

Conclusion

10/25/2025

The writings of Tertullian are very valuable because he quotes so many Scriptures. This is another proof of the truth of the dating of the New Testament to be only a few years after Jesus was crucified. Tertullian's interpretation of the Scriptures was definitely impacted by the traditions of the early Church.

Remember that, in the chapter, **History of Montanism**, Philip Schaff writes in **History of the Christian Church, Volume 2**, the following points about Montanism:

- “Montanism, in the first place, sought a forced continuance of the miraculous gifts of the apostolic church, which gradually disappeared as Christianity became settled in humanity, and its supernatural principle was naturalized on earth.”

Comment: The word “naturalized” in the sense that Philip Schaff uses it, means “to bring into conformity with nature”. (**Merriam Webster**) And this is a good description of what happened to the spirituality of the early Church. As the apostles died, this left the early Church dependent on their writings, all of which the individual churches did not have. A general acceptance of the canon of the New Testament was not held until Athanasius in 367 A.D. wrote his annual Easter letter to his churches. It contained the same list of the 27 books of the New Testament that are found in our Bibles today. Montanism was a revival of New Testament spirituality, but it was greatly hindered in its interpretation of the Scriptures by the traditions which had already developed in the early Church, and which the early Church held to be handed down by the apostles.

- “Montanism turned with horror from all the enjoyments of life, and held even art to be incompatible with Christian soberness and humility.”

Comment: In the chapter, **On Idolatry (Volume 3)**, under Page 64-65 (PDF Page 38):, we read in Chapter VIII. that Tertullian said, “There are also other species of very many arts which, although they extend not to the *making* of idols, yet, with the same criminality, *furnish the adjuncts* without which idols have no power.”

His main point about art was that it should not make idols. Tertullian does not want our artwork to be “in the honour and service, of demons”, as was often done in his day. He is not against the work of craftsmen who build “houses, and official residences, and baths, and tenements”. He urged “men generally to such kinds of handicrafts as do not come in contact with an idol indeed and with the things which are appropriate to an idol”. We can agree with him here. However, Montanism did take it to an extreme and would not allow any art.

In the chapter, Page 65-66 (PDF Page 39-41): Chapter IX.—Professions of Some Kinds Allied to Idolatry. Of Astrology in Particular, Tertullian begins, and says, “We

observe among the arts also some professions liable to the charge of idolatry.”

He does not say that he observes all “among the arts”, but “some professions liable to the charge of idolatry”, such as “Of astrologers”.

- “It forbade women all ornamental clothing, and required virgins to be veiled.”

Comment: In the chapter, **On the Veiling of Virgins (Volume 4)**, under Page 27 (PDF Page 54): CHAP. I. “Chapter I., Tertullian says, “Having already undergone the trouble peculiar to my opinion, I will show in Latin also that it behooves our virgins to be veiled from the time that they have passed the turning point of their age: that this observance is exacted by truth, on which no one can impose prescription—no space of times, no influence of persons, no privilege of regions.”

And he says, referring to the Holy Spirit, “He is the only prelate, because He alone succeeds Christ. They who have received Him set truth before custom. They who have heard Him prophesying even to the present time, not of old, bid virgins be wholly covered.”

“Prophesying” in the “present time” must be judged by the word of God, rightly divided. Whatever has been accepted as tradition needs to be judged by the word of God rightly divided. The covering of “virgins” with a veil is a “custom” and not “truth”. We are not under the law of the Old Testament in the New Testament.

- “It courted the blood-baptism of martyrdom, and condemned concealment or flight in persecution as a denial of Christ.”

Comment: In the chapter, **De Fuga in Persecutione (Volume 4)**, under, Page 119-120 (PDF Page 266-268): Tertullian writes “6. Nay, says some one, he fulfilled the command, when he fled from city to city. For so a certain individual, but a fugitive likewise, has chosen to maintain, and others have done the same who are unwilling to understand the meaning of that declaration of the Lord, that they may use it as a cloak for their cowardice, although it has had its persons as well as its times and reasons to which it specially applies. “When they begin,” He says, “to persecute you, flee from city to city.” (Note: Matthew 10:23) We maintain that this belongs specially to the persons of the apostles, and to their times and circumstances, as the following sentences will show, which are suitable only to the apostles: “Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and into a city of the Samaritans do not enter: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” (Note: Matthew 10:5)”

And then Tertullian concludes, “If, therefore, the prohibition against setting foot in the way of the Gentiles, and entering into the cities of the Samaritans, has come to an end, why should not the command to flee, which was issued at the same time, have come also to an end? Accordingly, from the time when, Israel having had its full measure, the apostles went over to the Gentiles, they neither fled from city to city, nor hesitated to suffer.”

And Tertullian argues that Paul would not be persuaded to forego going up to Jerusalem because of the persecution that awaited him, and that therefore it had become a law not to flee persecution. But Paul was especially chosen of the Lord, and the Lord had determined that Paul would see Rome and revealed the same to him in Acts 23:11. The Holy Spirit even forbade Paul to preach the word in Asia, and would not allow him to go into Bythinia. Paul was led by the Holy Spirit to go into Macedonia, and so must we be led by the Holy Spirit.

But Paul fled from being stoned in Iconium, as we read in Acts 14:1-7. Iconium is in present day Turkey, and not in Judea. Tertullian was wrong to forbid fleeing persecution.

- “It multiplied fasts and other ascetic exercises, and carried them to extreme severity, as the best preparation for the millennium.”

Comment: In the chapter, **On Fasting (Volume 4)**, under Page 111-112 (PDF Page 252): Chapter XIV.—Reply to the Charge of “Galaticism.”, Tertullian says, “Being, therefore, observers of “seasons” for these things, and of “days, and months, and years,” (Note: Galatians 4:10) we *Galaticize*. Plainly we do, if we are observers of *Jewish* ceremonies, of *legal* solemnities: for *those* the apostle unteaches, suppressing the continuance of the Old Testament which has been buried in Christ, and establishing that of the New. But if there is a new creation in Christ, (Luke 22:20, 2 Corinthians 5:17) our solemnities too will be bound to be new: else, if the apostle has erased *all* devotion absolutely “of seasons, and days, and months, and years,” why do we celebrate the Passover by an *annual* rotation in the *first month*? Why in the *fifty* ensuing *days* do we spend our time in all exultation? Why do we devote to Stations the *fourth* and *sixth* days of the week, and to fasts the “*preparation-day*?” (Note: Mark 15:42) Anyhow, *you* sometimes continue your Station even over the Sabbath,—a day never to be kept as a fast except at the passover season, according to a reason elsewhere given. With us, at all events, *every* day likewise is celebrated by an ordinary consecration.”

To Tertullian, they were not following the Old Testament laws, but they were making new “solemnities”, and why not, he argues. And he argues that he is not being a Galatian for so doing because they are not “Jewish ceremonies, of legal solemnities”. But Paul warns as in **Galatians 4 (KJV):9** But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? 10 Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.

Paul doesn’t mention any Jewish ceremonies, but just “days, and months, and times, and years”. Tertullian and the Montanists were starting new “solemnities” which were just as legalistic as the old were.

- “It prohibited second marriage as adultery, for laity as well as clergy, and inclined even to regard a single marriage as a mere concession on the part of God to the sensuous infirmity of man.”

Comment: In the chapter, **On Monogomy**, under Page 70-71 (PDF Page 161-162): “Chapter XIV.—Even If the Permission Had Been Given by St. Paul in the Sense Which the Psychics Allege, It Was Merely Like the Mosaic Permission of Divorce—A Condescension to Human Hard-Heartedness, Tertullian says, “The New Law abrogated divorce—it had (somewhat) to abrogate; the New Prophecy (abrogates) second marriage, (which is) no less a divorce of the former (marriage).”

The New Prophecy must be judged according to the word of God, as Peter taught in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):19** We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:

Tertullian must not exceed the word of God, which he is doing by prohibiting a valid second marriage, which Jesus Himself did not prohibit, as we read again in **Matthew 19 (KJV):9** And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

Tertullian and the “New Prophecy” were making it a law that there could be no second marriage. This is not according to Scripture, and in fact exceeds Scripture.

Under Page 70 (PDF Page 159-160): Chapter XIII.—Further Objections from St. Paul Answered., Tertullian continues, and argues, “and in as far as you would *not* be accounted an adulteress if you became (wife) to a second husband after the death of your (first) husband, if you were still bound to act in (subjection to) the law, in so far as a result of the diversity of (your) condition, he *does* prejudge you (guilty) of adultery if, after the death of your husband, you do marry another: inasmuch as you have now been made dead to the law, it cannot be lawful for you, now that you have withdrawn from that (law) in the eye of which it *was* lawful for you.”

According to Tertullian’s logic, in his interpretation of Romans 7:4, he is arguing that, because we are “married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God”, we are not to marry again if our husband or wife dies. But this goes against the clear teaching of Jesus in Mathew 19:19, and to 1 Corinthians 7:39.

- “It taught the impossibility of a second repentance, and refused to restore the lapsed to the fellowship of the church.”

Comment: In the chapter, **On Repentance**, under Page 660-661 (PDF Page 1453-1454): Chapter V.—Sin Never to Be Returned to After Repentance, Tertullian says, “Thus he who, through repentance for sins, had begun to make satisfaction to the Lord, will, through another repentance of his repentance, make satisfaction to the devil, and will be the more hateful to God in proportion as he will be the more acceptable to His rival.”

Under Page 663-664 (PDF Page 1460-1461): Chapter VIII.—Examples from Scripture to Prove the Lord’s Willingness to Pardon, Tertullian allows for the

repentance even of a prodigal, but he also believes one can lose their salvation.

Then under Page 664 (PDF Page 1462): Chapter IX.—Concerning the Outward Manifestations by Which This Second Repentance is to Be Accompanied, Tertullian says, “The narrower, then, the sphere of action of this second and only (remaining) repentance, the more laborious is its probation; in order that it may not be exhibited in the conscience alone, but may likewise be carried out in some (external) act. This act, which is more usually expressed and commonly spoken of under a Greek name, is ἐξομολόγησις (pronounced ex-omolo-gehsis), whereby we confess our sins to the Lord, not indeed as if He were ignorant of them, but inasmuch as by confession satisfaction is settled, of confession repentance is born; by repentance God is appeased. And thus *exomologesis* is a discipline for man’s prostration and humiliation, enjoining a demeanor calculated to move mercy. With regard also to the very dress and food, it commands (the penitent) to lie in sackcloth and ashes, to cover his body in mourning, to lay his spirit low in sorrows, to exchange for severe treatment the sins which he has committed; moreover, to know no food and drink but such as is plain,—not for the stomach’s sake, to wit, but the soul’s; for the most part, however, to feed prayers on fastings, to groan, to weep and make outcries unto the Lord your God; to bow before the feet of the presbyters, and kneel to God’s dear ones; to enjoin on all the brethren to be ambassadors to bear his deprecatory supplication (before God).”

Tertullian would not allow a second repentance for the seven deadly sins, as we shall read of in the next section.

- "Tertullian held all mortal sins (of which he numbers seven), committed after baptism, to be unpardonable, at least in this world, and a church, which showed such lenity towards gross offenders, as the Roman church at that time did, according to the corroborating testimony of Hippolytus, he called worse than a den of thieves," even a "spelunca maechorum et fornicatorum."”

Comment: In the chapter, **The Five Books Against Marcion, Book IV (Volume 3)**, under Page 355-357 (PDF Page -767): Chapter IX., Tertullian said, “The cleansing of the Syrian rather was significant throughout the nations of the world of their own cleansing in Christ their light, (Note: Luke 2:32) steeped as they were in the stains of the seven deadly sins: idolatry, blasphemy, murder, adultery, fornication, false-witness, and fraud.”

Tertullian considered the “seven deadly sins” to be irremissible. Repentance was not possible for these sins, according to Tertullian.

On Repentance

Under Page 661-662 (PDF Page 1455-1457): Chapter VI.—Baptism Not to Be Presumptuously Received. It Requires Preceding Repentance, Manifested by Amendment of Life, Tertullian says, “Further, how inconsistent is it to expect pardon of sins (to be granted) to a repentance which they have not fulfilled! This is to hold out your hand for merchandise, but

not produce the price. For repentance is the price at which the Lord has determined to award pardon: He proposes the redemption of release from penalty at this compensating exchange of repentance. If, then, sellers first examine the coin with which they make their bargains, to see whether it be cut, or scraped, or adulterated, we believe likewise that the Lord, when about to make us the grant of so costly merchandise, even of eternal life, first institutes a probation of our repentance.”

And he says, “A sinner is bound to bemoan himself *before* receiving pardon, because the time of repentance is coincident with that of peril and of fear. Not that I deny that the divine benefit—the putting away of sins, I mean—is in every way sure to such as are on the point of entering the (baptismal) water; but what we have to labour for is, that it may be granted us to attain that blessing. For who will grant to you, a man of so faithless repentance, one single sprinkling of any water whatever?”

But Tertullian adds, “That *baptismal* washing is a sealing of faith, which faith is begun and is commended by the faith of repentance. We are not washed *in order that we may* cease sinning, but *because we have* ceased, since in *heart* we have *been* bathed already.”

And Jesus said that it is when we believe that we pass from death to life, as we read again in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

There is no record in the Scripture of “a probation of our repentance”, or of anyone refusing baptism for someone because they did not show the fruits of repentance yet. What is required is faith in Jesus Christ. It is this faith that begins a personal relationship with God. If our faith is real, we start off as babes in Christ, and grow to be children, young men and women, and fathers and mothers in the Lord. The early Church in the time of Tertullian thought that one had to show the fruits of repentance before being baptized, by which in their thinking, one was regenerated and saved. This deemphasized faith, and brought the one who was baptized into a dependence on one’s works. If one fell into sin again, they could lose what was gained through baptism.

Second Marriage

Under **On Monogamy (Volume 4)**, Page 70-71 (PDF Page 161-162): “Chapter XIV.—Even If the Permission Had Been Given by St. Paul in the Sense Which the Psychics Allege, It Was Merely Like the Mosaic Permission of Divorce—A Condescension to Human Hard-Heartedness, Tertullian writes, “The New Law abrogated divorce—it had (somewhat) to abrogate; the New Prophecy (abrogates) second marriage, (which is) no less a divorce of the former (marriage).”

He did not allow any second marriage. The New Prophecy must be judged according to the word of God, as Peter taught in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):19** We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:

Tertullian must not exceed the word of God, which he is doing by prohibiting a valid

second marriage, which Jesus Himself did not prohibit, as we read again in **Matthew 19 (KJV):9** And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

Tradition

There were other issues in Tertullian's writings. In **The Chaplet or De Corona (Volume 3)**, under Page 94-95 (PDF Page 193): CHAP. III., we read, "And how long shall we draw the saw to and fro through this line, when we have an ancient practice, which by anticipation has made for us the state, i.e., of the question? If no passage of Scripture has prescribed it, assuredly custom, which without doubt flowed from tradition, has confirmed it. For how can anything come into use, if it has not first been handed down? Even in pleading tradition, written authority, you say, must be demanded. Let us inquire, therefore, whether tradition, unless it be written, should not be admitted. Certainly we shall say that it ought not to be admitted, if no cases of other practices which, without any written instrument, we maintain on the ground of tradition alone, and the countenance thereafter of custom, affords us any precedent."

Then under Page 95 (PDF Page 194-195): CHAP. IV., we read, "Tertullian begins, and says, "If for these and other such rules, you insist upon having positive Scripture injunction, you will find none. Tradition will be held forth to you as the originator of them, custom as their strengthener, and faith as their observer. That reason will support tradition, and custom and faith, you will either yourself perceive, or learn from some one who has."

And he also says under the same chapter, "If I nowhere find a law, it follows that tradition has given the fashion in question to custom, to find subsequently (its authorization in) the apostle's sanction, from the true interpretation of reason. This instances, therefore, will make it sufficiently plain that you can vindicate the keeping of even unwritten tradition established by custom; the proper witness for tradition when demonstrated by long-continued observance."

This is a picture of how tradition began to hold equal value with Scripture in the early Church.

The Soul

In the chapter, **Treatise on the Soul (Volume 3)**, under Page 185 (PDF Page 381-382): CHAP. V., Tertullian here says that the "spirit" is "the soul", and "that the soul is a corporeal substance". He is following Greek philosophy.

Under Page 190-191 (PDF Page 395-396): "Chapter XI., Tertullian calls the "soul spirit or breath". His logic is that the action of the soul is "to respire" and what is respired, or breathed, is "breath". So to him, breathing was an operation of the soul.

Tertullian says, "Consequently, as the spirit neither of God nor of the devil is naturally planted with a man's soul at his birth, this soul must evidently exist apart and alone, previous to

the accession to it of either spirit: if thus apart and alone, it must also be simple and uncompounded as regards its substance; and therefore it cannot respire from any other cause than from the actual condition of its own substance.”

In the chapter, **The Five Books Against Marcion, Book II (Volume 3)**, under Page 304-305 (PDF Page 581-583): CHAP. IX., in the thinking of the early Church and Tertullian, when God breathed into man the breath of life, man became a living soul. So man was composed of body and soul in their thinking. And when one was born again, the Holy Spirit united with the body and soul of man as an influence. The Holy Spirit would then leave if one committed a mortal sin.

Then under Page 220 (PDF Page 457): Chapter XL., Tertullian thought that our flesh was just a vessel, and that the soul was responsible for our sin. But what the Scripture, in context with Romans 7, is saying is that the “law of sin” in our flesh is pulling us to look with lust, and so we read as in **Romans 8 (KJV):5** For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

Our flesh pulls on our mind to fulfill its desires. When we yield to the desires of our flesh we become carnally minded. When we yield to the desires of the Spirit of God we become spiritually minded. Our soul is composed of our mind, will, heart, emotions or feelings, and conscience. Our soul is where we interact with our fellow man and woman. Our soul holds all of the experiences of our life here on earth. Our mind holds all of our perceptions of this world. Our heart is the center of our emotions or feelings. Our soul holds all of our hurt feelings. Our conscience is defiled by having lived according to the course of this world. All of our soul will need to be cleansed after we believe in Jesus Christ and we are born again.

After we are born again, we must understand that the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made us free from the “law of sin” in our flesh. We don’t have to yield to it now. The flesh is more than just a “cup” used by the soul. The flesh is pulling on the soul to sin. The soul of the Christian must now yield to the divine nature, which is now in our spirit, and not yield to the desires of the sinful nature in our flesh. Tertullian and the early Church did not understand the triune nature of man, and the new divine nature that is in our spirit after we are born again.

Hades

In the chapter, **Treatise on the Soul (Volume 3)**, under Page 231 (PDF Page 481-482): Chapter LV., Tertullian says, “To no one is heaven opened; the earth is still safe for him, I would not say it is shut against him. When the world, indeed, shall pass away, then the kingdom of heaven shall be opened.”

Tertullian believed that no one could go to heaven until “the world, indeed, shall pass away”.

Under Page 234-235 (PDF Page 489-491): CHAP LVIII., Tertullian says, “All souls, therefore, are shut up within Hades: do you admit this? (It is true, whether) you say yes or no: moreover, there are already experienced there punishments and consolations; and there you

have a poor man and a rich. And now, having postponed some stray questions for this part of my work, I will notice them in this suitable place, and then come to a close. Why, then, cannot you suppose that the soul undergoes punishment and consolation in Hades in the interval, while it awaits its alternative of judgment, in a certain anticipation either of gloom or of glory?"

And Tertullian adds, "In short, inasmuch as we understand "the prison" pointed out in the Gospel to be Hades, and as we also interpret "the uttermost farthing" (Note: Matthew 5:25-26) to mean the very smallest offence which has to be recompensed there before the resurrection, no one will hesitate to believe that the soul undergoes in Hades some compensatory discipline, without prejudice to the full process of the resurrection, when the recompense will be administered through the flesh besides."

Tertullian seems to indicate that even the righteous will undergo "in Hades some compensatory discipline" until one has "paid the uttermost farthing". This will add support for the acceptance of the doctrine of purgatory in the Roman Catholic Church in the years following.

In the chapter, **On the Resurrection of the Flesh (Volume 3)**, under Page 556-557 (PDF Page 1230-1231): Chapter XVII., Tertullian says, "That souls are even now susceptible of torment and of blessing in Hades, though they are disembodied, and notwithstanding their banishment from the flesh, is proved by the case of Lazarus."

Tertullian and the early Church thought that the righteous were still in Hades, and only the martyrs were in Paradise. But the Scripture is clear in Ephesians 4:8-10 that Jesus "descended first into the lower parts of the earth", and then led "captivity captive" and "ascended up far above all heavens". The "captivity" were those in Abraham's bosom, or the lower Paradise that Jesus referred to the thief on the cross.

Then under Page 556-557 (PDF Page 1230-1231): "Chapter XVII.—The Flesh Will Be Associated with the Soul in Enduring the Penal Sentences of the Final Judgment, Tertullian says, "Therefore as it has acted in each several instance, so proportionably does it suffer in Hades, being the first to taste of judgment as it was the first to induce to the commission of sin; but still it is waiting for the flesh in order that it may through the flesh also compensate for its deeds, inasmuch as it laid upon the flesh the execution of its own thoughts. This, in short, will be the process of that judgment which is postponed to the last great day, in order that by the exhibition of the flesh the entire course of the divine vengeance may be accomplished.

Tertullian and the early Church believed that all the righteous and the unrighteous will be present at one final judgment, which he said would be "that judgment which is postponed to the last great day". But the Scriptures are clear that there will be a first resurrection of only the righteous, and then a later resurrection of only the unrighteous at the White Throne Judgment.

And under Page 574-575 (PDF Page 1268-1269): "Chapter XL.—Sundry Passages of St. Paul Which Attest Our Doctrine Rescued from the Perversions of Heresy, he says, "'Observe how he here also ascribes to the excellence of martyrdom a contempt for the body. For no one, on becoming absent from the body, is at once a dweller in the presence of the Lord, except by the prerogative of martyrdom, he gains a lodging in Paradise, not in the lower regions."

Tertullian has said before that he believes the martyrs will go to paradise, which he does not consider to be heaven. All other righteous dead are still in Abraham's bosom, which along with Hell he considers as "a lodging" in "the lower regions".

The Rule of Faith

In the chapter, **On Prescription Against Heretics (Volume 3)**, under Page 251-252 (PDF Page 520): CHAP. XIX. —Appeal, in Discussion of Heresy, Lies Not to the Scriptures. The Scriptures Belong Only to Those Who Have the Rule of Faith.

Tertullian says, “Our appeal, therefore, must not be made to the Scriptures; nor must controversy be admitted on points in which victory will either be impossible, or uncertain, or not certain enough. But even if a discussion from the Scriptures should not turn out in such a way as to place both sides on a par, (yet) the natural order of things would require that this point should be first proposed, which is now the only one which we must discuss: “With whom lies that very faith to which the Scriptures belong. From what and through whom, and when, and to whom, has been handed down that rule, by which men become Christians?” For wherever it shall be manifest that the true Christian rule and faith shall be, *there* will likewise be the true Scriptures and expositions thereof, and all the Christian traditions.”

And under Page 265 (PDF Page 557): CHAP. XLIV., Tertullian says, “On the present occasion, indeed, our treatise has rather taken up a general position against heresies, (showing that they must) all be refuted on definite, equitable, and necessary rules, without any comparison with the Scriptures.”

Tertullian is saying that, in the discussion of heresy, no appeal should be made to the Scriptures, but rather, one should defer to “wherever it shall be manifest that the true Christian rule and faith shall be”. To him, the rule of faith, and submission to an apostolic church, was enough.

And in the chapter, **On the Veiling of Virgins (Volume 4)**, under Page 27 (PDF Page 54): CHAP. I., Tertullian says, “The rule of faith, indeed, is altogether one, alone immovable and irreformable; the rule, to wit, of believing in one only God omnipotent, the Creator of the universe, and His Son Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary, crucified under Pontius Pilate, raised again the third day from the dead, received in the heavens, sitting now at the right (hand) of the Father, destined to come to judge quick and dead through the resurrection of the flesh as well (as of the spirit).”

Tertullian was definitely saved. He just followed a lot of tradition in the early Church.

Apostolic Succession

In the chapter, **On Prescription Against Heretics (Volume 3)**, under Page 258 (PDF Page 538-539): “Chapter XXXII., “But if there be any (heresies) which are bold enough to plant themselves in the midst of the apostolic age, that they may thereby seem to have been handed down by the apostles, because they existed in the time of the apostles, we can say: Let them produce the original records of their churches; let them unfold the roll of their bishops, running down in due succession from the beginning in such a manner that [that first bishop of theirs] bishop shall be able to show for his ordainer and predecessor some one of the apostles or of apostolic men,—a man, moreover, who continued steadfast with the apostles. For this is the manner in which the apostolic churches transmit their registers: as the church of Smyrna, which

records that Polycarp was placed therein by John; as also the church of Rome, which makes Clement to have been ordained in like manner by Peter. In exactly the same way the other churches likewise exhibit (their several worthies), whom, as having been appointed to their episcopal places by apostles, they regard as transmitters of the apostolic seed.”

Then in Page 253 (PDF Page 524-525): “Chapter XXII. “Was anything withheld from the knowledge of Peter, who is called “the rock on which the church should be built,” who also obtained “the keys of the kingdom of heaven,” with the power of “loosing and binding in heaven and on earth?””

Then in Page 260-261 (PDF Page 545-546): Chapter XXXVI., Tertullian says, “Come now, you who would indulge a better curiosity, if you would apply it to the business of your salvation, run over the apostolic churches, in which the very thrones of the apostles are still preeminent in their places, in which their own authentic writings are read, uttering the voice and representing the face of each of them severally.”

Tertullian believed in apostolic succession. One had to submit to churches that were founded by an apostle. That Peter was “the rock on which the church should be built”, and that Peter had been in Rome planting the church, had become a tradition handed down by the apostles. But there is no historical evidence that Peter was ever in Rome. And Matthew 16:18 was misinterpreted by Tertullian and the early Church. Matthew 16:18 actually says that Peter is a small rock, and that the Lord Jesus is the massive rock upon which He is building His Church.

The Trinity

In the chapter, **Against Praxeas**, under Page 598 (PDF Page 1321-1322): “Chapter II., Tertullian defines the error of Praxeas here who said that “one cannot believe in One Only God in any other way than by saying that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are the very selfsame Person.”

Under Page 620-621 (PDF Page 1372-1374): “Chapter XXIV., Tertullian argues, “But there were some who even then did not understand. For Thomas, who was so long incredulous, said: “Lord, we know not whither Thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye would have known the Father also: but henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him.” (Note: John 14:5-7) And now we come to Philip, who, roused with the expectation of seeing the Father, and not understanding in what sense he was to take “seeing the Father,” says: “Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.” Then the Lord answered him: “Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?” (Note: John 14:8-9) Now whom does He say that they ought to have known?—for this is the sole point of discussion. Was it as the Father that they ought to have known Him, or as the Son? If it was as the Father, Praxeas must tell us how Christ, who had been so long time with them, could have possibly ever been (I will not say understood, but even) supposed to have been the Father.”

Tertullian understood the trinity of the Godhead. He makes a good point and argues well against Praxeas. Tertullian was a defender of the faith in the measure of the faith which he had.

Unpardonable Sins

In the chapter, **Scorpiace (Volume 3)**, under Page 638-639 (PDF Page 1407-1408): Chapter VI., Tertullian says, “God had foreseen also other weaknesses incident to the condition of man,—the stratagems of the enemy, the deceptive aspects of the creatures, the snares of the world; that faith, even after baptism, would be endangered; that the most, after attaining unto salvation, would be lost again, through soiling the wedding-dress, through failing to provide oil for their torchlets—would be such as would have to be sought for over mountains and woodlands, and carried back upon the shoulders. He therefore appointed as second supplies of comfort, and the last means of succour, the fight of martyrdom and the baptism—thereafter free from danger—of blood.”

Tertullian refers to the parable of the wedding garment in Matthew 22:1-14, and the parable of the oil in the lamps in Matthew 25:1-13, to show that one could “be lost again” even “after baptism”, that is in his thinking, “after attaining unto salvation”.

In the chapter, **On Modesty**, under Page 75-77: “Chapter II., Tertullian said, “We agree that the causes of repentance are sins. These we divide into two issues: some will be remissible, some irremissible: in accordance wherewith it will be doubtful to no one that some deserve chastisement, some condemnation. Every sin is dischargeable either by pardon or else by penalty: by pardon as the result of chastisement, by penalty as the result of condemnation. Touching this difference, we have not only already premised certain antithetical passages of the Scriptures, on one hand retaining, on the other remitting, sins; (Note: John 20:23) but John, too, will teach us: “If any knoweth his brother to be sinning a sin not unto death, he shall request, and life shall be given to him;” because he is not “sinning unto death,” this will be remissible. “(There) is a sin unto death; not for this do I say that any is to request” (Note: 1 John 5:16)—this will be irremissible.”

Under Page 86 (PDF Page 194-195): Chapter XII., Tertullian said, “When first the Gospel thundered and shook the old system to its base, when dispute was being held on the question of retaining or not the Law; this is the first rule which the apostles, on the authority of the Holy Spirit, send out to those who were already beginning to be gathered to their side out of the nations: “It has seemed (good),” say they, “to the Holy Spirit and to us to cast upon you no ampler weight than (that) of those (things) from which it is necessary that abstinence be observed; from sacrifices, and from fornications, and from blood: (Note: Acts 25:28-29) by abstaining from which ye act rightly, the Holy Spirit carrying you.””

He refers to **Acts 15 (KJV):**28 For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; 29 That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.

Tertullian continues, and says, “Sufficient it is, that in this place withal there has been preserved to adultery and fornication the post of their own honour between idolatry and murder: for the interdict upon “blood” we shall understand to be (an interdict) much more upon *human* blood. Well, then, in what light do the apostles will those crimes to appear which alone they select, in the way of careful guarding against, from the pristine Law? which alone they prescribe as necessarily to be abstained from? Not that they permit others; but that these alone they put in

the foremost rank, of course as not remissible; (they,) who, for the heathens' sake, made the other burdens of the law remissible.”

But the apostles and elders in Acts 15 said nothing about sins being “irremissible”. The issue in Acts 15 was whether circumcision was still necessary, as we read in **Acts 15 (KJV):1** And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.

Their decision was that circumcision was not necessary for the Gentiles, and so they said in **Acts 15 (KJV):19** Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: 20 But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.

And fornication, adultery, idolatry, and even murder are indeed remissible, as we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (NASB):9** Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor those habitually drunk, nor verbal abusers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

In the Kingdom of God that we will inherit, there will be no more sexual immorality, idolatry, adultery, homosexuality, thievery, greed, drunkenness, verbal abuse, or swindling. This is because all who inherit the Kingdom of God will be glorified, that is, changed to be immortal in their flesh. The Lord is not saying that if you have committed any of these sins you will not be able to enter the Kingdom of God. He is describing what it will be like in the Kingdom of God for those who will inherit it.

That all sins are remissible is stated in **1 John 1 (KJV):7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

There is a sin unto death, that is physical death, but not spiritual death for a believer. This sin is mentioned in 1 Corinthians 11:27-32.

The Supposed Lapse of Tertullian

In the chapter, **The Five Books Against Marcion, Book III (Volume 3)**, Chapter VIII. Tertullian argues well from the Scriptures. His faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ is very evident here. There is no evidence of a lapse, or a denial of Christ in his writing.

And we read his proof about the bread and the cup in the chapter, **The Five Books Against Marcion, Book IV (Volume 3)**, under Page 417-419 (PDF Page 903-905): “Chapter XL. of his writing against Marcion. And he was correct there, that the bread is a “figure” of the body of Jesus, and as Tertullian has argued correctly, bread could not be a “figure” of a phantom.

Tertullian’s supposed “lapse” was his siding with Montanus, who was promoting the exercise of spiritual gifts, which the early Church had given up. There were problems with the

understanding of Montanus as to how the gifts were to be exercised. And there were problems in part with Tertullian's understanding of Scripture and tradition, as there were also problems in the understanding of Scripture in the early Church in his time.

The canon of Scripture had not been clearly stated until the Easter letter to the churches of Athanasius in 367 A.D. Yet Tertullian quotes almost entirely from the canon of Scripture we have today. And again, there is no evidence of a lapse, or a denial of Christ in any of his writing. Tertullian was part of the early Church, which was growing in grace and knowledge, just as it is today.

The early Church had a ways to go before they found the freedom in Christ, which we read of in **Galatians 5 (NASB):1** It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

There are four rests of the believer in Scripture. There is the rest of salvation, which we read of in **Matthew 11 (KJV):28** Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

There is the rest of service, which we read of in **Matthew 11 (KJV):29** Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

This is the rest of our ministry gift. As each member has been placed by the Lord in His body, each one has a function to perform, according to our own individuality. As we find our place in His body, we find His yoke and rest for our souls.

There is also the rest of the inheritance, which we read of in **Hebrews 4 (NASB):8** For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that. 9 Consequently, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. 10 For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. 11 Therefore let's make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following the same example of disobedience.

As Israel did not enter His rest in the promised land, which was the rest of their inheritance, because they were disobedient, so we can find rest in the "promised land", the rest of our inheritance, as we walk in the light of His word.

Then the fourth rest is the rest of perfection, which we read of **Philippians 3 (KJV):20** For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: 21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

And in **1 John 3 (KJV):2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Remember that Jesus came to give us life, as we read in **John 10 (KJV):10** The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

Tertullian has said something that is very important in understanding how one is to hear. He pointed out that it is with the "hearing of the heart" that Jesus was teaching. Tertullian may not have stood with the mainstream Church in his time. But he understood what was most important, and that is to believe in Jesus Christ from the heart, "For with the heart man

believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation”, as Paul wrote in Romans 10:10.