim is to prove that custom is no substitute for truth:-

Proprium iam negotium passus meae opinionis, Latine quoque astendam uirgines nostras uelari oportere ex quo transitum aetatis suae fecerint: hoc exigere ueritatem, cui nemo praescribere potest, non spatium temporum, non patrocinia personarum, non priuilegium regionum. Ex his enim fere consuetudo initium ab aliqua ignorantia uel simplicitate sortita in usum per successionem corroboratur et ita aduersus ueritatem uindicatur. Sed Dominus noster Christus ueritatem se, non consuetudinem, cognominauit...<sup>46</sup>

Tertullian's suggestion of the invalidity of custom is taken up in the next

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44. See above, especially, pp. 56 ff..

45. See above, especially, pp. 28 f.; 67 ff..

46. De Virg. Vel., 1, 1. The final sentence is an allusion to Jn. 14:6:-

λέγει αὐτῷ Ἰησοῦς, Ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ ὁδὸς καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια  
καὶ ἡ ζωὴ.....

chapter where he desires to show the inconsistency within custom itself. One church veils virgins; another does not. Both practices are claimed to be founded on custom. <sup>47</sup> In De Virg. Vel., 3, 1, the temporary relationship between custom and truth is stated:-

Contenta erat ueritas pacisci cum consuetudine, ut tacite sub consuetudinis nomine frueretur se uel ex parte.

He concludes the chapter with a passionate and rhetorical appeal to truth to make herself known:-

Exsurge igitur ueritas, exsurge et quasi de patientia erumpe! Nullam uolo consuetudinem defendas; nam iam et illa consuetudine, sub qua te fruebaris, expugnatur. Te esse demonstra quae uirgines tegis. Ipsa scripturas tuas interpretare, quas consuetudo non nouit. Si enim nosset, nunquam esset. <sup>48</sup>

I would suggest that there is more than a simple reference to the interpretation of Scripture here. This appeal to truth to reveal the true meaning of Scripture is made by Tertullian, a follower of the New Prophecy. The implication is that he is thinking of the interpretation of Scripture granted to the movement, rather than to all Christians in general. Since the work is so clearly a justification for the existence of the New Prophecy, it is not incompatible with Tertullian's aim to see in this passage a reference to the movement's superior powers in the understanding of Scripture. That he asserted this superiority has already been noted. <sup>49</sup>

From this point onwards in the treatise, <sup>50</sup> Tertullian's concern is with the Scriptural foundation for the veiling of virgins. The passages to which he appeals are, as noted above, those to which he appeals in De Orat., with the odd exception. It is not that his appeal to Scripture has changed in De Virg. Vel., but it is rather that his belief in the New Prophecy has confirmed his former views on the subject of veiling. The truth inherent in

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47. See De Virg. Vel., 2.

48. De Virg. Vel., 3.5.

49. See above pp. 29ff; cf. pp. 275ff..

50. I.e. De Virg. Vel., 4ff..

the movement confirms his earlier understanding of Scripture. Truth is ancient; even if a custom can claim a long history, it may not be in agreement with truth:-

Si semper Christus, et prior omnibus, aequae ueritas sempiterna et antiqua res. Viderint ergo quibus nouum est quod sibi uetus est. Haereseis non tam nouitas quam ueritas reuincit. Quodcunque aduersus ueritatem sapit, hoc erit haeresis, etiam uetus consuetudo. <sup>51</sup>

Truth is the most important norm by which doctrine, and practices, are judged. How long a practice may have existed is irrelevant. Hence, even some beliefs which may be termed "old" are false, in spite of their antiquity. Tertullian frequently argues that what is earlier is true. <sup>52</sup> In this case he argues that truth is original, and condemns anything that is in opposition to it.

Within this context of the relationship between truth and custom, attention must be drawn to De Cor., in which, as stated above, <sup>53</sup> Tertullian deals briefly with veiling. <sup>54</sup> His concern is with the origins of the Jewish practice of veiling their womenfolk. Having just mentioned several Church practices for which there is no specific Scriptural justification, <sup>55</sup> he goes on, in De Cor., 4, 1:-

Harum et aliarum eiusmodi disciplinarum si legem exoptules scripturam, nullam leges. Traditio tibi praetendetur auctrix et consuetudo confirmatrix et fides obseruatrix. Rationem traditioni et consuetudini et fidei patrocinaturam aut ipse perspicies, aut ab aliquo qui perspexerit disces. Interim non nullam esse credes cui debeatur obsequium. Adicio unum adhuc exemplum, quatinus et de ueteribus docere conueniet. Apud Iudaeos tam sollemne est feminis eorum uelamen capitis, ut inde noscantur. Quaero legem. Apostolum differo.

The law which Tertullian seeks is not forthcoming, and he is forced to argue that even unwritten tradition can be justified if it has been established by custom:-

His igitur exemplis renuntiatum erit posse etiam non scriptam traditionem in obseruatione defendi, confirmatam consuetudine, idonea teste probatae tunc traditionis ex perseuerantia obseruationis. <sup>56</sup>

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51. De Virg. Vel., 1, 2.

52. See, for example, De Praesc. Haer., 31, 1; Adu. Marc., 4, 5, 1; Adu. Prax., 2, 2.

53. See p. 24<sup>3</sup>.

54. See De Cor., 2f..

55. See De Cor., 3, 2ff.. He mentions the rituals associated with baptism, the Eucharist, and fasting.

56. De Cor., 4, 4.

F. de Pauw has seen a development in Tertullian's thought in this context. From a consideration of passages in De Orat., 21f., De Virg. Vel., and De Cor., he argues that in the first work Tertullian sees custom as a written observance which can be justified by appeal to the apostle Paul; <sup>57</sup> in De Virg. Vel., which de Pauw takes to be a work written at the time of Tertullian's transition to the New Prophecy, custom is seen as a written observance, but there is evidence of an appeal to the Paraclete to interpret Scripture whose sense no longer seems clear; <sup>58</sup> in De Cor., is to be seen the culmination of this development, for in this work, Tertullian emphasises the importance of unwritten tradition and he makes no appeal to the authority of the apostle. <sup>59</sup> The conclusion of de Pauw is as follows:-

"Il semble bien que c'est le besoin de justifier un certain nombre de pratiques nouvelles montanistes, qu'il ne pouvait plus justifier au titre d'observances scripturaires, qui amena Tertullien à élaborer, en harmonie avec ses idées sur la tradition en général, une théorie complète des observances non écrites.... 60

I do not find de Pauw's argument convincing. It is based on the premise that in De Cor. is to be seen the culmination of ideas found in embryo in De Virg. Vel.. Although I stated in the introduction of this thesis that the chronology of Tertullian's writings is difficult to determine with any certainty, <sup>61</sup> I think it is possible to argue fairly convincingly that De Virg. Vel. is to be regarded as later than De Cor.. There is only one reference to the New Prophecy in De Cor., <sup>62</sup> and this is introduced casually, as Tertullian's early allusions to the movement seem to be. De Virg. Vel., on the other hand, is

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57. Tertullian appeals, in De Orat., 22, to 1 Cor. 11:3ff..

58. Tertullian appeals, in De Virg. Vel., to many passages of Scripture ( see the discussion in the present chapter of this thesis, and he frequently mentions the Paraclete; see especially, De Virg. Vel., 1.

59. See De Cor., 4, 2 .. Apostolum differo.

60. See P. de Pauw, "La justification des traditions non écrites chez Tertullien," Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses, 19 ( 1942 ).p.45.

61. See above, p.15.

62. This occurs in De Cor., 1, 4:-

Plane superest, ut etiam martyria recusare meditentur qui prophetias eiusdem spiritus sancti respuerunt.

a much more systematic approach to the justification of the New Prophecy. The emphasis on the Paraclete, his role, and the process of revelation is clearly marked.<sup>63</sup> Both treatises deal with subjects which do not seem to have been vital in the Church's controversy with the movement; so it is illegitimate to conclude that the subject matter has determined Tertullian's references to the New Prophecy. There is no reason for the inclusion in one of the works of a rationale for the movement, than that the increased emphasis on the Paraclete implies a later date.

If this assumption is correct - namely, that De Virg. Vel. was written after De Cor., the conclusion of de Pauw that De Cor. is the ultimate stage in the development of Tertullian's thought cannot be upheld. The appeal which Tertullian makes in De Cor. to unwritten tradition does not become a norm in his later writings. In De Virg. Vel., he is pleased to use any Scriptural texts which may offer him support. This is true of his other extreme works. Of course, as a man of law, he would wish to adduce as many witnesses as possible to confirm his argumentation. This is as evident in De Cor. where he appeals to custom, reason, nature,<sup>64</sup> as it is in De Virg. Vel., where he appeals to truth, nature, discipline, the Paraclete and Scripture.<sup>65</sup> It is wrong to assume that Tertullian's involvement in the New Prophecy leads him to turn away from Scripture as a source of authority. It is rather that the subject with which he is dealing in De Cor. does not lend itself easily to Scriptural authority. Therefore, Tertullian is forced to look elsewhere. Even in De Cor., he appeals to Scripture in a peripheral manner.<sup>66</sup>

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63. See especially, De Virg. Vel., 1.

64. Tertullian appeals to custom in De Cor., 3; to reason in chapter 4; to nature in chapter 5ff..

65. The appeal is made to truth in De Virg. Vel., 1; to nature in chapter 11ff.; to discipline in chapter 9; to the Paraclete in chapter 1, and cf. 17.3; to Scripture in chapters 4ff..

66. See De Cor. 4, 5f.; 6; 1; etc..

It would appear as though there is a contradiction between the view expressed in De Cor. and those expressed in De Virg. Vel. in regard to custom. Tertullian's desire in the latter work to prove that custom is no substitute for truth has already been noted.<sup>67</sup> The authority of custom is therefore undermined. In De Cor., the opposite seems to be the case. Custom can vindicate the keeping of even unwritten tradition.<sup>68</sup> Can this apparent contradiction be resolved? I think it can.

In De Cor., Tertullian does not think of custom as inconsistent. In his treatment of the veiling of virgins, however, he is painfully aware that one custom is followed in one Church, another custom in another Church. So he is forced to distinguish between customs. Some can be regarded as valid; others may not. There is some harmony between the two works in this matter, in spite of the seeming difference in status attributed to custom. In De Cor., 4, 1, Tertullian stresses the importance of reason;<sup>69</sup> in De Virg. Vel., 1, 2, he stresses the importance of truth. In his thinking, both reason and truth go back to eternity.<sup>70</sup> Both have association with God.<sup>71</sup> Both succeed in asserting the validity of custom. Furthermore, custom must be in accordance with God's discipline. This is emphasised in both works.<sup>72</sup> Nature, too, has its role to play in the justification of custom.<sup>73</sup>

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67. See above, p. 250.

68. See De Cor., 4, 4.

69. *Rationem traditioni et consuetudini et fidei patrocinaturam aut ipse perspicies, aut ab aliquo qui perspexerit disces.*

70. See De Cor., 4, 6, where Tertullian speaks of *ratio diuina*, and in De Virg. Vel., 1, 1, he speaks of *ueritas sempiterna*.

71. Cf. *diuina ratio*, and the relationship between Christ and truth is stressed in De Virg. Vel., 1, 1f..

72. See De Cor., 4, 5; De Virg. Vel., 2, 3.

73. See De Cor., 5ff.; De Virg. Vel., 11ff..

SUMMARY

In De Virg. Vel., Tertullian uses Scripture to support his argument that virgins should wear the veil. The texts that he uses are basically the same as those he has previously adduced in De Orat.. However, there are other important sources of authority. These include truth, nature, and discipline in general. The treatise ends with an appeal to a vision granted to one of the female followers of the New Prophecy. This vision has already been noted, and I made the comment that its position at the end of the work seems to give it outstanding authority, even above that of Scripture.<sup>74</sup> This is not to deny the high esteem in which Tertullian holds Scripture, even in this work, which contains as thorough an exposition of the rationale of the New Prophecy as any of Tertullian's writings.

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74. See above, pp. 44 f..



## ASSESSMENT

ASSESSMENT

The purposes of this assessment are three-fold: to set out the texts in which Tertullian's involvement in the New Prophecy seems to have influenced his exegesis; to discuss some points of interest in this context in his interpretation of Scripture; to assess Tertullian's originality in his use of Scripture. The three sections of this assessment reflect these aims.

A. TERTULLIAN'S APPEAL TO SCRIPTURE TO SUPPORT HIS BELIEF IN THE NEW PROPHECY AND ITS IDEAS

That Tertullian makes frequent appeal to Scripture to support his arguments is evident from the whole series of his writings. His reference to the Bible cannot be attributed to his involvement in the New Prophecy. However, because he uses Scripture in the majority of his works, a comparison can often be made to assess the influence which his belief in the movement and its ideas has on his use and interpretation of Scripture. The above discussion has drawn attention to numerous texts in which his belief in the movement appears to alter his exegesis in some way. It is the aim of this section to set out these texts clearly.

a) Texts Whose Exegesis Undergoes Some Change

There are thirty-seven texts which Tertullian uses in works dating from both periods of his life, allowing a useful comparison to be made:-

1. Gen.2:16f.; 3:1ff. ( The Fall )

The incident of the fall is used on several occasions for a variety of purposes, whether it be to stress that God's original law preceded all other laws he was to make, <sup>1</sup> or as an indication of the existence of heresy, <sup>2</sup> or as a proof of God's preference for monogamy. <sup>3</sup> In De Iei.,3,2, Tertullian uses the tasting of the fruit as the instance of Adam's forfeit, as the result of greed, of his original spiritual powers. Adam before this moment had been a type of the followers of the New Prophecy; afterwards, he was a type of the Catholics. <sup>4</sup>

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1. See Adu. Marc.,2,4,6; Adu. Iud.,2,2.  
2. See Adu. Marc.,2,2,7.  
3. See De Monog.,17,5.  
4. See above,pp. 122f..

2. Gen.6:3 In De Resurr.,10,2, Tertullian understands this reference to the withdrawal of God's spirit as applicable to all men; in De Monog.,1,3, he has limited its application to one specific group - the Catholics. 5
3. Deut.8:12ff. Tertullian's application of this text passes over from the condemnation of riches 6 to the claim that too much food makes a man forget God. 7
4. Ps.1:1ff. Tertullian's application of this text varies. He sees it as a warning to avoid spectacles; 8 as a warning against wickedness; 9 as a reference to Joseph of Arimathaea; 10 and finally, as a warning to avoid adulterers. 11
5. Ps.18:26f. In De Pud.,18,5, this text is taken as a warning against contact with adulterers. In two previous occurrences, there is no idea of adultery. 12
6. Ps.50:16f. This text, once applied to the context of spectacles, 13 is applied, in De Pud.,18,6, to show that aversion to adultery is long-standing. 14
7. Ps.51:17 The idea of the spiritual offering 15 gives way to the idea of the heart, broken as a result of hunger and physical discomfort. 16
8. Ps.78:25 The manna provided by God for the Israelites 17 becomes indicative of a partial fast. 18
9. Is.6:9f. From the application of the Jews' rejection of Christ, 19 Tertullian passes over to the view that it is their greed and desire to over-eat which causes their hearts to become thick. 20
10. Is.40:28 Whereas this text has been used to show God's preference for the correct motivation behind sacrifice, 21 and to refute Patripassian doctrine, 22 in De Iei.,6,7, it is applied to the New Prophecy's superiority over the Catholics. 23

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5. See above, pp. 113f.

6. See Adu. Marc.,4,15,9ff.; see p. 226.

7. See Adu. Iei.,6,3f.; see pp. 226f.

8. See De Spect.,3,3ff.; cf. 27,4.

9. See Adu. Marc.,2,19,2f..

10. See Adu. Marc.,4,42,8.

11. See De Pud.,18,4; see pp. 197ff..

12. See Adu. Marc.,5,18,6; De Exh. Cast.,10,3ff.; see pp. 200f.

13. See De Spect.,15,8.

14. See above, p. 202.

15. See Adu. Iud.,5,5.

16. See De Iei.,3,4; 16,1; see pp. 222f..

17. See Adu. Iud.,3,13; Adu. Marc.,2,18,2.

18. See De Iei.,5,4; see pp. 224f..

19. See Adu. Marc.,3,6,3.

20. See De Iei.,6,4; see pp. 227f.

21. See Adu. Marc.,2,22,2.

22. See Adu. Prax.,16,7.

23. See above, pp. 228f..

11. Is.52:11 Tertullian's application of this text to the avoidance of the adulterer has no precedent in earlier works. <sup>24</sup>
12. Ezek.33:11 The earlier applications of this text to the possibility of the forgiveness of all sins <sup>25</sup> is restricted later to sins committed before baptism. <sup>26</sup>
13. Joel 2:28f. In this text is to be seen the prediction of the pouring out of the Spirit at Pentecost, <sup>27</sup> and in the New Prophecy. <sup>28</sup>
14. Matt.10:23 This statement of Christ, which in early times is taken as permission for flight in persecution, <sup>29</sup> later is restricted in its application. <sup>30</sup>
15. Matt.18:20 The idea of three members of the Church develops as the concept of the priesthood of the laity comes to the fore. <sup>31</sup>
16. Matt.18:22 The Power of the Keys, once regarded as the gift of Christ to the whole Church, <sup>32</sup> is seen later as the personal gift to Peter. <sup>33</sup>
17. Matt,26:41 The emphasis on the flesh's subjectivity to the spirit <sup>34</sup> becomes a reference to the Paraclete's role in man's salvation. <sup>35</sup>
18. Luke 7:36ff. The unlimited nature of the woman's forgiveness by Christ <sup>36</sup> is later restricted. <sup>37</sup>
19. Luke 8:18 The forfeit mentioned in this text is taken as a monetary one <sup>38</sup> and as a spiritual one. <sup>39</sup> It is surprising that Tertullian does not make more of this text in the later phase of his life.

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24. See De Pud., 18,4; cf. Adu. Marc., 3,22,2; 5,18,6; De Cor., 10,7; see pp.
  25. See De Orat., 7,1; De Paen., 4,1f.; Adu. Marc., 2,8,2; 2,13,5; 4,10,4f.; 5,11,2.
  26. See De Pud., 18,12; see pp.
  27. See Adu. Marc., 5,4,2; 5,4,4; 5,8,6; 5,11,4; De Fuga, 6,4 etc..
  28. See De Resurr., 63,7ff.; see pp. 80ff..
  29. See Ad Uxor., 1,3,4.
  30. See De Fuga, 6,1; see pp. 243 ff..
  31. See De Exh. Cast., 7,3; cf. De Bapt., 6,2; De Paen., 10,5f. etc.; see pp.
  32. See De Praesc. Haer., 22,4; cf. Scorp., 10,8.
  33. See De Pud., 21,2f.; see pp. 214 ff..
  34. See Ad Mart., 4,1; De Pat., 13,7; Ad Uxor., 1,4,1; De Fuga, 8,1f..
  35. See De Monog., 14,4ff.; see pp. 102 ff..
  36. See Adu. Marc., 4,18,9.
  37. See De Pud., 11,1; see pp. 189 ff..
  38. See De Fuga, 11,2.
  39. See Adu. Marc., 2,2,6; 4,19,3f.. see pp. 245 ff..

20. Luke 9:59f. From the implication that the young man mentioned in this text was an apostle, <sup>40</sup> Tertullian goes on to see him as a priest, thus supporting the argument that all true believers are priests. <sup>41</sup>
21. Luke 15:3ff. The parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin, once seen as indicative of forgiveness for all sins, <sup>42</sup> are later restricted. <sup>43</sup>
22. Luke 15:11ff. The parable of the prodigal son is limited in a similar way. <sup>44</sup>
23. Luke 16:16 On some occasions, Tertullian sees this text as emphasising the relationship between the Christians and the Jews, or Christ and the Jews; <sup>45</sup> on others, it emphasises the relation of the <sup>Catholics</sup> Christians and the followers of the New Prophecy to the law. <sup>46</sup>
24. Luke 20:35f. Christ's reply to the Sadducees, once the sign of the break of marital bonds by death, <sup>47</sup> is later seen as indicative of the opposite. <sup>48</sup>
25. Jn.16:12f. The concept of the out-pouring of the Spirit at Pentecost <sup>49</sup> widens to include Paul <sup>50</sup> and the coming of the Paraclete in the New Prophecy. <sup>51</sup>
26. Acts 15:28f. The implication of the Decree as a dietary regulation <sup>52</sup> widens to include the idea of the unforgiveable nature of adultery. <sup>53</sup>
27. Rom.8:8 This text is applied to the contrast between the Catholics and the followers of the New Prophecy. <sup>54</sup> In earlier works, it is used to assert that flesh is not evil, <sup>55</sup> and perhaps in De Resurr., <sup>46,1</sup>, there is a hint of a transition between the two ideas. <sup>56</sup>
28. 1 Cor.5:5 The implication of the "spirit" in the text as that of man <sup>57</sup> seems to broaden to indicate the spirit within the Church. <sup>58</sup>

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40. See De Bapt., 12,9; Adu. Marc., 4,23,10.

41. See De Monog., 7,8; see pp. 135ff..

42. See De Paen., 8,4f..

43. See De Pud., 7,2ff.; see pp. 172ff..

44. See De Paen., 8,6; De Pud., 8f.; see pp. 175ff..

45. See, for example, Adu. Iud., 8,13f.; Adu. Marc., 4,33,7f.; 5,2,1; 5,8,5.

46. See De Iei., 11,4ff.; De Pud., 6,1ff.; see pp. 91ff..

47. See Ad Uxor., 1,1,5f..

48. See De Monog., 10,5; see pp. 160ff..

49. See De Praesc. Haer., 8,14; 22,9f.; 28,1.

50. See De Cor., 4,5f..

51. See De Fuga, 1; 14,3; De Virg. Vel., 1,4ff.; Adu. Prax., 2,1; 30,5; De Monog., 2,2ff. 3,8; see pp. 59ff..

52. See Apol., 9,13; cf. De Monog., 5,3.

53. See De Pud., 15,28f.; see pp. 191ff..

54. See De Iei., 17,4ff..

55. See Adu. Marc., 5,10,11ff.; De Resurr., 10,3; 46,1ff..

56. See pp. 117ff..

57. See Adu. Marc., 5,7,2.

58. See De Pud., 13,25; see pp. 202ff..

29. 1 Cor.7:9 As a follower of the New Prophecy, Tertullian comes to see in Paul's statement that marriage is preferable to burning, an indication of the fires of hell. <sup>59</sup>
30. 1 Cor.7:27ff. Tertullian takes this text in De Monog.,11,9f. as referring to the re-marriage of recent converts. In his earlier works, he is prepared to admit that Paul was permitting second marriage in general. <sup>60</sup>
31. 1 Cor.7:39f. This text, which receives little attention in the earlier works on marriage, is taken in De Monog. as referring to recent converts. Only they were to remarry, and then in the Lord. <sup>61</sup>
32. 1 Cor.9:5 Paul's implication that the apostles were married is accepted without difficulty in De Exh. Cast.,8,3; in De Monog.,8,5f., it is explained away. <sup>62</sup>
33. 1 Cor.14:34ff. In Adu. Marc.,5,8,11, Tertullian sees in this text the right of women to prophesy, but this enlargement is not later taken up. <sup>63</sup>
34. Gal.5:17 The emphasis changes from the spiritual element in man to the activity of the Spirit in God, in the New Prophecy. <sup>64</sup>
35. 1 Tim.1:20 The activity of Satan, once seen as purely reformatory, <sup>65</sup> is later seen as destructive. <sup>66</sup>
36. Rev.1:6 The idea of the priesthood of all believers as a spiritual characteristic develops into a more physical one. <sup>67</sup>
37. Rev.2:18ff. The forgiveness of all sins, seen in this text, is later restricted. <sup>68</sup>

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59. See De Pud.,1,16; cf. Ad Uxor.,1,3,3f.; De Exh. Cast.,3,7; De Monog.,3,4; see pp. 152 ff..

60. See Ad Uxor.,1,7,2f.; De Exh. Cast.,4,1; see pp.155f..

61. See De Monog.,11; cf. De Exh. Cast.,4; see pp.156 ff..

62. See pp. 140ff..

63. See De Bapt.,17,2; cf. De Virg. Vel.,9,1; see pp.47

64. See De Monog.,1,2f.; cf. De An.,40,2; De Resurr.,10,3; see pp. 110ff..

65. See De Fuga,2,7.

66. See De Pud.,13,21; see pp.203ff..

67. See De Exh. Cast.,7,1f.; De Monog.,7,6ff.; 12,1ff.; cf. De Orat.,28,2f.; see pp. 130 ff..

68. See De Pud.,19,1ff.; cf. De Paen.,8,1; see pp.187ff..

b) Texts Whose Only Use is to Justify the New Prophecy

In the course of this thesis, it has been shown that Tertullian uses texts to defend the views he adopts as a result of his involvement in the New Prophecy, and that many of these texts appear only in this context. A brief resumé of these will suffice here.

i) In the context of marriage:-

1. Gen.2:21 Adam's single rib; cf. Gen.2:18, the singular adiutor<sup>68</sup>
2. Gen.7:7 Noah was a monogamist
3. Gen.4:19ff. Lamech's bigamy and punishment.
4. An unknown text from Lev., to justify the monogamy expected of the clergy.
5. Deut.24:1 The law of repudium

ii) In the context of repentance and forgiveness:-

1. Lev.13:12ff.
2. Lev.14:36ff.
3. Lev.19:20ff.
4. 1 Cor.5 and 2 Cor.2
5. Heb.6:1ff.
6. 1 Jn.1:5ff.
7. 1 Jn.1:8ff.
8. 1 Jn.3:3ff.
9. Rev.21:7f.
10. Rev.22:14f.

All these texts, apart from the occasional exception possibly, <sup>69</sup> will not support per se the interpretation which Tertullian places on them, in an attempt to find Scriptural justification for his views.

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69. For example, the analogy drawn between the cleansing of the house and the cleansing of the sins could perhaps be justified on the grounds of figurative interpretation. In most cases, however, Tertullian places on the texts interpretations which they cannot uphold.

iii) In the context of ecstasy:-

1. Gen.2:21 Adam's prophecy under ecstasy
2. Luke 9:33 Peter's ignorance

iv) In the context of fasting:-

1. 1 Cor.13:1 The over-indulgence of the Catholics

v) In the controversy between Tertullian and the Church:-

1. 1 Cor.2:14 The psychici

Here again, a definite influence of the New Prophecy may be seen. Texts which Tertullian has never used before in these situations are taken over and are applied to the debate with the Catholics. Of course, some texts reveal far more influence of the movement than others. For example, the references to Adam's ecstasy and Peter's ignorance are applied to the principle of complete loss of mental faculties. Other texts are merely adduced as the result of a need to find as much evidence <sup>as possible</sup> in support of argumentation - a practice not necessarily confined to the followers of the New Prophecy. At every time of his life, Tertullian is ready to produce evidence in bulk to support his claims. As a man of law, no doubt, the prestige of as large a number of witnesses as possible would prove enticing. Tertullian, as a follower of the New Prophecy, just at <sup>as</sup> any other time in his life, adduces as many texts as possible to silence his opponents, and whilst some of them carry very little value than this, some of his interpretation must be clearly influenced by the beliefs he held.

Having collected together significant texts, it will now be useful to consider the rules of interpretation, if any, which emerge from his use of Scripture in this context.



B. SOME NOTES ON TERTULLIAN'S INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE

Several works have been written on the subject of Tertullian's exegesis and the principles he applies to it.<sup>1</sup> It is not my intention to re-state the conclusions of these works, since some of them lie outside the scope of this thesis, which is more concerned with the influence of the New Prophecy on Tertullian's interpretation of Scripture, rather than on general aspects covering perhaps one particular writing.<sup>2</sup> What I intend to discuss in this section are any points which have been thrown up in this thesis which shed light on Tertullian's interpretation of Scripture, and which may be compared with previous statements, in order that conclusions regarding the influence of the New Prophecy may be determined.

This thesis has shown that Tertullian is capable of contradicting his earlier exegesis, of applying interpretations to texts which they cannot support, and of seeing in texts applications which earlier he had left undeveloped.<sup>3</sup> This clearly warns against the assumption that his principles of exegesis remain consistent throughout his life. The subjects with which he is dealing, the people to whom he is addressing his works, and the extremity of his temperament lead him to produce on frequent occasions arbitrary exegesis which may bear little resemblance to the interpretation he may give the same text in another work where his aims are different. Therefore, the rules he applies to Scriptural interpretation may vary.

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1. See especially, R.P.C. Hanson, "Notes on Tertullian's Interpretation of Scripture," JTS. N.S., 12 ( 1961 ).pp.273ff.; H. Karpp, Schrift und Geist bei Tertullian; T.P. O'Malley, Tertullian and the Bible: Language - imagery - exegesis; O.Kuss, "Zur Hermeneutik Tertullians," Neutestamentliche Aufsätze. Regensburg. 1963; G. Zimmermann, Die hermeneutischen Prinzipien Tertullians: Würzburg: 1937.
  2. For example, the work of Hanson concentrates on Tertullian's exegesis in Adv. Marc.. The tendency seems to be to seize on the passages in Tertullian's works in which clear principles of exegesis are expounded and to analyse these, without necessarily doing justice to the occasion of the statements, nor the influences which are brought to bear on Tertullian.
  3. These conclusions are summarised in the previous section of this assessment.

G. Zimmermann offers a similar warning when he notes that Tertullian's assertion of hermeneutic principles may be merely the product of a certain polemic intention and must be taken in the context of the relevant discussion . He says:-

„Denn nicht alle seine Worte haben gleiches Gewicht und gleichen Wert.“<sup>4</sup>

It must be remembered that Tertullian's thoughts on the principles of interpretation of Scripture did not arise in a systematic manner, but as a result of the necessity of the moment. Hence, any consideration of his rules necessitates sifting odd passages from the whole range of his works, which does not lead to a thoroughly satisfactory assessment of the issue, especially as the second / third century writings are being criticised from the point of view of twentieth century scholarship. This said, Tertullian's exegesis of Scripture has its valuable features.<sup>5</sup>

. A summary of some of the salient aspects of his exegesis will now be made, in the light of his involvement in the New Prophecy.

1. All Scripture is in harmony with itself. There can be no discrepancy between the various writers, because they are inspired by the same Spirit. This view is found as early as De Orat., and as late as De Pud.. In De Orat., 20, 2<sup>o</sup>, Tertullian says:-

De modestia quidem cultus et ornatus aperta praescriptio est, etiam Petri, cohibentis eodem ore, quia eodem et spiritu, quo Paulus, et uestium gloriam et auri superbiam et crinium lenonem morositatem.

Similarly, in De Orat., 22, 1:-

... apostolus eodem utique spiritu actus, quo cum omnis scriptura diuina, tum et illa Genesis digesta est,....

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4. Die hermeneutischen Prinzipien Tertullians. p.3.

5. Hanson's article notes the good impression left by the interpretation which Tertullian applies to Scripture. The emphasis is on Tertullian's common sense, realism, and restraint.

Tertullian's opinion in this matter remains consistent. In De Pud., 19,3, he states:-

Bene autem quod apostolis et fidei et disciplinae regulis conuenit. Siue enim ego, inquit, siue illi, sic praedicamus. Totius itaque sacramenti interest nihil credere ab Iohanne concessum quod a Paulo sit denegatum.

However, a slight discrepancy appears to creep into his thought as he is forced to defend his argument that monogamy is God's will. In De Exh. Cast., 4, he constantly draws a distinction between Paul's own personal opinion, and divine precept. This accounts for an apparent confusion in the demands of the apostle. Some of his statements do not reflect the will of God, but must be seen as his own human view. So it is with his opinion that it is better to marry than to burn,<sup>7</sup> and his statement that to take a wife does not involve sin.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, a widow is at liberty to marry again, but only in the Lord.<sup>9</sup> When Paul adduces the authority of the Holy Spirit, his remarks are no longer to be taken as advice, but as a command.<sup>10</sup> This distinction in authority is taken up in De Monog., 3. But it is Tertullian's general view that Scripture is inspired by the Spirit. He emphasises this on numerous occasions.<sup>11</sup> I have been unable to find a

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6. For a discussion on Tertullian's use of the word sacramentum, see R. Braun, Deus Christianorum: Recherches sur le vocabulaire doctrinal de Tertullien: Paris: 1962. pp. 435ff.; T. P. O'Malley, Tertullian and the Bible: Language - imagery - exegesis. pp. 161f.; D. Michaelides, Sacramentum chez Tertullien: Paris: 1970. Tertullian's use of the word seems to reflect the Pauline ἑνωτήριον, and is closely related to Tertullian's exegesis of Scripture.

7. See 1 Cor. 7:9.

8. See 1 Cor. 7:27.

9. See 1 Cor. 7:39f..

10. Tertullian's words in De Exh. Cast., 4,6, are:-

...et factum est iam non consilium diuini spiritus, sed pro eius maiestate praeceptum.

11. See, for example, Ad Uxor., 2,2,4; De Cult. Fem., 1,3,2; Adu. Hermog., 22,1. De Pud., 19,4.

statement to the effect that every single word of Scripture is inspired, but this would seem to be the implication from Tertullian's emphasis on spiritual inspiration. In De Cult. Fem., Tertullian's criteria for including a work in the canon include its inspiration by the Spirit, and its relevance to Christ and his followers.<sup>12</sup> In this context, he cites 2 Tim.3:16:-

... a nobis quidem nihil omnino reiciendum est, quod pertineat ad nos. Et legimus omnem scripturam aedificationi habilem diuinitus inspirari,...

Since Paul's preference for marriage<sup>rather</sup> than passion and his advice regarding marriage which Tertullian takes as a personal opinion in De Exh. Cast. and De Monog. can clearly be understood as pertaining to Christians, and indeed, as suitable for edification, the distinction which he draws between divine and human authority will not stand on his own principles. Hence, his desire to distinguish the two sources of authority leads him to arbitrary conclusions, directly resulting from the influence of the New Prophecy.<sup>13</sup> Tertullian stresses that Paul's personal statements were uttered on account of the circumstances in which he found himself.<sup>14</sup> This leads on to the second point.

2. A full consideration must be made to the context in which a Scriptural quotation finds itself. This is, of course, an admirable principle of exegesis. Tertullian's clearest statements of this principle are to be found in his later writings, although this does not mean he does not apply the principle earlier. So, in De Monog., 11, 13, discussing Paul's words in 1 Cor.7:39f.,<sup>15</sup> Tertullian says:-

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12. See De Cult. Fem., 1, 3, 3, which is discussing the book of Enoch.

13. See above, pp. 156 ff..

14. See De Monog., 14, 1.

15. That widows are to marry only in the Lord.

Haec erit interpretatio capituli istius de hoc examinanda, an et tempori et causae, et tam exemplis et argumentis praecedentibus quam et sententiis et sensibus subsequentibus, et in primis an ipsius apostoli et consilio proprio congruat et instituto; nihil enim custodiendum est quam ne diuersus sibi deprehendatur.

The importance of considering the intention of the speaker ( writer ) is stressed in De Pud.,9,12:-

... ad propositum Domini simpliciter interpretatio gubernabitur.

In the same chapter, other points are mentioned in the same context:-

Puto me et materiae parabolarum et congruentiae rerum et tutelae disciplinarum adcommodatiores interpretationes reddidisse.... Sed plus est, quod nihil aliud argumentari licet citra id de quo agebatur.<sup>16</sup>

All the passages referred to in De Pud. are concerned with the correct understanding of the parable of the prodigal son, which Tertullian wishes to interpret from the point of view of the New Prophecy,<sup>17</sup> but this does not make his principle invalid. However, there is a discrepancy in his understanding, in some passages, of how far an interpretation should be restricted merely to the context under consideration. This is the third point to be discussed.

3. On some occasions, Tertullian allows that a text may have a specific and a general application. His discussion of Matt.7:7 in De Praesc. Haer.,8,14, and his exegesis of Matt.10:23 in De Fuga,13,2 have already been noted.<sup>18</sup> In both these passages, Tertullian stresses that the application of the texts is limited to the context. So, only the Jews were to seek. This encouragement by Christ did not apply to gentiles, for Christ had not yet opened the way to them. Similarly, Christ's encouragement to flee in the face of persecution applied only to the Jews, because the apostles had not yet completed their preaching.

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16. De Pud.,9,20.

17. See above, pp. 175 ff..

18. See above, pp. 243 ff.-

These are examples of the way in which Tertullian's emphasis on the context of a Scriptural text leads him to stress that the only application possible is a specific one. Yet Tertullian is not consistent in this opinion, for other passages show his desire to see in texts a more general application. His statement in De Cult. Fem., 1,3,3 that nothing which pertains to Christians should be rejected suggests that in many passages of Scripture he sees the possibility of applications to Christians. This is one reason why he wishes to admit the book of Enoch into the canon. This desire for more general interpretation of Scripture is found in De Spect., 3,4;-

... late tamen semper scriptura diuina diuiditur, ubicumque secundum praesentis rei sensum etiam disciplina munitur, ut hic quoque non sit aliena uox a spectaculorum interdictione.

The issue centres on the interpretation of Ps.1:1, which Tertullian sees not merely as a reference to the Jews, but as a reference to all men. When God rebukes the Jews, or warns them of their duty, or threatens them with destruction, he is addressing all men.<sup>19</sup> This can be seen as a transition from what Tertullian calls species to genus.<sup>20</sup>

As has been noted above,<sup>21</sup> in De Praesc. Haer., 8,16, Tertullian posits something like a compromise between these two positions:-

Omnia quidem Domini dicta omnibus posita sunt, per aures Iudaeorum ad nos transierunt sed pleraque in personas directa, non proprietatem admonitionis nobis constituerunt, sed exemplum.

It will have been noticed that all these references, except for the one in De Fuga, were written at a time when no influence of the New Prophecy can be detected in Tertullian's writings. However, there is some relevance to the issue,

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19. See De Spect., 3,8.

20. Ibid.

21. See p. 61.

since Tertullian's tendency to contradict himself is in open view. To assume that contradictions are created only by the influence of the New Prophecy<sup>7</sup> would be wrong. Obviously, Tertullian's views vary according to the situation in which he finds himself. Perhaps it could be argued that tendencies revealed in his earlier works become more prevalent as he defends the principles of the New Prophecy.

Since Scripture can be applied to different situations and times, it is necessary to see how Tertullian sets about interpreting Scripture.

4. Tertullian's methods of exegesis are by no means clear-cut, but they do recommend themselves as realistic.<sup>22</sup> He admits that some passages of Scripture must be understood as allegory or typology,<sup>23</sup> whilst others have only a literal sense.<sup>24</sup> We have noted examples of these kinds of exegesis.<sup>25</sup>

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22. See the statement of Hanson, noted above, p. , n.5.

23. For example, see De Resurr., 27,1; 52,14; Adu. Marc., 2,19,1f.; 3,5,4; 3,18; In Adu. Marc., Tertullian often resorts to allegory and types to assert the continuity between the Old and New Testaments. For discussion on Tertullian's figurative interpretation of Scripture, see especially, G.Zimmermann, Die hermeneutischen Prinzipien Tertullians.chapter 2.T.P. O'Malley, Tertullian and the Bible: Language - imagery - exegesis.pp. 125ff. and 141ff.:

24. See, for example, De Resurr..28,5; 29,1; 30,1ff.: Tertullian's literal interpretation extends to textual criticism as well; cf. De Monog.,11,11.

25. See above., One or two examples will suffice. Tertullian wishes to see the Patriarchs as types ( see pp. 146ff. ); he tends towards allegorical interpretation of the parables of the lost coin, sheep, and son in De Pud. ( see pp. 172ff. ). An example of his literal interpretation would be his insistence on the physical characteristics of the body, and its need for food, thus causing a rejection of the spiritual graces ( see particularly the chapter on fasting; for example, pp.222ff. ).

However, Tertullian frequently asserts that there is a relationship between the two kinds of exegesis. In De Resurr., 20, 7, he says:-

Quae et si spiritaliter quoque interpretari solemus secundum comparationem animalium uitiorum a domino remediatorum, <sup>26</sup> cum tamen et carnaliter adimpleta sunt, ostendunt prophetas in utramque speciem praedicasse, saluo eo, quod plures uoces eorum nudae et simplices et ab omni allegoriae nubilo purae defendi possunt:...

Similarly, in Scorp., 11, 4, he asserts:-

Haec si non ita accipiuntur, quemadmodum pronuntiantur, sine dubio praeter quam sonant sapiunt, et aliud in uocibus erit, aliud in sensibus, ut allegoriae, ut parabolae, ut aenigmata. <sup>27</sup>

Tertullian's thought is that in a passage which can be taken figuratively, there are two strata of interpretation. Using his Stoic background, he puts this idea in terms of images and reality:-

Nam etsi figmentum ueritatis in imagine est, imago ipsa in ueritate est sui: necesse est esse prius sibi id quod alii configuretur. <sup>28</sup>

Of course, the possibility of more than one interpretation creates problems.

The heretics tamper with passages of Scripture to place on them their own particular exegesis. They see allegory where there is none; they take other passages literally, when a simple interpretation will not suffice. <sup>29</sup> Hence, Tertullian is forced to draw up another rule.

5. In cases of uncertainty, the minority of statements should be understood by the majority; <sup>30</sup> the obscure passages should be understood by the plain

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26. The infirmities of which Tertullian is speaking are those mentioned in Is. 35:3ff.

27. For a full discussion of the terms allegoria and aenigma, see T.P. O'Malley, Tertullian and the Bible: Language - imagery - exegesis. pp. 141ff..

28. De Resurr., 30, 5.

29. See Adu. Marc., 4, 19, 6.

30. See Adu. Prax., 20, 2; De Pud., 17, 18.



ones.<sup>31</sup> Scripture must be seen as a whole. This is not to say that all exegesis must be in accordance with all Scripture. Some passages will necessarily be in discord with others, at least on the surface. Whenever this occurs, the sense is to be taken from a general consideration of Scripture, and from a consideration of the whole of the Christian faith. So, in De Carne, 8,1, in discussing Marcion's and Apelles' illegitimate appeal to Scripture, Tertullian says:-

Solis istis capitulis, quibus maxime instructi sibi uidentur Marcion et Apelles, secundum ueritatem integri et incorrupti euangelii interpretatis satis esse debuerat ....

The sense of the word euangelii in this passage needs elucidation. It could mean the gospel in the Scriptural sense, or it could mean the gospel in the sense of the Christian preaching and faith. I have been unable to discover any passages in which Tertullian speaks of the New Testament gospel as an entity in this way, and his discussion with Marcion starts from the consideration of Marcion's own text of Scripture,<sup>32</sup> so it would seem more likely that Tertullian is thinking of the Christian faith as a whole in this context. He quite frequently admits that there are conflicting passages in Scripture, which would seem to speak against the idea of the gospel as a complete entity here.<sup>33</sup>

Not only are some passages of Scripture obscure, but the heretics complicate exegesis by introducing divergencies and ambiguities. However, clear rules make themselves manifest:-

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31. See De Resurr., 19,1; 21,2.

32. See T.P. O'Malley, Tertullian and the Bible: Language - imagery - exegesis.pp.1ff..

33. See, for example, Adu. Prax., 20,2; De Pud., 2,10.

Et haec itaque dispectio tituli et praeconii ipsius, fidem utique defendens uocabulorum, illuc proficere debet, ut, si quid diuersa pars turbat obtentu figurarum et aenigmatum, manifestiora quaeque praeualeant et ( de ) incertis certiora praescribant. <sup>34</sup>

Similarly, in De An.,<sup>35</sup>, speaking of the philosopher Carpocrates, Tertullian says:-

Huc enim temperat totam illam allegoriam domini certis interpretationibus relucens et primo quidem simpliciter intellegendam. <sup>35</sup>

There is clearly the possibility of different interpretations of Scripture depending on the stand-point from which the exegesis is conducted, and on the amount of enlightenment of the interpreter. A heretic who has indulged in fanciful speculation cannot succeed in interpreting Scripture, correctly, since

Illuc igitur et scripturarum et expositionum adulteratio deputanda est ubi doctrinae diuersitas inuenitur. <sup>36</sup>

Tertullian introduces his prescription that the heretics are not to be admitted to the interpretation of Scripture, because Scripture does not belong to them. <sup>37</sup>

An important point must be stated here in the context of Tertullian's involvement in the New Prophecy. As a follower of this movement, he constantly asserts that the Paraclete introduces no novelty of doctrine. <sup>38</sup> He must certainly have in mind his prescription - since, no doubt, the Catholics would not have been slow to accuse him of denying his own principle that the manifestation of novel doctrine accompanied an immediate exclusion to the use of Scripture. In addition he states on several occasions that there is a relationship between

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34. De Resurr., 19, 1.

35. De An., 35, 2.

36. De Praesc. Haer., 38, 1.

37. See especially, De Praesc. Haer., 15; 37 etc..

38. See, for example, De Monog., 2f.; De Iei., passim; De Virg. Vel., 1 etc.

the correct interpretation of Scripture and the regula.<sup>39</sup> So, in his later writings, he stresses that the New Prophecy teaches nothing which is in discord with the regula.<sup>40</sup> This concept of the possession of true faith leads us to the next point.

6. The possession of God's grace results in a true interpretation of Scripture. This thought is expressed in Adu. Marc., 3, 16, 1, in his discussion on the name Jesus, Tertullian says:-

Nec enim, si nos, per dei gratiam intellectum consecuti sacramentorum eius, hoc quoque nomen agnoscimus Christo destinatum, ideo et Iudaeis, quibus adempta est sapientia, nota erit res. X hsp

The sense of sacramentorum in this passage is bound up with the exegesis of Scripture, since later in the chapter, Tertullian goes on to discuss the type presented by the figure of Joshua. So God's grace provides insight into the mysteries of Scripture.<sup>41</sup> Tertullian's implication is that the members of the Catholic Church possess this grace. In another passage from Adu. Marc., he states that the obscure parts of Scripture were revealed by the coming of Christ. This thought is inspired by 1 Cor. 2:6f. and 1 Cor. 1:20ff.:-

Hanc dicit sapientiam in occulto fuisse, quae fuerit in stultis et in pusillis et ( in ) inhonestis, quae latuerit etiam sub figuris, allegoriis et aenigmatibus, reuelanda postmodum in Christo, ...<sup>42</sup>

Again, the suggestion is that the revelation has been granted to all who accept the coming of Christ. However, Tertullian's involvement in the New Prophecy leads him to adjust this view. In the closing section of De Resurr., he clearly

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39. For fuller discussion on the relationship between the interpretation of Scripture, see D. van den Eynde, Les Normes de L'enseignement chretien dans la litterature patristique de trois premiers siecles: Paris:1933. pp.291ff.; E. Flesseman-van Leer, Tradition and Scripture in the Early Church: Assen: 1954. pp.178ff.; H. Karpp, Schrift und Geist bei Tertullian. pp.33ff.; T.P. O'Malley, Tertullian and the Bible: Language - imagery - exegesis. p.122.

40. See De Virg. Vel., 1, 3f..

41. See above, n. 6. The reference to Joshua is in the context of his name and its relation to the name of Jesus.

42. Adu. Marc., 5, 6, 1.

states that the Paraclete has shed illumination on the allegories and parables of Scripture in his revelation in the New Prophecy:-

...idcirco iam omnes retro ambiguitates et quantas uolunt parabolas aperta atque perspicua totius sacramenti praedicatione discussit per nouam prophetiam de paraclito inundantem. <sup>43</sup>

This would seem as though Tertullian is saying that only the followers of the New Prophecy have the power to interpret Scripture correctly, but I suggest that his assertion of this monopoly is not as clear-cut as this. A few lines earlier, he has cited Joel 2:28f., which he sees as implying the outpouring of the Spirit to all men. This outpouring results in the clearing of all obscurity from Scripture.<sup>44</sup> So there is an apparent discrepancy in his thought. Tertullian's use of Joel 2:28f. has already been noted,<sup>45</sup> and it would appear as though his citation of the text leads him to see in it a reference to the coming of the Paraclete in the New Prophecy. Certainly, the closing lines of *De Resurr.* must be seen as propaganda on behalf of the New Prophecy, and I suggest that it would be better to understand Tertullian's thought in this passage as an assertion that although the Catholics possess insight into the interpretation of Scripture, those who accept the New Prophecy have an even clearer insight. It must be remembered that, if this closing section of *De Resurr.* dates from the same time as the rest of the work, Tertullian is still a member of the Catholic Church, and his conflict with his brethren is not yet in evidence.

Another assertion that the followers of the New Prophecy possess a clearer understanding of Scripture is found in *Adu. Prax.*, 13,5:-

Nos enim qui et tempora et causas scripturarum per Dei gratiam inspicimus, maxime Paraclleti, non hominum discipuli, ...

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43. *De Resurr.*, 63,9.

44. See *De Resurr.*, 63,7.

45. See above, pp. 80ff..

In his statement of the role of the Paraclete in De Virg. Vel., 1,5, Tertullian again emphasises the revelation of the Scriptures:-

Quae est ergo Paracleti administratio, nisi haec, quod disciplina dirigitur, quod scripturae reuelantur, quod intellectus reformatur, quod ad meliora proficitur ?

The Spirit's role in the inspiration and understanding of Scripture has already been discussed,<sup>46</sup> and there is no doubt that throughout his life Tertullian sees a relationship between the two. However, it is also certain that as he stresses the revelation of the Paraclete in the New Prophecy, he begins to emphasise that its followers have a superior power to other Christians. This emphasis makes itself apparent even before Tertullian's conflict with the Church has begun. The logical conclusion of his train of thought would be that the followers of the New Prophecy possessed complete insight into the meaning of Scripture and that his opponents had no such understanding. As far as I can discover, Tertullian makes no such claim.

7. Alongside this belief in the movement's superior understanding of Scripture there develops in Tertullian's mind the idea that the followers of the New Prophecy have a most intimate relationship with God. The depth of this relationship is revealed in their superior understanding of Scripture, and also in their more stringent code of discipline.<sup>47</sup> Tertullian appeals to Scripture to justify the "spiritual" side of this attitude of the followers of the New Prophecy to God. In this appeal to Scripture, he wishes to see in texts indications of the contrast which exists between those whose relationship with God is founded on the correct basis, and those whose relationship is not.<sup>48</sup> However, the appeal to various texts is not enough. Tertullian looks for examples of men and women whose status in the eyes of God is special in some way.<sup>49</sup> Often, they have shown

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46. See above, pp. 29f.

47. The idea of the New Prophecy's superior discipline is prevalent throughout Tertullian's later works. The followers of the New Prophecy practise more frequent fasting, their maintenance of monogamy, their refusal to allow forgiveness to adultery etc..

48. See especially the texts discussed in chapter 4 of this thesis, pp. 102 ff.

49. Among these figures are Adam, Noah, Elijah, Daniel, John, Anna etc..

their high standing with God in their outward conduct, for example, in the frequency of their fasting.<sup>50</sup> Among the examples which Tertullian finds, none play a more important role in his thought than Adam and Daniel. The relationship of these two men to God is not shown merely by their discipline. They possess a far greater insight into God's purpose and dispensation - or at least, Adam did before the fall. It seems as though Tertullian sees these men as types of the followers of the New Prophecy, endowed with superior knowledge and spiritual powers than other men.<sup>51</sup>

§. The emphasis on Adam in this context is quite in keeping with Tertullian's long-standing opinion of Adam's importance in God's dispensation. As early as De Paen., 2, Tertullian hints at the return of man to his original state before his fall:-

Nam deus post tot ac tanta delicta humanae temeritatis a principe generis Adam auspicata, post damnatum hominem cum saeculi dote, post eiectum paradiso mortique subiectum, cum rursus ad suam misericordiam maturuisset, iam inde in semetipso paenitentiam dedicavit, rescissa sententia irarum pristinarum ignoscere pactus operi et imagini suae.<sup>52</sup>

Although the role of Christ in this process of salvation is briefly mentioned in the subsequent sections of this chapter, Tertullian's emphasis is on the efficacy of penitence in the attainment of salvation. He thinks of Christ as teaching the form of the necessary repentance, and therefore, the initiative is placed on man.

In Adu. Marc., the theme develops. Man, in the same form as Adam, will achieve the obedience to God which Adam failed to achieve:-

Atque adeo eundem hominem, eandem substantiam animae, eundem Adae statum eadem arbitrii libertas et potestas uictorem efficit hodie de eodem diabolo, cum secundum obsequium legum dei administratur.<sup>53</sup>

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50. See above, pp. 230 f..

51. See above, pp. 122 f.; 235 ff..

52. De Paen., 2, 3.

53. Adu. Marc., 2, 8, 3.

Again, the emphasis seems to be on man's ability to restore things to their original state. That it was God's intention for Adam to attain salvation is shown by Tertullian in Adu. Marc.,2,25,4f.:-

Nam etsi Adam propter statum legis deditus morti est, sed spes ei salua est, dicente domino: ecce Adam factus est tamquam unus ex nobis, de futura scilicet adlectione hominis in diuinitatem.... Ideoque nec maledixit ( nec ) ipsum Adam nec Euam, ut restitutionis candidatos, ut confessione releuatos...

It is in a consideration of Paul's teaching that Tertullian's idea of the relationship between Adam and Christ becomes most marked. So, in Adu. Marc.,5,9f., he includes in his discussion of the belief in the resurrection of the body such statements as:-

Quodsi sic in Christo uiuificamur omnes, sicut mortificamur in Adam, quando in Adam corpore mortificemur, sic necesse est et in Christo ( corpore ) uiuificemur. 54

and, quoting Paul:-

factus primus homo Adam in animam uiuam, nouissimus Adam in spiritum uiuificantem,... 55

Tertullian frequently thinks of Adam as a type of Christ. 56 The emphasis which Tertullian places on the figure of Adam and on the state of things at the very beginning is nowhere so marked as in De Monog.,5. Here he stresses that Christ directs back to the beginning, and anything which was not done in the beginning is to be abandoned. This fits in with his constant assertion that what is earlier is correct. 57 The role of Christ as restitutor is predominant in De Monog.,5. 58 However, the New Prophecy adds to Tertullian's understanding

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54. Adu. Marc.,5,9,5.

55. Adu. Marc.,10,7.

56. See, for example, De An.,43,10; De Monog.,5,7.

57. See, for example, Adu. Marc.,4,5,1; Adu. Prax.,2,2.

58. See De Monog.,5,1ff.; Tertullian seems influenced by Irenaeus' view of recapitulation.

of this recall to the original. In De Monog., 14,3, he says:-

Si enim Christus abstulit quod Moyses praecepit, quia ab initio non fuit sic, nec sic ideo ab alia uenisse uirtute reputabitur Christus, cur non et Paracletus abstulerit quod Paulus indulset, quia et secundum matrimonium ab initio non fuit, nec ideo suspectus habendus sit, quasi spiritus alienus, tantum ut Deo et Christo dignum sit quod superducitur ?

The implication is that the coming of Christ did not succeed in recalling all things back to the beginning, but that the Paraclete, revealed in the New Prophecy, had to come to finalise the process. The coming of the Paraclete brought about an even more stringent code of behaviour than the coming of Christ had done. <sup>59</sup>

The influence of Tertullian's acceptance of the New Prophecy speaks for itself in this context. It is not that his new beliefs forced him to introduce anything basically new into his understanding of the importance of the original state. His emphasis on that had always been manifest. He had constantly recognised the importance of man's original state. He took up Paul's views on the relationship between Adam and Christ. What did change, as his involvement in the New Prophecy led him to stress the importance of the role of the Paraclete, was his insistence that Christ had completed the process of re-calling things back to original. As a follower of the New Prophecy, he admits that the Paraclete fulfilled what Christ had left unfulfilled. <sup>60</sup>

8. As a result of his emphasis on the importance of the original state, Tertullian's attitude to the law undergoes some slight modification. His frequently contradictory views on this subject have already been noted. <sup>61</sup> Against Marcion, Tertullian wishes to stress the continuity between the Old and New

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59. For a discussion of this passage, see H. Karpp, Schrift und Geist bei Tertullian. pp.59f..

60. This is influenced by his use of the text of Jn.16:12f. to justify the belief in the coming of the Paraclete in the New Prophecy; see above, pp. 59 ff..

61. See above, pp. 26f.; 91 ff..



Testaments, whether it be as a result of Christ's fulfilment or enlargement or even abolition of the law, As a follower of the New Prophecy, much of Tertullian's argumentation involves an appeal to the Old Testament and its law to justify the practices of the movement.<sup>62</sup> It would seem as though he emphasises a dependence on the law to such an extent that he is accused by the Catholics of making the same mistake as the Galatians whom Paul censured.<sup>63</sup> Tertullian is forced to assess his position. Two passages are worthy of note. In the first, answering the charge of Galaticism, he says in relation to fasting:-

Horum igitur tempora obseruantes et dies et menses et annos galaticamur ? Plane, si Iudaicarum caeremoniarum, si legalium sollempnitatum obseruantes sumus; illas enim apostolus dedocet compescens ueteris testamenti in Christo sepulti perseuerantiam et noui sistens. Quod si noua conditio in Christo, noua et sollempnia esse debebunt:...<sup>64</sup>

The implication is that it is to the new dispensation that any laws should be referred. There is still validity in the former system, providing it is set against the backcloth of the new era inaugurated by Christ.

In De Pud.,<sup>6</sup> Tertullian is arguing that it is not legitimate to look back to the old system of law, but this is not to say that the law has been dissolved by Christ, for he has fulfilled it:-

Nam et si cum maxime a lege coepimus demonstrando moechiam, merito ab eo statu legis, quem Christus non dissoluit, sed impleuit. Onera enim legis usque ad Iohannem, non remedia. Operum iuga reiecta sunt, non disciplina.<sup>65</sup>

The text of Luke 16:16 has already been discussed.<sup>66</sup> The acceptance of the New Prophecy has forced Tertullian to think again about his understanding of the role of the Old Testament law. The more stringent discipline of the movement often needed an appeal to legalistic passages in the Old Testament for its justification, and thus, Tertullian must no longer emphasise the invalidity of the law as a stage in God's dispensation which is now passed, and to which

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62. This appeal has been emphasised in the thesis. Tertullian wishes to find support for his views on fasting, monogamy, forgiveness etc. in the Old Testament.

63. See De Iei.,14.

64. De Iei.,14,1f..

65. De Pud.,6,3.

66. See above,pp.91ff..

an appeal is unacceptable.

9. The important role which Scripture plays in Tertullian's justification of his views has been highlighted by this thesis. However, there are some occasions when Scripture has little, or no, light to shed on a particular issue. When this happens, Tertullian adopts one of three approaches. He looks for any passage of Scripture, however irrelevant it may seem, in which support may be found. This may involve elaborate and often arbitrary exegesis.<sup>67</sup> Or he argues his point from the silence of Scripture. So, in De Exh. Cast., 4,4, he can argue that if Paul had wished for second marriage, he would have commanded it in no uncertain terms. In De Monog., 4,4, he states explicitly:-

Negat scriptura quod non notat.

The precariousness of this argument is pinpointed in De Cor., 2,4:-

Nam si ideo dicetur coronari licere, quia non prohibeat scriptura, aequae aequae retorquetur ideo coronari non licere, quia scriptura non iubeat.

It might appear that this feature occurs in Tertullian's writings only after his involvement in the New Prophecy, but this is not so. As early as Ad Uxor., 1,3, he can write:-

Denique prohiberi nuptias nusquam omnino legimus, ut bonum scilicet.<sup>68</sup>

The third possibility is to find authority other than Scripture. This he does in De Cor., 4, when Scriptural support for the refusal to wear the crown is lacking.<sup>69</sup> However, wherever Scripture can provide support, Tertullian will always adduce it. This is just as true in his later writings as in his works uninfluenced by the New Prophecy. In his controversy with the Catholics, it would be only natural to appeal to a common source of authority. Scripture was this source.

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67. This is brought out throughout the thesis; cf. the exegesis of Ps.1:1ff. in De Spect., 3.

68. Ad Uxor., 1,3,2.

69. For discussion on Tertullian's appeal to unwritten traditions, see D. van den Evnde, Les Normes de l'enseignement chrétien dans la littérature patristique de trois premiers siècles. pp.274ff.; F. de Pauw, "La justifications des traditions non écrites chez Tertullien," Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses, 19 (1942). pp.5ff..

Tertullian's ideal is that Scripture is supported by as many other authorities as possible. So, he constantly stresses that Nature, reason, the discipline and tradition of the Church, and even pagan examples support Scripture.<sup>70</sup> As a follower of the New Prophecy, this justification is still as essential, and he has a further support - namely the teaching of the Paraclete. Indeed, such status is given to the oracles of the Paraclete, that Tertullian seems, on occasions, to give them priority over Scripture. Certainly, he thinks of them as of equal value, and their recent revelation enhances their standing in his eyes.<sup>71</sup>

That Tertullian's understanding of Scripture undergoes a modification as a result of his involvement in the New Prophecy is quite clearly proven.

70. See above, especially pages 20ff., 162ff., 250ff..

71. See above, pp. 32ff..

C. THE ORIGINALITY OF TERTULLIAN

The above chapters of this thesis have succeeded in drawing attention to the many ways in which Tertullian's understanding and exegesis of various Scriptural texts are influenced by his increasing involvement in the New Prophecy. What I now wish to show is that the changes in application of Scripture and the interpretations which are placed on it because of Tertullian's desire to find support for his argumentation in the Bible may not be attributed to any other writer or source, but are to be seen as the product of Tertullian's own mind.

Before this is attempted, several points need to be made. Firstly, it will be necessary to re-emphasise a comment made in the introduction of this thesis, that Tertullian was influenced by features in the original New Prophecy which were not systematically thought out or developed. All he adopted was a group of ill-formed theories which reflected his personal spiritual and rigoristic outlook, and it was these theories that, I believe, he took over and for which he eventually found himself providing the basic logical and Scriptural argumentation, which he, as a man trained in law, would find essential for any worthwhile set of beliefs.<sup>1</sup> Throughout the various chapters of the thesis, I have tried to compare the scanty information which we possess about the original beliefs of the movement with those reflected in Tertullian's works. It will be evident that, although the information we possess about the original movement is scanty, the original tenets of the movement are in no way definite or thorough.

The second point is that the lack of extant material will make any conclusions I draw to some extent arbitrary and incomplete. The originality of Tertullian can only be thoroughly assessed in the light of every source to which he had access, of every influence in the development of his thought. Clearly, these are

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1. For Tertullian's legal background, see the introduction of this thesis, p.8.

not available in complete form, and therefore, a consideration of only the part of this material which is still extant will inevitably lead to distortion. I hope that this distortion will be slight.

Thirdly, the extent to which Tertullian knew and used the sources that were available to him may, on occasions, be open to question. That he used the writings of secular authors and Christian authors is proven.<sup>2</sup> The depth to which he used them is perhaps not such an easily determined matter. Even if he does use earlier or contemporary material, his dependence on and his faithfulness to his sources may vary according to the topic in hand. As for the use of any similar Scriptural texts to other writers, there may be every dependence, or none at all. Thus care must be taken in such an assessment of Tertullian's originality.

My approach to the matter in hand is by a consideration of two types of sources:-

1. any material which hints at the use and interpretation of Scripture among the followers of the New Prophecy;
2. any material which Tertullian may have known which included exegesis of Scripture.

1. The Use and Interpretation of Scripture among the Followers of the New Prophecy

My concern here is with the use of Scripture which would be prevalent among the earliest followers of the movement; in other words, with the use of Scripture which would have been prevalent at the time when Tertullian was writing.

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2. For Tertullian's use of pagan authors, see the introduction, p.8. For his use of Clement and Irenaeus, see pp. 197 and 279.

Thus, a distinction is necessary between sources which reflect the later doctrine of the movement and those which reflect the original ideas of Montanus and the prophetesses.

In such an assessment, the account of the movement given by Eusebius must be given pride of place. There can be no doubt that here lies the most reliable information available about the original movement. As for the account provided by Epiphanius, the writer himself states his sources:-

Ἐπηγγειλάμεθα, γὰρ ἀπὸ ἐκείτης μὲν ἀίρεσεως μὴ φθουῆσαι,  
ἀλλὰ ὑποφῆναι ἢ δι' ἀκοῆς, ἢ τε ὑπὸ ἐγγράφων, καὶ ἢ τε  
ὑπὸ τινῶν ἀληθῶς πιστωσάμενων τῶν ἡμῶν εὐνοικῶν κατεϊληφέν.<sup>3</sup>

The reliability of these sources is questionable and they must be used with care. They may not always refer to the original beliefs of the movement, and indeed, it is more likely that many of them may refer to later stages of the movement, even perhaps to the movement which was known to Epiphanius himself. There has been much discussion over these sources.<sup>4</sup> It is not my intention to enter the debate. My concern here is really with the parts of Epiphanius' account which contain Scriptural quotations which may help in an understanding of Tertullian's originality.<sup>5</sup>

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3. Pan., 48, 15.

4. See P. de Labriolle, Les Sources, pp. xxxvi ff., for a full discussion.

5. The main sections for such a task are Pan., 48, 3 - 13 and 49, 2.

a) Scriptural References and Allusions in Eusebius' Account of the New Prophecy

There are several hints in the sources cited by Eusebius that Scripture did play some part in the debate between the Church and the Phrygian followers of Montanus and the prophetesses. These may be summarised as follows:-

i) Some people, seeing the strange experiences which Montanus was undergoing, rebuked him and ordered him not to speak, remembering the words of Christ which warned of the coming of the false prophets.<sup>6</sup> This would seem to be an allusion to Matt.7:15.

ii) The followers of the New Prophecy called the Catholics "murderers of the prophets" because the Church refused to receive their prophets who, claimed the followers of Montanus, were those whom the Lord promised to send to the people. The anonymous source goes on to ask whether any of Montanus' followers were indeed persecuted by the Jews, or killed by the wicked; whether any were crucified for the name, or whether any of the women were scourged in the synagogues or stoned.<sup>7</sup> The allusion seems to be to Matt.23:34.

iii) The anonymous writer catalogues the prophets of the New Testament who, he argues, had never spoken in ecstasy.<sup>8</sup>

iv) The anonymous writer also argues that the prophetic spirit is to remain in the Church until the final coming.<sup>9</sup> This must refer to Paul's words in 1,Cor.1:7.<sup>10</sup>

v) Apollonius argues that the followers of the New Prophecy have broken the Lord's command in Matt.10:9f. in which he tells his disciples to provide no gold or silver, nor two coats.

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6. See H.E.,5,16,8.

7. See H.E.,5,16,12.

8. See H.E.,5,17,3. Agabus, Silas, Judas, the daughters of Philip, are included.

9. See H.E.,5,17,4.

10. ... ἀπεκδέχομεν τὴν ἀποκάλυψιν τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

vi) Apollonius emphasises that a prophet must be examined carefully, since a tree is known by its fruit.<sup>11</sup> This is clearly an allusion to Matt.12:33.<sup>12</sup>

vii) It would appear that Apollonius had used citations from Rev. to disprove the truth of the New Prophecy.<sup>13</sup> The nature of these citations is not explicitly stated.

An analysis of these allusions to Scripture will be valuable. First of all, apart from the allusion to Matt.23:34, the emphasis is on the Church's use of Scripture in the debate, rather than on the use made by the movement of the Bible. This emphasis is only to be expected, since the narrative is written from the stand-point of the Church.

Secondly, the aim of the Church's use of Scripture seems to be to condemn the existence and behaviour of the prophets, rather than to refute their beliefs. The exception to this is possibly the desire to show that ecstasy is a valid part of the prophetic experience. Certainly the catalogue which the anonymous writer provides may suggest that the followers of Montanus had referred to Scripture, although the confidence with which the anonymous writer passes over the prophets of the Old Testament and of the New Testament could imply that the movement had not used a systematic appeal to Scriptural evidence - if it had made such an appeal at all - to justify its concept of ecstasy. Had a more systematic emphasis been placed on Scriptural argumentation by the followers of the New Prophecy, the Catholic refutation of the arguments would, no doubt, have been more thorough.

Thirdly, the only definite hint that the followers of the New Prophecy used Scripture must be the title applied to the Catholics - "murderers of the prophets". Again, Scripture is used to highlight the adverse treatment which the

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11. See H.E., 5, 18, 8.

12. Ἡ ποιήσατε τὸ δένδρον καλὸν καὶ τὸν καρπὸν αὐτοῦ καλόν,  
ἢ ποιήσατε τὸ δένδρον σαπρὸν καὶ τὸν καρπὸν αὐτοῦ  
σαπρὸν. Ἐκ γὰρ τοῦ καρποῦ τὸ δένδρον γινώσκεται.

13. See H.E., 5, 18, 14.



movement is receiving at the hands of the Church. The concern is with the justification of its existence, rather than of its beliefs.

It must again be stressed that the sources used by Eusebius are not cited fully. The fact that several Church writers could write complete treatises against the movement shows that there may have been some Scriptural debate.<sup>14</sup> However, I would suggest that, at first, the movement would rely on the spiritual experiences of its leaders as justification of its validity. The important role of the Spirit in the Church could not be denied, and the movement would not be slow to realise that it could emphasise its part in the continuing activity of the Spirit. The incentive was placed on the Catholics to find arguments to refute the validity of the new movement. Naturally they would resort to Scripture for support, since it would not be easy to reduce the movement to the status of false prophecy.

I therefore conclude from the evidence offered by Eusebius that the followers of Montanus did not appeal to Scripture in any systematic way to justify their authority. Odd Scriptural quotations may have been used, but possibly these were more concerned with *raison d'être*, rather than with doctrine.

b) Scriptural References and Allusions in Epiphanius' Account of the New Prophecy

In Pan., 48, Epiphanius begins his account of the the New Prophecy. In 48,1, he appeals to 1 Jn.4:1 to show that there were some spirits which came from God, whilst, by implication, there were some which did not.<sup>15</sup> In 48,2, he alludes to Scripture twice. On both occasions his intention is to belittle the followers of the New Prophecy. Of Maximilla, he says that she did not even know the date of her own death - a possible allusion to Gen.27:2.<sup>16</sup> Of the followers,

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14. Such as the anonymous writer cited by Eusebius; Apollonius and Alcibiades ( or Miltiades ), mentioned in H.E., 5, 17, 1.

15. Ἀγέλῃτοί, μὴ παντὶ πνεύματι πιστεύετε, ἀλλὰ δοκιμάζετε τὰ πνεύματα εἰ ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐστίν, ὅτι πολλοὶ ψευδοπροφῆται ἐξεληλύθεισιν εἰς τὸν κόσμον.

This text is also mentioned by Ambrosiaster, in his commentary on 2 Thess., 5.

16. Isaac told Esau that he did not know the day of his death.

he says that they have erred, failing to hold fast to the fountain <sup>17</sup> - a possible allusion to Col.2:19. <sup>18</sup> However, it is in 48,3 and the sections which follow that Epiphanius really uses Scripture to support his arguments. In these sections, the main issue is that of ecstasy. A list of the passages to which reference is made will be useful here:-

- i) The Spirit ( particularly of prophecy ) has been granted to the Church. 1 Cor.12:7 says that every man receives the manifestation of the Spirit... according to the proportion of his faith. <sup>19</sup> Epiphanius' allusion must be to this.
- ii) There are some false prophets and some true ones. Christ warned against the false ones. Epiphanius cites Matt.7:15.
- iii) The prophets were in complete control of their faculties when they were inspired by the Spirit. The examples of Moses, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel are given. <sup>20</sup>
- iv) The ecstasy that fell upon Adam was that of sleep, not that of the suspension of mental faculties. Adam's statement of the past and prophecy of the future in Gen.2:21 could only reveal a man in full control of his senses.
- v) Ps.116:11 refers to a man experiencing great surprise. <sup>21</sup>
- vi) Peter's ecstatic experience in Acts 10:11f. was not indicative of loss of mental powers. <sup>22</sup>
- vii) Abraham fell into ecstasy of fear. The allusion is to Gen.15:12. <sup>23</sup>
- viii) Moses experienced the same ecstasy caused by fear. Heb.12:21 is cited. <sup>24</sup>
- ix) The apostles at the ascension of Jesus were not out of their minds. The reference is to Acts 1:11. <sup>25</sup>

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17. Epiphanius' phrase is μὴ κρατοῦντες τὴν ἀρχὴν

18. ... οὐ κρατῶν τὴν κεφαλὴν

19. ἐκείτω δὲ δίδοται ἡ φανέρωσις τοῦ Πνεύματος πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον.

20. The references are probably to Num.12:7; 1 Sam.9:9; Is.1:1; 6:1; Ezek.4:12,14; Daniel's powers of interpretation are mentioned.

21. Epiphanius' version is:-

Ἐγὼ εἶπον ἐν τῇ ἐκστάσει μου, πῶς ἄνθρωπος ψεύστης.

22. See earlier, p 52f.

23. περὶ δὲ ἡλίου δυσμῶν ἐκστασις ἐπέπεσεν τῷ Ἀβραμ, καὶ ἰδοὺ φόβος σκοτεινῆς μεγάλης

24. Μωϋσῆς εἶπεν Ἐκφοβὸς εἶμι καὶ ἐντρομος.

25. .. τὴν ἐστήκατε βλέποντες εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν...

ΕΠΙΠΙΠΤΕΙ Αὐτῷ

x) Agabus and the prophets who came to Antioch spoke in full control of their senses. The references are to Acts 21:11 and Acts 11:27f..<sup>26</sup>

xi) Even Paul, in 1 Tim.4:1 and 2 Tim.3:1 confirms this because his prophecies were full of truth.<sup>27</sup>

( Then follows a digression on marriage and fasting in 48,8f.. )

In 48,10, Epiphanius picks up the thread again:-

xii) The claim made by Montanus that he represents God dwelling in man is proven fallacious by Christ's words in Jn.5:43 that someone else would come in his own name and would be received.<sup>28</sup>

xiii) The words of Christ in Jn.16:7 and 14 that he would afterwards send the Paraclete who would glorify him cannot be applied to Montanus, since he glorifies himself.<sup>29</sup>

xiv) Montanus has no connection with the true head. The allusion is to Eph.4:15.<sup>30</sup>

xv) The apostles themselves did not make such a great claim as Maximilla did when she said that people were not to listen to her, but to Christ. Peter and Paul ( in 2 Pet.1:18 and 1 Cor.11:1 ) show their relationship to Christ.<sup>31</sup> Even Christ said that anyone who heard the apostles, heard him. The reference is to Luke 10:16. Nowhere is the personality of the speaker annihilated, as Maximilla claimed.

xvi) Spirits mentioned in Scripture witnessed to the truth about God and Christ. Acts 16:16 and Matt.8:29 are cited.

xvii) The obligation which Maximilla forces upon her followers is inconsistent

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26. Cf. Eusebius, H.E.,5,17,3 for reference to Agabus.

27. Paul's references to seductive spirits and perilous times have proved true.

28. εἰν ἄλλος ἔλθῃ ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τῷ ἰδίῳ, ἐκεῖνον λήμψεσθε.

29. For a discussion on Tertullian's use of these texts, see pp. 59 ff..

30. ... ἡ κεφαλὴ, Χριστός ἐστὶν οὐ πᾶν τὸ σῶμα συνάρμοσθαι - - -

31. Peter speaks of being with Christ at the Transfiguration, and Paul speaks of belonging to Christ.

with the attitude of Christ. He placed no strain or necessity on his followers. Epiphanius cites Jn.7:37; Luke 9:23; Is.1:19 and 58:14 to prove his point.<sup>32</sup>

No more Scriptural quotations are found in the subsequent sections of Pan.,48.

The above exposition of Epiphanius' use of Scripture in Pan.,48,1ff. reveals two important features. Firstly, he uses Scripture to refute the validity of the movement. He emphasises Scriptural evidence that there were to be false prophets, and that the nature and manifestations of the Spirit recorded in Scripture are not in harmony with those in the New Prophecy. The words of Christ often repudiate the validity of the movement. The claims made by the leaders of the movement cannot be upheld by the teaching of Christ.

Secondly, the main issue in the chapter seems to be that of ecstasy. Indeed, much of Epiphanius' use of Scripture is concerned with proving that the ecstatic experiences of true prophets in no way involved a loss of mental faculties. This issue seems to dominate sections 3 - 8. Some of the texts he uses have already been revealed in Tertullian's treatment of the subject.<sup>33</sup> In fact, the similarity of the treatment given to the topic by the two writers has led to the suggestion that there was a relationship between the two. P. de Labriolle, in opposition to the view of Voigt, is only prepared to state that the source which Epiphanius used ought possibly to be dated around the end of the second century, or the beginning of the third.<sup>34</sup> Numerous authors have been suggested as possible sources which Epiphanius might have used.<sup>35</sup> Labriolle thinks that the most likely source is the anonymous writer cited by Eusebius.<sup>36</sup> Certainly, there are similarities between the Scriptural references used by the two, in particular, the catalogue of Biblical prophets and the nature of their ecstatic

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32. These texts refer to Christ's call, and to the blessings awaiting the faithful of God.

33. See above, Gen.2:21 and Jn.16:12f. are two examples.

34. See Les Sources.p.liii.

35. Among the authors suggested are the anonymous writer cited by Eusebius, Apollonius, Hippolytus, Rhodon. See P.de Labriolle, Les Sources.p.liv.

36. See Les Sources.p.liv.

experiences. If this dependence may be assumed, it would appear that the foundations laid by the anonymous writer have been elaborated by Epiphanius.

As for Pan., 48, 8f., in which Epiphanius refers to marriage and to fasting, several references to Scripture are evident. 1 Tim. 4:1 and 3; 1 Cor. 9:24 and 1 Tim. 5:11ff. are included. Of these passages, the two from Paul's letter to Timothy are used as a justification of the Church's correct doctrine and practices. In 1 Tim. 4:1ff., Paul warns against those who, falling prey to adverse spirits, will forbid marriage and condemn abstinence. Epiphanius turns this warning against the followers of Montanus, saying that they have been guilty of such perversion. In 1 Tim. 5:11ff., Paul advocates a policy of leniency, rather than of imposition, on those who find they cannot sustain the high standards expected of them. Epiphanius emphasises that this policy of leniency is in no way compatible with the obligations placed upon the followers of the New Prophecy. Paul's words in 1 Cor. 9:24, in which he speaks of the prize to be won in the race, are alluded to by Epiphanius, when he argues that the obligations imposed by the movement are not imposed for reasons of virtue or salvation, but are founded in the fact that the movement considers Christ's words and actions abominable.

Again, it is evident that Epiphanius' concern is with a refutation of the movement's practices, rather than with a systematic argumentation against its doctrine. There is no mention of any Scriptural evidence cited by the followers of the movement in defence of their views on marriage and fasting. Any references emanate purely from Epiphanius.

In Pan., 49, 2, Epiphanius goes on to consider other evidence which he feels condemns the movement. After asserting that the followers of the movement use both Old and New Testaments and that they profess the resurrection of the dead, he cites numerous views which, he says, they put forward without any authority. They grant Eve a special credit because she ate the apple of knowledge first of all. They regard the sister of Moses as a prophetess, and use her as justification

for the admission of women into the clergy. They also assert that Philip had four daughters who were prophetesses. Among other practices which Epiphanius mentions is that of admitting women into the clergy. Apart from appealing to Moses' sister, they are said to appeal to Gal.3:28, in which Paul states that in Christ there is neither male nor female.

There is an obvious problem in Epiphanius' account. Is he referring to the original movement, or to a later version? Without a doubt, I would suggest, the latter. The whole tenor of Pan.,49,2 gives the impression that a far more advanced system than that of original New Prophecy is in Epiphanius' mind. The references to the admission of women into the clergy suggests an institutionalised system, rather than an ill-formed one geared to the activity of the Spirit in ecstatic, often inarticulate, experiences. Similarly, the entrance of the seven virgins, to which Epiphanius refers,<sup>37</sup> suggests a well-seasoned tradition. That the followers of the movement believe in the resurrection of the dead hints at a fixed doctrine. In the beginning, the new activity of the Spirit would certainly have pushed to the background the desire, and even the necessity, to formulate such systems of doctrine. Perhaps even the use of the Old and New Testaments is to be seen as the result of generations of study, debate, and desire for justification, rather than as a predominant feature in the original movement. Two further considerations support this claim. The way in which Epiphanius mentions Quintilla alongside Priscilla, and the way in which he mentions that the followers of the movement are called Artotyrites, because of their practice of eating bread and cheese during the celebration of their mysteries<sup>38</sup> suggest that the movement he is describing is a later form of that which originated in Asia Minor in the second century.

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37. These virgins, says Epiphanius, enter their assembly clothed in white, carrying torches, and then they prophesy in front of the people.

38. There is a reference to cheese in Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis,4, which has led to the suggestion that there are hints of the New Prophecy in the narrative, See, for example, P. Monceaux, Histoire Littéraire: Vol.1,p.80.

As for Epiphanius' references to the movement's use of Scripture, I can find no evidence to support the view that the early movement regarded Eve as of outstanding importance. In fact, Epiphanius himself can argue that woman is secondary to man since Eve was taken from Adam, and was the first to transgress. Tertullian certainly accredits woman, and Eve in particular, with sin.<sup>39</sup> It may well be that the followers of the New Prophecy appealed to the example of the four daughters of Philip to justify the role of women in prophecy. However, the appeal to their example in order to justify the inclusion of women into the clergy seems a new idea.<sup>40</sup> The appeal to the sister of Moses for the same purpose seems even more obscure.<sup>41</sup>

The conclusions I would wish to draw from the account provided by Epiphanius are these. Firstly, it would be misleading to regard his evidence as indicative of the early form of the New Prophecy. Some of the information he provides may reflect the original movement, but a wholesale dependence on his account for the practices and doctrines of the early movement would be most misleading. Much of his evidence is coloured by later accounts and prejudices.

Secondly, whenever Epiphanius does refer to the movement's appeal to Scripture, it would be dangerous to assume that the appeal was made at the beginning of the movement's history. Indeed, the emphasis accredited to Eve and to the sister of Moses seem to have very little, if any, foundation in what we know of the early movement and in Tertullian's works.

Thirdly, the majority of references to Scripture are used by Epiphanius to put forward the view of the Church. The fact that he appeals to Scripture to justify his position need not necessarily indicate that he had in mind Scriptural texts to which the movement had already appealed.

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39. See, for example, De Cult. Fem., 1, 1.

40. I can find no other evidence of such an appeal.

41. The only way I can see a link between Moses' sister and the clergy is that perhaps the water to which she went to rescue Moses might be seen as representing baptismal waters giving salvation.

c) Scriptural References and Allusions in the Oracles of the New Prophecy

The oracles which Tertullian cites or to which he alludes have already been examined.<sup>42</sup> Only one of these oracles contains anything which might be remotely dependent on Scripture. This is the oracle cited in De Resurr., 11, 2:-

Carnes sunt, et carnem oderunt.

There is no doubt that "flesh" is ecclesiastical language and may well be influenced by Paul. The oracle here may be dependent on Gen. 6:3, in which God threatens to withdraw his spirit from man. This text has been shown to be of importance in Tertullian's justification of his belief in the New Prophecy. It may be that the use he makes of the text is influenced by this oracle, attributed to Prisca.<sup>43</sup>

Three more oracles, cited by Church writers, in which the influence of Scripture may be detected, must be mentioned.

i) Τί λέγεις τὸν ὑπὲρ ἀνθρώπου σωζόμενον; λάμπει γὰρ ὁ δίκαιος, φησὶν, ὑπὲρ τὸν ἥλιον ἑκατοντὰ πλάσιον, οἱ δὲ μικροὶ ἐν ὑμῖν σωζόμενοι λάμπουσιν ἑκατοντὰ πλάσιον ὑπὲρ τῶν σελήνην.

This oracle, cited by Epiphanius in Pan., 48, 10, is attributed to Montanus himself. There are hints of Matt. 13:40ff. to which Epiphanius himself refers in his comments on the oracle,<sup>44</sup> and to Dan. 12:3.<sup>45</sup> The expression ὁ δίκαιος also seems influenced by Scripture.<sup>46</sup> I have been unable to find any reference to Matt. 13:40ff. and Dan. 12:3 in Tertullian's writings.

ii) διώκομαι ὡς λύκος ἐκ προβάτων. οὐκ εἶμι λύκος. ῥῆμά εἶμι καὶ πνεῦμα καὶ δύναμις.

This oracle, cited by the anonymous writer in Eusebius, H.E., 5, 16, 17, is attributed to the spirit which speaks in Maximilla. The idea of the wolf and the

42. See above, pp. 32 ff.

43. See above, pp. 113 ff.

44. Cf. the expression οἱ δίκαιοι ἐκλάμπουσιν ὡς ὁ ἥλιος in Matt. 13:43. See Pan., 48, 10.

45. This text speaks of the wise who will shine like the brightness of the heavens.

46. Cf. Matt. 10:41; Mk. 6:20; Rom. 5:7 etc..



sheep reflects passages like Matt.7:15; 10:16; Luke 10:3 and Jn.10:12. <sup>47</sup>

Tertullian himself uses the idea in his treatment of the threat which heretics make against the "flock" of the Church. <sup>48</sup>

iii) ἔν ἰδέα φησὶ γυναικὸς ἑσχηματισμένως ἐν στολῇ  
λαμπρᾷ ἦλθε πρὸς με Χριστὸς καὶ ἐνέβλεπεν ἐν  
ἐμοὶ τὴν σοφίαν, καὶ ἀπεκάλυψε μοι ταυτὸν τὸν  
τόπον εἶναι ἁγίου, καὶ ὡς τὴν Ἱερουσαλὴμ ἐκ τοῦ  
οὐρανοῦ κατενεύει.

This vision, cited by Epiphanius in Pan.,49,1, is attributed to one of the

women, either Quintilla or Priscilla. Mention is made of the heavenly Jerusalem

descending from the sky. <sup>49</sup> This idea was prevalent in Jewish Apocalyptic material

and early Christian literature. Tertullian himself speaks of the fulfilment

of a prediction of the New Prophecy in the vision of the descent of the

heavenly city seen in Judaea. <sup>50</sup> He appeals to Gal.4:26, Ezekiel and Revelation

for support of the concept.

In the four oracles cited above, allusions to Scripture are evident.

Tertullian uses some of these Scriptural passages in his works. However, where

he does use the ideas found in these oracles, I do not think he is indebted

to the oracles themselves. A closer examination of the concepts involved - men

being flesh, the righteous shining as the sun, the sheep and the wolf, and the

heavenly Jerusalem - shows that they were all prevalent in the ecclesiastical

environment of his day. <sup>51</sup> They all came through Scripture into the Church.

There is no need to look to a new movement for their introduction into Tertullian's

thought. <sup>52</sup> Any resemblance between the terminology of the oracles and that

of Tertullian need not imply the dependence of one on the other.

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47. The idea of the threat of unbelievers or heretics against the faith is commonly expressed in the terms of wolves and sheep in the Bible.

48. See, for example, De Praesc. Haer.,4,2, which incidentally, is uninfluenced by the New Prophecy.

49. Cf. Rev.21:2.

50. See Adu. Marc.,3,24,3f..

51. All the concepts are evident in Scripture, and there is no necessity to look beyond Scripture for influence.

52. Tertullian frequently speaks of men as flesh ( see above, pp.80ff) and his thought reveals eschatological overtones, even before his involvement in the New Prophecy ( see above, p.74 ).

2. The Use and Interpretation of Scripture among Writers Whose Works Tertullian May Have Known.

The concern of this thesis has been to highlight any texts in which a change in exegesis may be detected as a result of Tertullian's involvement in the New Prophecy. Therefore, I am going to restrict this examination to a study of these same texts in writers whom Tertullian could have known. These writers include Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp, Hermas, the Apologists, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, the writers of the Didache and the various Acts of the Martyrs, and possibly Hippolytus. Once again, the paucity of extant material presents a problem, and an examination must necessarily be restricted. However, I hope that some value may emerge.

Throughout this thesis I have drawn attention to any significant exegesis of a specific text which may be found in the writings of the authors listed above. There is no doubt that Tertullian is, in odd cases, indebted to other writers. The exegesis which is given to Ps.1:1ff. in relation to the question of a Christian's attendance at the shows in De Spect., 3,3, is one example of Tertullian's dependence on other writers. His knowledge of the exegesis of Clement of Alexandria is certain here. However, De Spect. is not influenced by the New Prophecy. It must be emphasised that in the passages of Scripture in which a change in exegesis occurs in Tertullian's works as a direct result of his involvement in the New Prophecy there seems to be no real dependence on other writers.

My examination of other writers has proved negative in this matter. Nowhere have I found any exegesis which may be compared with Tertullian's later exegesis resulting from an influence of the New Prophecy. The example of Joel 2:28f. has

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53. These include The Acts of the Scilli Martyrs and the Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis.

54. See above, pp. 197ff..

been mentioned. Even in the Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis, in which the sympathy of the redactor to the New Prophecy is most apparent, the exegesis of the text bears little resemblance to that which Tertullian, in his most extreme works, is prepared to give it. The precedent had been set in the Passio for a thorough-going interpretation of the text in support of the *raison d'etre* of the movement, yet Tertullian does not take the opportunity of including such an interpretation in his writings. This clearly shows Tertullian's objectivity in the choice of his material.

Apart from Tertullian's selection of his material, there is another major factor involved in Tertullian's scanty use of other sources in relation to his exegesis of texts in which a change may be noted. The writers listed above would not have been concerned, in the main, to justify the beliefs and attitudes of the New Prophecy. It would be highly unlikely that the exegesis applied by Tertullian as a follower of the New Prophecy would be fore-shadowed in the works of these writers. The attitude of Irenaeus to the movement is not clearly defined.<sup>56</sup> Certainly, he spends very little time in discussion of the movement. Hippolytus also makes very little mention of the followers of the movement, and where he does seemingly hint at their beliefs he merely mentions their doctrine of fasting and the errors in their attitude to revelation and God. He accuses them of straying from Scripture, but does not mention any specific passages. Clement of Alexandria states only that the followers of the New Prophecy call those who do not share their beliefs ψυκικολοι.<sup>57</sup>

I am therefore forced to conclude that there is very little extant evidence to suggest that Tertullian drew his often unusual exegeses in support of the New Prophecy and its doctrines from other sources. Even where the opportunity

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55. See above, pp. 80ff..

56. For a full discussion on Irenaeus' attitude to the New Prophecy, see P. de Labriolle, La Crise, pp. 230ff..

See Hippolytus' commentary on Daniel, 3, 20. In Philos., 8, 19, he accuses some of them of being Noetians.

57. See Strom., 4, 13, 93, 1.

presented itself, he was discriminating in his exegesis. I have to suggest that Tertullian himself was responsible for the interpretations which he placed on the texts to support his belief in the New Prophecy. There is no need to look to other sources. Certainly, the extreme positions into which Tertullian was forced as he became more and more sympathetic to the movement can often be seen fore-shadowed in his earlier writings when equally desperate interpretations may be noticed. Tertullian's desire to justify his view Scripturally can be seen at every stage of his life, and it would be wrong to attribute desperate exegesis to the influence of the New Prophecy. We should look to Tertullian himself for the extreme interpretations of Scripture to which his acceptance of the New Prophecy led him. His own imagination and desire to prove himself right are resources enough for the exegesis found in his later works.

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