TERTULLIAN, FIRST THEOLOGIAN OF THE WEST

ERIC OSBORN

Professor Emeritus, Queen's College, University of Melbourne Honorary Professor, La Trobe University, Melbourne



Contents

Ĵ

Preface		page xiii
Note on the text and list of abbreviations		xviii
I	Simplicity and perfection The simple beginning. Intricate apologetic. Divine unicity. Perfection in dishonour: 'Jesus Christ, son of God, saviour'. Problems of recapitulation. Perfection in God.	I
2	The puzzle: Athens and Jerusalem A Four solutions to the puzzle. (i) Psychoanalysis of a puzzled mind. (ii) Cultural history. (iii) Tertullian as philosopher. (iv) Clarity through disjunction. (v) Common ground. B The perfect and the imperfect. (i) The rule of faith. (ii) Summing up all things in Christ. (iii) Discipline of reason. C Finality of Christ as a solution to the puzzle.)
3	The paradox: credible because inept A Irrationalist interpretations. (i) Neurotic fideism. (ii) God-tall and world-talk. (iii) Mystery and reason. B Rationalist interpretations. (i) Improbability and certitude. (ii) Context, scripture and particularity. (iii) Paradox, scripture and syllogism. C Tertullian's argument. (i) Marcion disproved. (ii God's unique transcendence. (iii) Correction through opposites. (iv) Folly and wisdom. (v) Two natures. (vi) Correction as final clue to paradox. D Supporting arguments)
4	Strife of opposites and faith as recognition A The strife of opposites. (i) The balance of justice. (ii) The divine economy. (iii) The triumph of the cross. B Recognizing the well-known God. C Tertullian as apologist. (i) Respect fo Rome. (ii) Selective monotheism.	_

K	Contents	
5	Antithesis in one God: 'Against Marcion' A One good and rational God. (i) Why there is one God. (ii) Why there is one world, a harmony of opposites. (iii) Why the same God creates and redeems. (iv) Why God's goodness must be eternal and rational. (v) Why a good God must be just. B Knowledge, humanity, justice and salvation. (i) How humanity knows God. (ii) How God's goodness is shown in the creation and freedom of mankind. (iii) How divine justice responds to man's sin. (iv) The argument from retrospective indignity. (v) Antitheses in God. C Prophecy fulfilled. (i) Is christology redundant? (ii) Why the father comes first. (iii) Can we make sense of miracles and metaphors? (iv) Why truth demands an incarnation. (v) How prophecies are fulfilled in truth. D The Christ of the creator. (i) On recognizing the true antitheses. (ii) On identifying the gospel. (iii) Against separation: division and detail. (iv) On not being ashamed of the world. E Pauline paradox.	
6	Trinity and christology A Trinity a new faith in one God. (i) Jewish controversy. (ii) Marcion. (iii) Praxeas. B Trinity: the mystery of the economy. (i) The necessity of the economy. (ii) Relative disposition and substantial relation. (iii) Redaction into one, from plurality to unity. (iv) Substance and persons. (v) Criticisms of Tertullian. (vi) Persona. C Christology. (i) Two natures. (ii) A modern postscript.	116
7	Prayer and the bible A Prayer as combat. (i) The New Prayer. (ii) Practice of prayer. B Reading the bible. (i) Concentration in antithesis. (ii) Elaboration. (iii) Uncertain victory. (iv) Alien text.	144
8	Mankind's two natures and a sordid church A Sin as contradiction. (i) One soul, two natures. (ii) Free will and God's indulgence. (iii) Blame. (iv) Penance. B A sordid church. (i) Was Tertullian a schismatic? (ii) Images of the church. (iii) Marks of the church. (iv) Ministry.	163
9	Argument and humour: Hermogenes and the Valentinians	183

A Against Hermogenes. (i) Unicity of God. (ii) Eternal matter. (iii) Eternal evil (Hem. 10–16). (iv) Exegesis of scripture (Hem. 19-32). (v) Contradictory conditions of matter (Herm. 35-40). (vi)

Contents	xi
Contradictory motion of matter (<i>Herm.</i> 41-3). (vii) Comment. B Against the Valentinians. (i) Story and satire. (ii) The duty of derision: 'risus officium est'. (iii) Logic, coherence and aesthetic. (iv) Recapitulation as the great inversion.	`
Promise of laughter, judgement of hell: apocalyse and system A Montanism. B Apocalyptic exuberance. C Apocalyptic system.	209
A Love and fear. (i) Love as ultimate command and Christian perfection. (ii) Love replaced by fear and hope? (iii) From fear to obedience and love. B Denial and affirmation of the world. (i): World-denial: martyrdom, virginity, modesty, fasting. (ii) World-affirmation: loyalty to creator, marriage made in heaven, finality of the flesh. C Natural law and apocalypse. (i) Natural law: conscience, law and nature, discipline. (ii) Apocalypse: renewal of lost image, last Adam, idolatry as reversal of assimilation, end and beginning.	225
Conclusion	
Select bibliography Subject index Citations from Tertullian Citations from the Bible	

283