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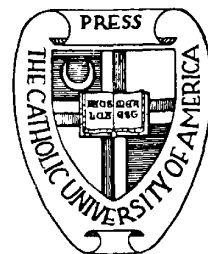
TERTULLIAN
APOLOGETICAL WORKS
AND
MINUCIUS FELIX
OCTAVIUS

Translated by

RUDOLPH ARBESMANN, O.S.A.

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TERTULLIAN
ON THE SOUL

Translated

by

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Fordham University

IMPRIMI POTEST

JOHN J. McMAHON, S. J.
Provincial

New York
March 3, 1950

INTRODUCTION

TERTULLIAN'S TREATISE *On the Soul* is the first work in the long series of Christian contributions to psychology. In entering this field, however, the most learned personality of the early Church was not deserting his dual function as apologist for Christianity against the pagans and as staunch defender of the apostolic faith against the machinations of heretics. He had written a work, *On the Origin of the Soul* (which has not survived), against the materialist Hermogenes, and in the present treatise he turns to a complete treatment of the other matters in which philosophical speculation about the soul impinged upon the teaching of Revelation.¹

His reason for undertaking this task is made clear from the outset. The defense of Christian teaching against the heretics is best furthered by attacking the basis of heresy—the errors of philosophy—for ‘The philosophers are the patriarchs of the heretics.’ Consequently, we should not look to Tertullian primarily for philosophical speculation, which was hardly the dominant characteristic of his mind. His vast erudition in the fields of ancient philosophy, religion and physiology are here forged into arms for the defense of divine Truth. Tertullian is composing the theological answer to pagan and heretical teachings on the soul rather than constructing a system of Christian psychology. He makes use of

¹ The translator was fortunate in being able to use the excellent edition of J. H. Waszink, *Quinti Septimi Florentis Tertulliani De Anima* (Amsterdam 1947) X 49* 651.

ancient philosophy, sometimes to agree with it, but generally to condemn its teaching and always to compare it with what God has revealed about His masterpiece of earthly creation, the soul of man.

After an introduction in which he describes the faulty methods of the philosophers and warns against the dangers of their teaching,² he analyzes the questions that arise as to the qualities of the soul. Against Plato, who held the eternity of the soul, actuated from time to time in different incarnations, he declares that it had a beginning in time, its origin being in the breath of God.³ He then joins the Stoics in asserting the fact that the soul is corporeal, against Plato who held that it was incorporeal, and fortifies his view from the parable of Lazarus and Dives, which, he insists, must be understood literally. It is clear from Tertullian's extended treatment of this point that he cannot conceive of a spiritual entity and he fears that an admission of incorporeality may endanger the substantial reality of the soul. To be sure, he insists that the soul is a body, but a body of a peculiar kind, and one that will, of its very nature, lack many of the attributes of a material body. Thus, in spite of its invisibility, it is still corporeal.⁴

Because of his assertion of corporeality, Tertullian is forced to say that the soul has a definite shape—the same as that of the contours of the body. In support of this he adduces a vision enjoyed by a woman of the Montanist sect who had 'seen' a human soul, together with the account in Genesis⁵ of the divine inbreathing of the soul of Adam.⁶

The unity of the soul next engages his attention, and he

² Chs. 1-3.

³ Ch. 4.

⁴ Chs. 5-8.

⁵ Gen. 2.7.

⁶ Ch. 9.

must oppose the view of some early anatomists who believed that life could exist (and did, in small insects) without breathing. Thus he asserts the identity of life, breath and the soul. The mind, again, is identical with the soul, intelligence being its second function, after that of giving life to man. Finally, he denies the various divisions of the soul into parts excogitated by philosophers and claims the activities of the soul are merely functions exercised throughout the parts of the body by the soul diffused through the whole.⁷

Allied to the question of the unity of the soul are a number of points concerned with its activity. Thus, the soul has its principle directive faculty seated in the heart; the irrational element of which Plato spoke is not a part of the soul, but arose from sin as a result of the temptation of the Devil and the consequent effects of Original Sin.⁸ He asserts the infallibility of sense perception, except when other factors impede the senses in their normal function. These senses, together with the mind, are the soul's source of knowledge.⁹ The life and development of the soul begins from the moment of conception and, while the essential nature of the soul is identical with the soul of Adam, all changes are due to external circumstances.¹⁰

The second part of the work treats of the origin of the soul, beginning with a refutation of Plato's doctrine of 'reminiscence'¹¹ and the assertion that the embryo is a living being and that body and soul come into being at the same time.¹² There follows a digression, in which all the resources of Tertullian's irony are called into play, attacking the Pythagorean and Platonic theory of transmigration of soul.¹³ The sex of the

7 Chs. 10-14.

8 Chs. 15-16.

9 Chs. 17-18.

10 Chs. 19-21.

11 Chs. 23-24.

12 Chs. 25-27.

13 Chs. 28-35.

soul and its development up to the time of birth conclude this section.¹⁴

The concluding portion of the work deals with the topics which were most important for Tertullian's main purpose: the growth of the soul along with the body, his curious notion of an age of puberty for the soul as well as for the body, and the influence of sin on the soul. The attacks of the Devil upon the soul begin at birth and continue through life, and Original Sin is removed by Baptism.¹⁵ The questions of sleep and dreams were of great interest to Tertullian, who, now in his Montanist period, looked to the influence of 'ecstasy' as a means of divine communication with the soul.¹⁶

The philosophic and heretical views of death are next dealt with and it is declared to be the permanent separation of soul and body.¹⁷ The final topic, the fate of the soul after death, strongly reflects Tertullian's millenarian views when he declares that only the souls of martyrs go immediately to Heaven, all others being detained in Hell until the resurrection, for reward or punishment in accordance with their deeds. Without using the word, Tertullian is here describing the state of Purgatory; the final punishment or reward of the soul must await the resurrection of the body, its companion in sin or virtue.¹⁸

At every step of the way, Tertullian has stated and analyzed the views of the philosophers and pagans, and his work would have been an arsenal of argument for subsequent Christian writers. The learning, both divine and human, manifested in the treatise give credence to the fulsome praise accorded

14 Chs. 36-37.

15 Chs. 38-41.

16 Chs. 42-49.

17 Chs. 50-53.

18 Chs. 54-58.

him by Vincent of Lerins and St. Jerome.¹⁹ Such praise is surely the more deserved when we realize that those who laud his gifts must bemoan the tragedy that led so brilliant a mind into the heresy of Montanism.

The main source for the origins of Montanism is Eusebius,²⁰ who tells of the disturbance of the Church in Asia Minor caused by the alleged prophecies of Montanus and his associates, Priscilla and Maximilla. The essential point of this movement was the reliance on personal *charismata* of prophecy as a guide for the government of the Church. Eusebius considered them agents of the Devil for the perversion of truth. Their 'new prophecy' had the faithful in a turmoil for a time, but the movement, after a brief appearance in Rome, where it was immediately condemned, seems to have faded away. In some fashion not ascertainable, it moved into North Africa, and at Carthage Tertullian became acquainted in great detail with its teaching and practices.

Tertullian is thenceforward the source of our information as to the ideas of Montanism and it is not clear how much of this development was the result of his own additions to the curiously undogmatic heresy from the East.²¹ For it appears to have adhered strictly to traditional teaching with the exception of a belief in an early end of this life, which

19 Vincent of Lerins, *Commonitorium*: 24: 'There is no one more learned than this man, none better informed in all human and divine sciences. He is at home in philosophy; he knows all the philosophic schools and their founders; by the amazing breadth of his mind he was able to encompass all the variety of the arts and human history.' St. Jerome, *Epistola* 70.5: 'When we turn to those who wrote in Latin, there is no man more learned or more effective than Tertullian. His *Apology* and his work, *Against the Pagans*, contain all the learning of the ancient world.'

20 *Ecclesiastical History*, trans. K. Lake, 2v. (Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, Mass. 1926) 5.14.19.

21 Cf. the works of Labriolle, listed in Select Bibliography.

would be followed by the resurrection of the just and the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth. This Millenarianism was a survival of the materialistic Jewish ideas as to an earthly Messiah-King and it had affected a certain number of Christians until it was attacked by Origen and effectively destroyed by St. Augustine.

The influence of Montanist ideas is to be found in the works of Tertullian for some years before he made his formal break with the Church. Thus, he shows a belief in Millenarianism, an increasing severity in his moral teaching such as the condemnation of second marriages, and a denial to the Church of the power of forgiving the sins of murder, fornication and idolatry. He obviously became persuaded of the truth of Montanist 'oracles' and, on this point, according to St. Augustine, lapsed into formal heresy. He envisaged God's dealing with mankind in successive stages of clearer revelation. 'The Old Law was born in the reign of fear, mankind passed its infancy under the direction of the Law and the Prophets, the Gospel brought it to the bloom of youth until finally, in the reign of the Paraclete, it came full maturity.'²² In discussing his condemnation of second marriages, he asks: 'If Christ could change what had been permitted by the Law of Moses' [divorce for adultery] 'why cannot the Paraclete deny the concession allowed by St. Paul?''²³

From St. Augustine we know that Tertullian was at first opposed to Montanism, and it is a fascinating problem to consider how a man of his learning and training could have been attracted to a movement so contrary to his type of mind and the principles on which his early work was based.

Many things about Montanism should have repelled him.

²² *De virginibus velandis* 1.

²³ *De monogamia* 14.

Even in his treatise *On the Soul* (when he was strongly under Montanist influence) he shows scant respect for Phrygians.²⁴ The high position in the sect accorded to women would also have gone against the grain but the strongest deterrent would surely lie in the anarchical tendency of Montanism. The methodical and legal mind of Tertullian clearly shows his predilection for orderly organization with a clear delineation of the lines of authority. The rule of faith was for him all-important and his main point in his controversy with the heretic Marcion is the succession and fidelity to apostolic teaching.²⁵ The mind must accept the Church's teaching and strict discipline will act as a curb on the will. How such a mind could have embraced Montanism, in which teaching and discipline were liable to daily variation on the strength of the latest 'oracle,' is one of the psychological mysteries on which his *On the Soul* throws no light.

On the other hand, certain features of Montanism would have been attractive to Tertullian. His moral teaching always leaned to the rigoristic side, and Montanist stress on mortification and martyrdom as a preparation for the proximate Second Coming of Christ would have appealed to him. He surely disliked vague and general moral prescriptions, preferring a clear and definite statement of obligation to any apparent compromise with human weakness. On the word of the Paraclete, he made obligatory for all what had been matters of devotion in the question of fasting. Early in his career he condoned the weakness of the counsel of prudent flight in the face of persecution, but later he condemned it as a refusal of the grace of martyrdom.²⁶ Christ may have allowed the Apostles to escape, but that permission had been

24 Ch. 20.3.

25 *De pudicitia* 21.

26 *De fuga* 1, 9, 11, 14.

abrogated by the Paraclete. In the years 200-203 he would allow remarriage of a widow, but considered it more perfect to remain unmarried.²⁷ At his first exposure to Montanism he recanted and later went so far as to say that as there was only one God, there could only be one marriage.²⁸ Life was simpler for Tertullian when peremptory command made nicety of moral judgment unnecessary. This desire that the practical conduct of life should ever be determined by definite rules was fostered by the promise, implicit in Montanism, of continual guidance and direction by the Spirit. The 'living voice' of apostolic teaching soon appeared defective and he gave an enthusiastic welcome to the sect that promised ever more explicit revelation in practical matters. With the over-emphasis on one consideration to the neglect of others so typical of all heresy, he made St. Paul's mention²⁹ of the *charismata* of prophecy the touchstone of all truth and discipline.

Furthermore, it is clear from all of Tertullian's writings that he had held none of his opinions lightly. His polemical works against pagans and heretics all manifest a violent and passionate temperament. The more his opinions were opposed, the more he had to win the argument; pride finally overcame judgment. The staunch defender of the *magisterium* founded by Christ became the preacher of a doctrine that would supersede the teaching of the Master whom Tertullian undoubtedly loved and revered after his fashion, even to the end of his unhappy life.

27 *Ad uxorem* 1.7.

28 *De monogamia* 1.

29 1 Cor. 14.

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ON THE SOUL

Chapter 1

IN MY DISCUSSION with Hermogenes concerning the nature of the soul, I deliberately restricted myself to the single point of its origin, in as much as he assumed this origin to be a result of an emanation from matter rather than of the divine inbreathing.¹ Now we may turn to some other related questions in which I feel sure I shall have to contend with the philosophers.

(2) Even in the prison cell of Socrates² they skirmished as to the immortality of the soul. I am not sure that was quite the best moment for an official statement of the master's opinion, though the fact the discussion took place in jail is not the important one. For, how could Socrates have a clear perception of anything at such a time? The sacred ship had returned from Delos; by his formal condemnation he had, in anticipation, already drained the cup of poison; he stood on the brink of death. Obviously, any natural emotion would have terrified him in such circumstances, and any unnatural reaction

¹ This cannot refer to the extant treatise *Against Hermogenes* since the origin of the soul is not discussed therein. Tertullian is here alluding to his (lost) work *On the Origin of the Soul against Hermogenes*, knowledge of which is assumed throughout the *De anima*. He refers to it nine times, often curtailing his treatment of important topics (e.g., the immortality of the soul, *De anima* 22.2; 24.2) because he had established them in the earlier treatise. Hermogenes came from the East and settled in Carthage as a painter where he came to the attention of Tertullian. Hermogenes believed in the eternity of matter and hence denied Creation out of nothing. Cf. Waszink, *op. cit.* 7*-14*.

² Tertullian here attacks Socrates as the leader of all the philosophers, whose main defect is that they have examined the soul without the help of divine Revelation. Elsewhere, he expresses agreement and admiration for Socrates and his pupil and spokesman, Plato.

would have left him entirely beside himself. Even though he were calm and peaceful, totally unshaken, either by the tears of his wife, soon to be a widow, or by the sight of his children, forthwith to be orphans, and so rose superior to affection's claims, he yet would be disturbed in mind by the effort to maintain his composure; this composure, in turn, would have been ruffled by the struggle he made to overcome his natural trepidation in such a situation. No man, thus unjustly condemned, could bring himself to think calmly of anything but what would console him in his misfortune. Much less could the philosopher who lives for glory, and, in trouble, must not seek consolation for the injustice he suffers, but rather must show contempt for it.

(3) So, when Socrates had been sentenced and his wife came to him crying that he had been unjustly condemned, he seemed almost cheerful as he asked her: 'Would it have been all right had I been justly condemned?' Therefore, it is not surprising that even in prison he tried to take some of the glory from the discreditable victory of Anytus and Melitus by thus asserting the immortality of the soul. For, in that way, he could set at naught the wrong they had perpetrated.

(4) The result is that, at that moment, all the famous wisdom of Socrates was more concerned with maintaining an outward appearance of equanimity than of asserting his conviction of solemn truth. For, who can know truth without the help of God? Who can know God without Christ? Who has ever discovered Christ without the Holy Spirit? And who has ever received the Holy Spirit without the gift of faith? Socrates, as we know, surely was guided by a far different spirit. He claimed that he had been directed from his youth by a *daimon*—the worst kind of teacher surely—in spite of the fact that the poets and philosophers speak of such as though they were gods or very close to gods.

(5) But, at that time the power of Christian teaching was not yet known. Christian truth alone can give the lie to this most dangerous and pernicious devil, the father of all falsehood and the destroyer of all truth. Now, if the voice of the demon who spoke from the Pythian shrine (thus conveniently promoting the work of his colleague)³ proclaimed him the wisest of all men, how much more admirable and trustworthy is the voice of Christian wisdom before whose breath the whole host of demons is scattered!

(6) The wisdom of the school of Heaven calmly denies the existence of the gods of this world and is never caught in the inconsistency of offering a cock to Aesculapius.⁴ Christian wisdom invents no new gods, but destroys the old; it never corrupts the youth, but trains them in goodness and purity. Therefore, it stands condemned not merely in one city but in all the world and in the cause of truth; it incurs the greater hatred in proportion to the fullness of the wisdom it cherishes. Hence, it does not die by emptying a cup in convivial fashion, but it perishes on the cross, by being burned alive or by whatever other horror human ingenuity can devise. And so, when there is question of examining the soul here in the dungeon of this world (far darker than the prison where Socrates met with Cebes and Phaedo), let us study the question in accordance with the teachings of God, sure that no one can tell us more of the soul than its Creator. Learn from God about that which you have received from God; if you don't learn it from God, you never will from anyone else. For, who can reveal what God has concealed? Whom would we ask? If we are ignorant, let us be content. It is safer and

³ The personal *daimon* of Socrates.

⁴ At the end of Plato's *Phaedo*, after a discussion of the immortality of the soul which took place on the day of Socrates' death, Socrates takes the poison and asks one of his friends to pay in his name the debt of a cock to the god, Aesculapius.

better to be ignorant, if God has not revealed it, than to know something which human presumption has discovered.

Chapter 2

(1) Of course, I would not deny that the philosophers occasionally happen upon the truth;¹ the very fact that they do testifies to the truth itself. Sometimes in the midst of a storm when the sailor can't tell sea from sky, by sheer luck the ship will sail into a safe harbor. At night by blind chance we will often find the right door in the dark. Most of our ideas about nature, however, are suggested by a kind of common sense with which God has endowed the soul of man.

(2) This good sense has been appropriated by philosophers and, with a view to enhancing that glory of their own profession, they have blown it up to great size (in the context, the expression comes to me quite naturally), straining after that subtlety of expression which is more adapted to tearing down than to building anything up and which is cleverer at persuading men by talking than by teaching. Philosophy invents general laws for things and declares some universally applicable and some only partially so. She makes incertainties out of certainties, appeals to examples, as if all things could be compared; she defines anything, allotting different properties to the same objects; she grants nothing to divine power and treats her own private theories as if they were laws of nature. All this I could tolerate if only philos-

¹ Philosophers sometimes attain truth by pure chance, by using common sense which is a gift of God. They also use certain so-called sacred books, apocryphal books (not acknowledged as part of the canon of Sacred Scripture) and, occasionally, portions of the Old Testament, which they either falsified or wrongly applied. Hence, they cannot arrive at the truth.

ophy were faithful to nature and would admit that it sprang from the same source.

(3) Philosophy imagines that she draws her wisdom from sacred books because in ancient times they thought all writers were gods, or at least somehow divine. For instance, Plato followed closely the teachings of Egyptian Mercury [Hermes]; in Phrygia they honored Silenus, to whom Midas gave his long ears when the shepherds brought him to the god; Clazomenians built a temple to Hermodimus after his death; and they had the same attitude toward Orpheus, Musaeus and Pherecydes the teacher of Pythagoras. Why, the philosophers have even adopted the teachings of those works which we condemn as spurious. For we know these works are not to be accepted unless they agree with the true system of prophecy which has arisen in our times.² We never forget that there have been false prophets, yes, and fallen angels, too, who have taught the whole world by this same kind of deceitful cleverness.

(4) I suppose it is conceivable that some ancient searcher for wisdom might, out of honest curiosity, have consulted the writings of the Prophets. But among the philosophers you will certainly find more discord than harmony in their doctrines. In fact, in their points of agreement they betray the discord between the various schools. When you find in their works something true and in accord with the teaching of the Prophets, they claim it was obtained from some other source or they twist it in some other fashion, thus perverting the original truth which they pretend is bolstered by falsehood or itself supports what is not true.

(5) One of the principal points of difference between philosophers and ourselves in this matter is that they frequently

² The teaching on Montanus, founder of the Phrygian sect of the Montanists.

clothe sentiments that are common to both of us in arguments they have themselves invented, which are in some respects contrary to our teaching. In other cases, to prove their own views they will use arguments which both of us admit to be valid but which are more allied to their opinions. The result is that truth is not to be found among the philosophers because of the poison with which they have infected it. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to free ourselves from agreement with the philosophers under both of these specious appearances which are ultimately destructive of truth. Hence, we must separate the points on which we agree from the arguments of the philosophers and the arguments which both accept from their erroneous conclusions. To this end we must submit all questions to God's teachings, with the clear exception of those obvious points which we can accept as plain truth without committing ourselves to a favorable judgment on philosophy in general. For, in such cases, we may accept proof from our opponents when to do so will be useful to such as are not our enemies.

(6) Now, I am quite aware that the philosophers have gathered a vast mass of material on the soul in their own treatises. There are all sorts of opinions on the soul, many sharp disagreements, countless questions are asked and all kinds of intricate solutions are offered. Besides, I have also studied the sister-science to philosophy, medicine, which claims through its ability to cure the body a special competence as to the doctrine on the soul. This causes a disagreement between philosophy and medicine, for the latter claims to know more because it deals with the habitation of the soul. But, let them settle their own quarrel as to which is the greater. In pursuing their researches in the soul, philosophy has exercised the full scope of her genius, while medicine has been restricted

to the techniques of that profession. Probabilities leave a broad field for speculation and one can argue forever about possibilities. The harder it is to prove something, the more difficult it is to persuade a man of your view. Hence, I am not surprised that the gloomy old Heraclitus became bored with their interminable questions when he saw how little light they shed on the subject. He told the philosophers: 'You'll never explore the furthest reaches of the soul, no matter how many roads you travel.'

(7) The Christian, however, can plumb the depths of this topic with the aid of a few simple words. Things that are absolutely certain are always simply explained and his investigations should go no further than we are permitted. The Apostle has forbidden us to indulge in endless questions. We can learn no more about the soul than God has revealed and His revelation is the sum and substance of the whole matter.

Chapter 3

(1) I have often wished that the clarification of approved doctrines did not, in a sense, demand the existence of heresies. For we thus would have no need of arguments about the soul with the philosophers, those patriarchs of the heretics.¹ Even in the time of the Apostles, St. Paul foresaw there would be trouble between philosophy and the truth. He felt it necessary to issue that warning after he had visited Athens, that city of

¹ Tertullian's purpose in this treatise was to combat heretics; by refuting the philosophers, the ultimate teachers of heresy, he could destroy the basis of any heretical teaching on the soul. Thus, Tertullian wrote a treatise (not extant) on the origin and essence of the soul against Hermogenes, who taught that matter was eternal and creation impossible. Certain ideas of Aristotle and Plato may have influenced his thought. Cf. Waszink, *op. cit.* 9*-14*.

babblers, with its horde of hucksters of 'wisdom' and 'eloquence.'²

(2) The doctrines about the soul concocted by these pseudo-philosophers remind me of men who mix water with wine. Some of them deny the immortality of the soul, while others claim it is even more than immortal. They argue about its substance, its form, or its individual faculties. They hold various views as to its origin and they disagree as to its ultimate fate. I think their views stem from the characters of their leaders. Thus, they speak of the idealism of Plato, the vigor of Zeno, the calmness of Aristotle, the pessimism of Epicurus, the sadness of Heraclitus, the madness of Empedocles.

(3) It's too bad, I suppose, that the Law has come forth from Sion and not from Greece. It is regrettable, too, that Christ chose fisherman instead of sophists to preach His doctrine. The philosophers with their vaporings becloud the clear sky of truth. These must Christians disperse, scattering the teachings of the philosophers about the origin of things by using the heavenly teachings of the Lord. Thus, the doctrines by which the pagans are deceived and the faith of Christians weakened will be destroyed.

(4) As we said at the beginning, we established one point in our discussion with Hermogenes—that the soul has its origin in the 'breath' of God and did not come from matter. We base that statement on the clear assertion of divine Revelation, which declares that 'God breathed the breath of life into the face of man and man became a living soul.'³ On the origin of the soul, then, there is no further need of discussion.

² Cf. Acts. 17.16-34, for St. Paul's address to the Athenians. Col. 2.8: 'See to it that no one deceives you by philosophy and vain deceit, according to human traditions, according to the elements of the world and not according to Christ.'

³ Gen. 2.7.

There is a treatise on that and there is a heretic who denies it. Let that be the introduction to my other ideas on the subject.

Chapter 4

(1) Now that we have decided on the origin of the soul, the next question is as to its nature. When we say that it has its own origin in the breath of God, we obviously hold that the soul had a beginning. Plato denies this, since he believes it to be unborn and uncreated.¹ Since it had a beginning, we teach that it was born and made. In this we make no mistake, either, for there is a distinction between being born and being made, and the former term we generally apply to living things. Though such distinctions sometimes indicate that things are mutually exclusive, they may also hint at a certain similarity of meaning. Thus, when we say that something is 'made' we mean that it is 'brought forth,' for anything that receives being in any sense can be said to be generated. Obviously, the maker of anything can be referred to as its parent, and even Plato uses this terminology.² So, our faith tells us that souls are made or born. Besides, Plato's opinion is contradicted by Revelation.³

Chapter 5

(1) If we were to question Eubulus on this matter, and Critolaus, Xenocrates, and Aristotle, who here happens to agree with Plato, we might be inclined to deny that the soul is in any sense corporeal, forgetting that a considerable number of philosophers believe the soul to be a body.

¹ *Phaedrus* 245D.

² *Timaeus* 28C.

³ I.e., his opinion that the soul is eternal.

(2) And, I am not speaking of those who say that it is made of things obviously material as do Hipparchus and Heraclitus [Fire], Hippo and Thales [Water], Empedocles and Critias [Blood], and Epicurus [Atoms] (*if* [sic.] as a matter of fact atoms do form bodies by their unions), or Critolaus and his Peripatetics who say it is made of some fifth substance, if that is necessarily a body which includes corporeal substances. It is the Stoics¹ I am speaking of, who will easily prove that the soul is a body, even though they almost agree with us in saying that the soul is a spirit; for spirit and breath are very nearly the same thing.

(3) Zeno, defining the soul as a spirit that is generated with the body, argues in the following fashion. Anything that by its departure causes a living being to die is a body. But, on the departure of this spirit which is generated with the body, the living being dies. Therefore, this spirit which is generated with the body is a body. But, this spirit of which we speak is the soul. Hence, we must conclude that the soul is corporeal.

(4) In much the same way, Cleanthes believed that just as there are bodily resemblances between parents and their children, so also qualities of soul are directly transmitted from the souls of the parents. Thus, he holds that both soul and body of the child would be the reflection of the individual manners, characteristics, and qualities of the bodies and souls of each of the parents.

¹ Tertullian's insistence that the soul is a *body* is understandable in view of his early position in the development of philosophical terminology. In his view, *body* is equivalent to *substance*, and the only way in which he could defend the substantiality of the soul was to call it a body. For, unless it were a *body*, it would be *nothing*. Cf. *On the Flesh of Christ* 11; *Against Hermogenes* 35; *On the Soul* 7.3. His general principle, 'Everything that is, is in some fashion, a body,' is to be understood in this sense. In this he was strongly influenced by Stoicism. Cf. A. d'Alès, *La Théologie de Tertullien* (Paris 1905) 137, and G. Esser, *Die Seelenlehre Tertullians* (Paderborn 1893) 65f.; 111f.

(5) But it is as being corporeal that the soul can be called like or unlike, since corporeal and incorporeal things do not share the same characteristics. Further, the soul shares the pain of the body when the latter suffers from bruises, wounds, or sores, and the body will reflect the disabilities of the soul under the influence of anxiety, worry, or love by a parallel weakness, as when the body testifies to the presence of shame and fear in the soul by blushing or growing pale. This mutual influence, then, proves the soul to be corporeal.

(6) Chrysippus agrees with Cleanthes when he declares that it is impossible for corporeal things to be separated from incorporeal substances because there is no medium of contact between them. For, as Lucretius says: 'Nothing can touch or be touched unless it be a body.'² As a matter of fact, when body and soul are separated, a man dies. Hence, we see that the soul is corporeal; unless it were, it could not be separated from the body.

Chapter 6

(1) There is more subtlety than truth in Plato's attempt to refute this position. All bodies, he says, are either living or non-living. If they be non-living, they receive motion from without, while living bodies have an intrinsic principle of activity.¹ Now, the soul is not moved from without since it is living, nor from within, since the soul itself is the cause of the movement of the body. Hence, it would appear not to be a body, since its motion is not governed by the laws of bodily motion.

(2) Our first stricture on this argument is the incongruity

² Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* 1.305.

¹ *Phaedrus* 245E.

of a definition which is drawn from things which have no relation to the soul. Why does he say that the soul is either a living or a non-living thing when, as a matter of fact, a man's body is said to be living or dead because of the presence or absence of the soul? That which produces an effect cannot be said to be that effect in such a way that you could say it is *either* living *or* non-living. The soul is so called by virtue of its substance. If, then, the soul cannot be spoken of as either a living or a non-living substance, why reduce it to categories which embrace living and non-living things?

(3) Let us admit for the sake of argument that it is a law of bodies that they are moved from without. Have we not shown in another work² that the soul is moved by another in prophecy and madness and, therefore, from without? It is clear according to my major premise, then, that I must assert the soul to be corporeal. Now, if it be a law of bodies that they receive motion from without, it is to a greater extent their characteristic to move others. The soul moves the body and the effect of its influence appears externally. For, it is the soul which moves the feet in walking, the hands in touching, the eyes in seeing, and the tongue in speaking, as a sort of internal image which moves within and stirs the surface. How could an incorporeal soul have this power to move solid bodies if it were itself incorporeal?

(4) How would you say the corporeal and intellectual powers of sensation are divided in man? The Platonists³ tell us that physical substances such as earth and fire are perceived by the bodily senses of touch and sight, while immaterial things such as kindness or meanness are apprehended by the intellectual powers. Therefore, they conclude that the soul is in-

² Probably in the lost treatise on the origin of the soul written against Hermogenes.

³ Cf. *Phaedo* 79A.

corporeal since its properties are perceived by the intellectual and not by the bodily senses.

(5) All this would be fine, except that I shall now upset the basis of their argument. For, you see, incorporeal objects *can* be perceived by the bodily senses: thus, sound by the hearing, color by the sight, odors by the sense of smell, in all of which cases the soul has contact with the body. Note that I am not saying that these things are perceived by bodily senses because they have physical contact with material things. Since, as we see, incorporeal things are perceived by corporeal organs, what is to prevent the soul which is corporeal from being understood by incorporeal faculties? Thus, surely, is their argument refuted.

(6) Another one of their favorite arguments goes like this: All bodies are nourished by bodies, but the incorporeal soul by incorporeal things such as the study of wisdom. But, even this argument will not stand up, since we are told by Soranus,⁴ a learned medical authority, that material food also benefits the soul and when in a state of weakness it is frequently refreshed by food. Naturally, since if it is deprived of all food, it departs from the body. This same Soranus has written four volumes of exhaustive commentary on the soul and he has examined all the theories of the philosophers, too, though in the process of establishing the corporeality of the soul he has robbed it of its immortality. Unfortunately, it is not granted to all men to believe the truth which Christians hold.

(7) Therefore, just as Soranus has adduced facts to prove

⁴ Soranus, a Greek physician of the early second century A.D., wrote four books on the soul, in which he quoted from the works of Plato, Aristotle, Chrysippus, and Heraclides of Pontus. He was keenly interested in the history of medicine and in etymology. Much of Tertullian's information about medical matters and ancient Greek religion is apparently borrowed from Soranus.

that the soul is fed with material food, let Plato bring forward the same kind of argument to prove it is fed with incorporeal substances. But no one has ever injected into the soul that was hesitating on the brink of death some honeyed drops of Platonic eloquence or stuffed it with crumbs of Aristotelian subtlety. How do the souls of all those hardy barbarians manage to live? They have never been privileged to drink of the fountains of wisdom, and yet, while uneducated, they show very good sense. Poor ignorant fellows, they have never strolled in the Academic gardens or Stoic porches nor have they ever visited the prison of Socrates. In a word, though philosophy forms no part of their diet, they still manage to live. For, the substance of the soul is not increased by intellectual discipline, but it is rendered more cultivated. Learning will not add to the soul's girth, but only to its embellishment. I like the Stoic opinion that the arts, too, are corporeal; if they are right, then the soul would receive corporeal nourishment from wisdom and that would be a proof that the soul was corporeal.

(8) But the philosophers are so marvelously abstracted in their speculations that they can't see what is in front of them. You recall the story of Thales, who fell into the well. It often happens that, through a misunderstanding of their own doctrines, they suspect a failure of their own health; that was the trouble with Chrysippus when he took hellebore. Some such hallucination, I imagine, must have occurred to Plato when he asserted that two bodies could not be contained in one. Apparently, he was forgetting that pregnant women quite often carry not only one, but two or three bodies within the confines of one womb. In the records of civil law, there is the case of the Greek woman who bore quintuplets at one birth. Clearly, she was the mother and parent of the whole brood, all of a single brood, and thus she bore within

herself this numerous progeny—I almost said ‘race’—and she herself was the sixth.

(9) Nature in general testifies that bodies destined to be born from other bodies are already contained in the one from which they are delivered. That which in any way proceeds from another is distinct from the first. Nothing, however, proceeds from another except by generation and the result of such a process is always two beings.

Chapter 7

(1) Let that suffice for the philosophers, since we have plenty of evidence from our own side. The corporeal nature of the soul is asserted all through the Scriptures. A soul is said to suffer in Hell; it is punished in the flames, its tongue is so parched that it begs from a more fortunate soul the comfort of a drop of cold water.

(2) Don’t tell me that the story of the joy of Lazarus and the torments of Dives is merely a parable.¹ Why was the name of Lazarus mentioned if the story were not true? But, even if we are to take it all as imaginary, it still proves my position. For, unless the soul really were corporeal, bodily qualities would not be attributed to the soul, nor would Scripture make up a statement about parts of the body if they did not exist in Hell.

(3) Tell me: What goes to Hell after the separation of soul and body? What is imprisoned there till the Day of Judgment? To what did Christ go after His death on the Cross? To the souls of the patriarchs? Well, why all this, if

¹ Tertullian to the contrary, the story of Lazarus and Dives was not intended to be taken literally; cf. *Luke* 16.20-31. Tertullian assumes that the use of the name ‘Lazarus’ must refer to the brother of Mary and Martha, although nothing in the Gospel would lead us to suspect that he was a beggar.

in Hell souls are *nothing*? For, they certainly are *nothing* if they have no bodily substance. An incorporeal thing cannot be guarded in any way and it is incapable of punishment or refreshment. Anything that can undergo punishment or reward must be a body. But I'll deal with that more fully at the proper time.

(4) For the present, we may say that whatever torment or comfort the soul experiences in its prison or temporary lodging in the lower regions, whether in the fire or resting in the bosom of Abraham, it all proves that the soul is corporeal. An incorporeal thing can't suffer, since it hasn't got that which would make it capable of suffering. If it has, it's a body. Now, if anything corporeal is thereby capable of suffering, it follows that anything capable of suffering must necessarily be corporeal.

Chapter 8

(1) Besides, it is an altogether foolish procedure to deny that a thing is corporeal because it is not exactly like all other corporeal things. And, when we find something with a great variety of special natures, isn't that really a sign of the omnipotence of the Creator that He can thus combine like and unlike in such friendly rivalry? The philosophers themselves teach us that the universe is made up of a system of harmonious opposites, according to Empedocles' doctrine of strife and love.

(2) So, although corporeal things are opposed to the incorporeal, yet the former differ among themselves in such fashion as to broaden the extension of the species without at all changing the genus, all remaining corporeal. Their very variety enhances the glory of God. They vary because of their differences; they differ according to their varying

modes of perception; they have different foods; some are visible, others invisible, some light, some heavy.¹

(3) The philosophers would tell us that a body from which the soul has departed is heavier than it was before and thence they conclude that the soul must be incorporeal. And, if the soul were corporeal, then a corpse should be lighter than before, since presumably it has lost the weight of something corporeal. In answer to this, Soranus says that we might as well conclude that the sea is incorporeal since a ship out of water is a heavy and motionless hulk. In fact, is not the corporeal essence of the soul all the stronger since with the slightest effort it is able to move the great bulk of the body?

(4) The fact that the soul is invisible flows from the nature of its corporeal substance and is determined by its own nature. Besides, of its very nature it is destined to be invisible to certain things. Owls cannot endure the light of the sun whereas eagles are so capable of gazing at its light that the parent eagle judges the nobility of its young by the way in which the eaglet stares at the sun. An eaglet that turns its eyes away from the sun is cast from the nest as unfit to live, unworthy of its parents.

(5) And so, an object may be invisible to one being and quite clearly seen by another without any prejudice to the corporeality of the object itself which is seen by one and not by the other. The sun in a bodily substance, being made of fire; the eagle gazes at it steadily but it is invisible to the owl, but the owl does not deny the object seen by the eagle. In such fashion, the bodily substance of the soul may generally be invisible to the eye of flesh, but it is clearly perceived by the

¹ From this chapter it is clear that Tertullian is trying to describe a corporeal soul that is different from ordinary material things.

spirit. Thus St. John ‘in the spirit’² saw ‘the souls of them that were slain for the word of God.’³

Chapter 9

(1) Now, when we assert that the soul is a body of a unique and peculiar kind, this fact will give us a hint as to the other normal accidents of bodies which will be found in the soul. If they are present in the soul they will be there after the fashion of its specific corporeality; if they are not, that also will be due to the soul’s peculiar corporeality, that it does not possess all the conventional accidents that we normally find in bodies. And yet, I have no hesitation in asserting that the soul possesses the cardinal attributes of bodies such as external form and definite boundaries; these boundaries we express in terms of triple extension of length, breadth and height by which the philosophers measure all bodies.

(2) Suppose we thus say that the soul has a definite shape. Plato refused to admit this lest he endanger the immortality of the soul. His argument goes like this: Everything that has a definite shape is made up of parts fitted together. Now anything made of parts can be broken down into its component parts. But the soul is immortal: therefore it is indestructible because it is immortal; it is without a definite shape because it is indestructible; but it would be made up of parts fitted together, if it possessed a definite shape. Therefore, the only shape Plato would predicate of the soul is that impressed upon it by the intellectual forms which can mold it to beauty by the presence therein of justice and the principles of philosophy, while the soul can become ‘deformed or misshapen’ by the contrary vices.

(3) Contrary to Plato, we attribute corporeal extension

² Apoc. 1.10.

³ Apoc. 6.9.

to the soul not merely because of the influence of our reasoning as to its corporeal nature but also because of the conviction we have from Revelation. For, since we acknowledge the existence of spiritual *Charismata*, we have deserved to enjoy the gift of prophecy after the death of St. John.

(4) There is among us [Montanists] a sister who has been favored with wonderful gifts of revelation which she experiences in an ecstasy of the spirit during the sacred ceremonies on the Lord's day.¹ She converses with the angels and, sometimes, with the Lord Himself. She perceives hidden mysteries and has the power of reading the hearts of men and of prescribing remedies for such as need them. In the course of the services, she finds the matter of her visions in the Scripture lessons, the psalms, the sermon, or the prayers. One time I happened to be preaching about the soul when she became rapt in ecstasy. After the services were over and the laity had left, we asked her as is our custom, what visions she had had. (All her visions are carefully written down for purposes of examination.) 'Among other things,' she reported, 'I have seen a soul in bodily shape and a spirit appeared to me, not an empty and filmy thing, but an object which could be taken in the hands, soft and light and of an ethereal color, and in shape altogether like a human being. That was my vision.' And God is witness to its truth and St. Paul assured us that there would be visions and revelations in the Church. Can you still refuse to believe when the fact proclaims its truth?

¹ This is the *locus classicus* for Montanist prophecy in Tertullian's works. At the time of writing this treatise, Tertullian was definitely of Montanist persuasion, though perhaps the formal break with the Church had not yet been made. He finally became persuaded that the revelations made during such 'ecstasy' were supplementary to, and at times, corrective of the teachings of Christ and the Apostles. In thus wandering from the apostolic rule of faith, he went into heresy. This incident may well have taken place at a Catholic service.

(5) If then the soul is a body it must possess the qualities that she mentioned, especially that of color, which is found in every body. What color would you expect the soul to be but ethereally bright? Not in the sense that the substance of the soul is air as Aenesidemus and Anaximenes believed, and according to some, Heraclitus, also. Nor is the soul composed of light as Heraclides of Pontus thought.

(6) For even though meteors gleam with a reddish glow they are not altogether made of fire; nor are beryls composed of water because they have a pure wavy lustre. There are indeed many things alike in color but very different in nature. Because anything thin and transparent is thought to be like air, the soul is so considered, especially since it is generated as air or breath. Hence it is that the tenuousness and subtlety of its structure militates against the belief in its corporeality.

(7) Likewise if you imagine a soul, you cannot picture it as being anything but human in shape. In fact, it must be exactly the shape of the body which it animates. A glance at the soul's original creation will persuade us of this. For, if you recall, when God breathed the breath of life into the face of man, and man became a living soul, the breath must have passed at once through the face into the interior of the body and diffused itself throughout all the space of the body. By the divine breath it was condensed and took on the lineaments of the body that it filled and, as it were, it was frozen into the exact shape of the body.

(8) Thus the corporeal form of the soul was fixed by this condensation and its shape was 'hardened in the mold' of the body. This is the interior man; the other is the outer but together they form one being. The soul has its own eyes and ears with which people must have seen and heard the Lord; it has also other members which it uses in thought and moves in its dreams. Thus, Dives in Hell has a tongue; Lazarus, a

finger; and Abraham, a bosom. By these features also, the souls of the martyrs are recognized under the altar. The soul that in the beginning took the form of the body of Adam became the germ not only of the substance of every human soul but also of the shape that each one was to bear.

Chapter 10

(1) It is one of the fundamentals of our faith to hold, with Plato, that the soul is essentially simple, which means at least uncompounded in its substance. (Let them say what they will about the influence of the arts and learning on the formation of the soul.)

(2) Some say that there is within the soul some substance, the breath,¹ distinct from the soul, as if to live (the effect of the soul) were one thing and to breathe (by means of the breath) were another! Not all animals possess both of these functions. There are many that are alive, but do not breathe since they have no lungs or windpipes, the instruments of breathing.

(3) But in an examination of the soul of man, what is the use of searching for arguments from the body of a gnat or an ant? Since God the Creator has assigned to each animal organs that are proper for the fulfillment of its function, such comparisons are useless. We do not have to say that man breathes by one process and lives by another, merely because he has lungs and a windpipe. No more should we say that an ant lives but does not breathe in the assumption that he lacks these organs.

¹ Because of his belief that the soul was the 'breath of God' (relying on Gen. 2.7) and the concomitance of life and breathing, Tertullian assumed that the soul was breath, i.e., some tenuous form of airy substance.

(4) Who knows so much about the works of God that he would dare to say what any animal has or lacks? There was Herophilus, the famous surgeon, or rather, butcher, who cut up any number of bodies to investigate their nature. In the interests of knowledge, he showed his hatred of man. I doubt very much that he got a clear idea of the internal organs since death changes the vital functions and, apart from mere death, the process of dissection would further disturb the organs.

(5) Philosophers hold it certain that gnats, ants, and moths have no lungs or windpipes. Tell me, then, you lynx-eyed searchers, have they any eyes for seeing? They certainly go where they wish and they go after and avoid things they know by sight. Show me, then, their eyes; point out the pupils. Moths certainly can eat, but where are their jaws and their teeth? Gnats can buzz, and even in the dark they can find their way to our ears. Show me the tube which emits the sound and the opening of their mouths. Even the tiniest of animals has to be fed by some food or other. Can you point out to me their organs for the consumption, digestion, and disposal of their food? There is only one conclusion. If these are the means of sustaining life, then all living things must have them, even though they are too small to be perceived by our eyes or minds. This will be easier to believe if we recall that God the Creator is as wonderful in all His works both great and small.

(6) If, however, you choose to believe that the power of God cannot form such tiny bodies, still you must admire His wonderful power in that He can make the smallest animals live without providing them with the ordinary organs. Thus, they can see without eyes, eat without teeth, and digest their food without stomachs. Some animals can move without feet, as snakes who move by extending or stretching themselves;

worms, by lifting themselves forward; and snails, by a slimy crawl.

(7) Why, then, can't they breathe without bellows of the lungs and the tube of the windpipe? Then you would have a fine argument for the connection of the soul and breath because there are beings which don't breathe and they don't because they don't have organs of respiration. If you admit that a thing can live without breathing, then why can't something breathe without lungs? What do you mean by breathing? I suppose it means to exhale some air. What do you mean by death? Not being able to exhale air. This is the only answer I can give you if breathing and living are not the same thing. A dead man does not breathe; hence, breathing must be a sign of life. To have respiration is to breathe; hence, respiration is a sign of life. Now, if both living and breathing could be accomplished without a soul, breathing would not be a function of the soul but only of life. But, living is breathing and breathing is living. Therefore, the whole process of breathing and living belongs to that which makes us live, namely, the soul.

(8) If you insist on separating the breath and the soul, then separate their operations. Let each do something totally independent of the other. Let the soul live without breathing and the spirit breathe without the soul. Suppose one to have left the body, the other remaining, and you would have a union of life and death. If soul and breath are distinct, they can be separated so that one departs and the other remains. Again, you have a union of life and death. But, such a union could never happen. Two things are not distinct if they cannot be divided, but they surely could have been divided were they really separate things.

(9) Perhaps it would be possible for them to grow together into unity? No, this could not be unless living and

breathing are considered to be the same thing. The nature of a being is betrayed by its normal operations. Thus, it is clear that you have greater reason for believing the breath and the soul to be one, since you assign no real difference between them; hence, the soul and breath are one, both life and respiration being functions of the soul. Why make a distinction between day and the light which pertains to day, when day is, really, only light? To be sure, there are various kinds of light as there are various kinds of fires. And there will be different kinds of spirits, some from God and some from the Devil. Whenever question arises as to soul and breath, be sure that the soul *is* the breath just as day is the light [of day] itself. For, there is no difference between a being and that by which it is a being.

Chapter 11

(1) The nature of our present discussion compels me to say the soul is spirit *or* breath because the power of breathing is attributed to a substance other than the soul. It is true we claim breathing to be a function of the soul which we believe to be simple and un compounded, and we also say that the soul is a spirit, but in a technical sense; not that it is *by nature* a spirit, but in its operation; not in substance, but merely in act. The soul is a spirit because it respire and not because it is actually a 'spirit.' Breathing and respiration are the same thing. Since one of the properties of the soul is respiration, we are forced to call the soul a spirit.¹

(2) We have to insist on calling the soul 'breath' in

¹ Tertullian is here hampered by his own terminology. The equivocal meaning of *spiritus* forces him to insist that the soul is not a 'spiritual substance,' because that, in his mind, would undermine its reality. Yet, he must use the word somehow to describe the process of breathing.

opposition to Hermogenes, who claims the soul arises from matter and not from 'the breath of God.' Against the obvious meaning of Scripture he changes breath to spirit, since he cannot believe that the spirit (which God breathed into man) could fall into sin and come to judgment.² Therefore, he believes the soul arose from matter and not from the spirit of God. Therefore, even from that passage, we hold the soul to be breath and not a spirit; and this in the Scriptural sense and keeping in mind the ambiguity of the word. Hence, it is with regret that I use the word spirit at all of the soul because of the equivocal sense of breath or respiration. Hence, we are discussing the substance of the soul and breathing is a natural function of the substance.

(3) Now, I should never delay so long on this topic were it not for some of the heretics who introduce into the soul some mysterious spiritual seed. This, they say, was put into it in secret, by the generosity of Mother Wisdom, without the knowledge of the Creator. Now, Holy Scripture, which surely has better knowledge of God, the Creator of the soul, tells us nothing more than that God breathed into the face of man the breath of life and man became a living soul through which he lives and breathes. In many books of Scripture, God has made a sufficiently clear distinction between spirit and soul. Thus, He has said: 'The spirit went forth from Me and I made all breathing.'³ The soul is a breath made from the spirit. Again, He said: 'I have given breath to the people on the earth and spirit to them that tread thereon.'⁴ Now, this means that first God gives the soul, that is, breath, to the people upon the earth; that is, those living live in the body according to the flesh. After that, He gives the spirit

² Gen. 2.7.

³ Isa. 57.16.

⁴ Isa. 42.5.

to those who tread upon the earth; that is, those who control the tendencies of the flesh. This agrees with what St. Paul says: 'That was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; afterwards that which is spiritual.'⁵

(4) For, when Adam, at the very beginning prophesied: 'The great mystery in Christ and in the Church,' saying: 'This now is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. . . Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother and shall stick [*adglutinabit*] to his wife and they two shall be in one flesh,' he was speaking under the influence of the spirit. For, there descended upon him that ecstasy, the power of the Holy Spirit which produces prophecy.⁶

(5) It is possible for an evil spirit to influence a man. The spirit of God later turned Saul into another man, that is, into a prophet, when people said: 'What is this that has happened to the son of Cis? Is Saul also among the prophets?'⁷ But the Evil Spirit also turned him into another man, in other words, into a renegade. For some time Judas was numbered among the chosen [Apostles], even becoming the keeper of the purse. He was then not yet a traitor, but he was dishonest. Later, the Devil entered into his soul.

(6) Therefore, if neither the spirit of God nor the Devil enters into the soul of man at the birth of the soul, then the soul must exist separately before the accession of either spirit. If it exists alone, then it is simple and uncompounded in substance and it breathes simply as a result of the substance which it received from God.

⁵ 1 Cor. 15.46.

⁶ Eph. 5.31-2; Gen. 2.23-24. This prophecy of Adam was for Tertullian a kind of model of Montanist revelations uttered in ecstasy.

⁷ 1 Kings 10.11.

Chapter 12

(1) The next point is with regard to the *animus*, the mind, which the Greeks call *nous*. By 'mind' I mean merely that faculty which is inherent and implanted in the soul and proper to it by birth and by which the soul acts and gains knowledge. The possession of this faculty makes it possible for the soul to act upon itself, the soul being moved by the mind as if they were distinct substances. This is the opinion of those who hold that the soul is the moving principle of the universe, what Socrates calls 'God' or Valentinus 'the only-begotten of his father Bythus and Sige, his mother.'

(2) On this matter, Anaxagoras is very confused. He asserts the mind to be the beginning of all things; he says that it supports the motion of the universe,¹ while at the same time it is pure, simple, and incapable of admixture. Hence, it cannot be compounded with the soul. Elsewhere, he actually joins mind and soul.

(3) Aristotle² noted this inconsistency, probably not so much for the sake of supporting his own view as merely to weaken that of Anaxagoras. For, while he postpones his definition of the mind, he does discuss a second constituent principle of the mind, a divine principle which he understands as impassible and thereby devoid of any union with the soul. Since it is clear that the soul is subject to those emotions which it happens to undergo, it must feel them through the mind or at least in conjunction with the mind. If mind and soul are joined, the mind cannot be impervious to emotion. If, on the other hand, the soul feels nothing through or with the mind, it enjoys no union with that which is moved neither with the soul nor by itself. And, what is more, if the soul

¹ Cf. *Phaedo* 97B-C.

² Aristotle, *De anima* 404B 1.

suffers no emotion through or with the mind, then the soul neither feels, nor knows, nor is moved by the mind, as they would hold.

(4) Aristotle makes all sensations to be passions, and in this he is right.³ To have sensation is to be acted upon and to be acted upon is to feel. Besides, to know is to feel, and to be moved is to feel, and the whole is a process of being acted upon. But, we see that the soul experiences none of these things unless the mind is also affected, for it is the mind which really effects all these things.

(5) Therefore, we hold against Anaxagoras that the mind is capable of admixture and against Aristotle that it undergoes emotions. Besides, if we postulate a complete distinction into mind and soul so that they are two different substances, then one of them must produce all emotion, sensation, and every sort of perception, action and motion, while the other is completely passive and unmovable. There is no other alternative: either the mind or the soul is completely useless.

(6) If, on the other hand, we predicate all these activities of both mind and soul, then they are really one, and Democritus will be proved correct in denying all distinction between them. The only question remaining, then, will be as to the nature of their union: whether one is swallowed up by the other or each has a separate function. We hold that the soul is so united to the mind that they are not distinct substances, but that the mind is a faculty of the soul.

³ *Ibid.* 416B 33-35.

Chapter 13

(1) The next topic is, naturally, which of the two is superior to the other. In other words, which of the two holds primacy over the other in such a way that the one that appears to be superior may be the primary substance of which the other is merely a function or instrument. Now, as a matter of fact, everyone will admit that the soul is the greater since in common terminology 'soul' is a synonym for 'man.'

(2) The rich man asks: 'How many *souls* do I support?' He does not say: 'How many *minds*?' To the pilot of a ship are entrusted 'so many souls,' not minds. Thus, the laborer, at his toil; and the soldier in battle lays down his life, by which he means his soul, not his mind. Which are more familiar to us: the dangers and desires of the soul, or of the mind? When a man dies, we say his soul departs, and not his mind. In fact, when the philosophers and physicians write a treatise on the mind, the title of their books and the material itself are always concerned with the soul.

(3) That you may have God's testimony of the matter, He always speaks to the soul; it is the soul He stirs in order that the mind may turn to Him. Christ came to bring salvation to souls;¹ and it is souls that He threatens to bury in Hell.² He warns us not to be more solicitous for our souls than for Him,³ and as the Good Shepherd He lays down His life, that is, His Soul for His sheep.⁴ Therefore, we may conclude that the soul is superior, and to it the mind is united, with the mind as servant and not as master.

1 Luke 9.56.

2 Matt. 10.28.

3 Matt. 10.39.

4 John 10.15.

Chapter 14

(1) The soul, then, is a single substance, simple, and can no more be said to be made up of parts than that it can be divided into parts, since it is indivisible. For, if it were composite and divisible, it would not be immortal. Since it is not mortal, obviously it is not composite or divisible. For, to be divided is to be dissolved and to be dissolved is to die.

(2) Various philosophers have divided the soul into parts; Plato into two, Zeno into three, Aristotle into five, Panaetius into six, Soranus into seven, Chrysippus into eight, Apollonphanes into nine, while some Stoics name twelve parts. Thus, Posidonius adds two more; he begins with two notions—the *leading*, which he calls ‘*hegemonikon*,’ and the *rational* or ‘*logikon*’—and he goes on to make seventeen divisions in all. Thus, each school divides the soul into varying numbers of parts.

(3) Not that we are to declare that all these are strictly ‘parts’ of the soul; rather, we should say with Aristotle that some of them are powers or capabilities or operations of the soul.¹ They are not really organic parts of a living being, but, rather, functions it is capable of performing—as that of motion, action, or thought, or of any other activity which they wish to specify. The same should be said of the traditional five senses—sight, hearing, taste, touch, and smell. Now, although each of these senses has a definite part of the body assigned to it, there is no need to say that there is a similar division of parts in the soul itself. As a matter of fact, the various functions of the body are not so completely divided as they would divide the soul.

(4) One body is made up of various parts, so that the

¹ Aristotle, *De Anima* 411B 5-10.

result is a union and not a division. Look at that marvelous instrument of Archimedes, his hydraulic organ, I mean, with its multiple sections, parts, bands, and passages. It has many variations of sound, various combinations of harmonies, and batteries of pipes. Yet, the whole makes up one unit. Likewise, the wind which is forced through the pipes by hydraulic pressure is not divided into separate 'winds' from the fact of its dispersion through the instrument. It is united in its substance, though divided in its efficacy.

(5) This example fits very well the theories of Strato, Aenesidemus and Heraclitus. They maintain the unity of the soul as diffused throughout the body but present in all parts of the body. Just as the wind is distributed through the pipes within the organ, the soul displays its various functions not by being separated but merely distributed in some natural order. Philosophers and physicians can tell us what to call these faculties, how they are to be distinctly classified, and in what portions of the body they are to be exercised. These few remarks will suffice for our purpose.

Chapter 15

(1) At the beginning, we must decide whether there is in the soul some supreme principle of life and intelligence, the so-called *hegemonikon* or directing principle. Otherwise, the very existence of the soul is called in question. For, the people who deny such a directing faculty do so on the assumption that there is no such thing as a soul.

(2) Dicaearchus from Messene and, among the medical men, Andreas and Asclepiades, dispense with this guiding faculty in that they declare the senses are in the soul and they hold the senses to be supreme. Asclepiades depends wholly on the following argument: Many animals will continue to

have a certain amount of life and sensation even after those parts of the body in which the soul is generally considered to reside have been amputated. Thus, flies, wasps, and locusts will live after their heads have been removed, and you can cut out the hearts of she-goats, tortoises, and eels and they will still move. Obviously, then, there is no supreme principle, because, if there were one, life could not continue in the soul after the seat of that principle had been removed.

(3) However, Dicaearchus has considerable opposition to his view among the philosophers, such as Plato, Strato, Epicurus, Democritus, Empedocles, Socrates, and Aristotle. The doctors, such as Herophilus, Erasistratus, Diocles, Hippocrates, and Soranus himself, disagree with Andreas and Asclepiades. Of course, as Christians, we oppose both schools, since we know from Revelation that there is a directive faculty in the soul which itself resides in a special place in the body.

(4) We read that God is the searcher and examiner of hearts.¹ The Prophet to whom God has revealed the secrets of the heart² is approved when God shows that He knows the workings of men's hearts: 'Why do you think evil in your hearts?'³ David prayed: 'Create a clean heart in me, O God.'⁴ St. Paul says that with the heart we believe unto justice;⁵ St. John, that a man's heart will reprehend him.⁶ Finally, Christ Himself said: 'Whosoever shall look upon a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart.'⁷ From all these texts, two points become clear. First,

1 Wisd. 1.6.

2 Prov. 24.12.

3 Matt. 9.4.

4 Ps. 50.12.

5 Rom. 10.10.

6 John 3.20.

7 Matt. 5.28.

there is a directive faculty in the soul according to the divine charge, that is, a principle of life and intelligence (obviously, what can know, must be alive); secondly, the soul resides in that most precious part of the body into which God looks.

(5) Hence, one cannot agree with Heraclitus that the principal part of the soul can be stirred from without, nor with Moschion that it is somehow diffused throughout the whole body. Plato⁸ also is wrong when he says the soul is in the head, as well as Xenocrates, who thought it was in the crown of the head. It does not repose in the brain, as Hippocrates taught, nor around the base of the brain, according to Herophilus. Strato and Erasistratus erred in saying it was in the outer membranes of the brain. Strato, the physician, wrongly placed it in between the eyebrows. Epicurus says the soul lies within the structure of the breast. The truth is rather to be found among the Egyptians, especially in the writings of those among them who knew Holy Scripture. There is a verse of Orpheus or Empedocles which reads: 'The seat of sensation lies in the blood around the heart.'

(6) We find that Protagoras, Apollodorus, and Chrysippus believe this; so, let Asclepiades go searching for his goats who are bleating without hearts and his flies flitting around without heads. And, as for the rest of them who try to argue to the nature of the soul from their experiments on animals, you can tell them that they are the ones who are 'living' without hearts or heads.

8 *Timaeus* 69D.

Chapter 16

(1) The view of Plato, that the soul has a rational and an irrational element, is in consonance with Revelation.¹ The only exception we take to this statement is that we would not say that each of these elements was equally based in the nature of the soul. To be sure, it is altogether natural to the soul to be rational, since it takes its origin from its Creator, who is rational. It is impossible that that be irrational which came from the will of God; in fact, resulted from His very breath. The irrational element, however, must be thought to have come later, resulting from the suggestion of the serpent and producing the very act of the first transgression. From then on, this irrational element became imbedded in the soul, developed with the soul, and, as it happened at the very beginning of the soul's existence, gave every appearance of being an essential element of the soul.

(2) However, as Plato says, since the rational element derives from the rational soul of God, we are in danger of attributing irrationality to God, also, the soul's Author, if we say that irrationality is natural to the soul. Now, the impulse to sin proceeds from the Devil and, since all sin is irrational, the irrational therefore proceeds from the Devil whence comes sin. Sin is alien to the nature of God, as is also anything irrational. The distinction, then, between these two elements of the soul arises from the difference of their authors.

¹ While apparently agreeing with Plato's triple division of the soul into *rational*, *spirited* and *concupiscible*, in which the latter two are considered irrational, Tertullian carefully points out that the effect of irrationality, i.e., sin, is in no sense a work of God or a part of the soul, but the result of the temptation of the serpent. Thus, original sin, contracted by Adam, is transmitted to all his progeny, a conception which fitted neatly into Tertullian's Traducianism. By the very fact of being born of Christian parents, however (and thus destined for baptism), children are said to be born 'holy'; Cf. I Cor. 7.14.

(3) Since Plato reserves complete rationality to God and in human souls divides the irrational into two parts,² the irascible *thumikon* and concupiscible *epithumetikon* (the first of which we have in common with lions, the second with flies, while the rational we share with God), I realize that we will have to treat this point more fully because of what we know of the nature of Christ.

(4) For, in Him we perceive the rational, by which He taught, preached, and pointed out the way of salvation. The irascible also was in Him whereby He inveighed against the Scribes and Pharisees,³ and the concupiscible by which He desired to eat the Pasch with His disciples.⁴

(5) Therefore, the irascible and concupiscible impulses in our souls are not always to be ascribed to the irrational element, which certainly, in our Lord, flowed from the rational element of His soul. God becomes angry in accordance with reason, with such as deserve His anger; and, equally reasonably, He desires such things as are worthy of Him. For, He will be angry with the evil man and for the good man He will desire salvation.

(6) St. Paul attributes the concupiscible quality to human nature: 'If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.'⁵ From the fact that he says 'a good work,' it is clear that the desire is a reasonable one. The irascible quality is also allowed to us, since he experiences it himself: 'I would that they were cut off, who trouble you.'⁶ Such anger, which arose from his desire for good order, was undoubtedly rational.

(7) However, when St. Paul says: 'We were one time

² *Republic* 438D; 548C; 580D.

³ *Matt.* 12.34.

⁴ *Luke* 22.15.

⁵ *1 Tim.* 3.1.

⁶ *Gal.* 5.12.

children of wrath,'⁷ he is reproving an irrational anger which does not flow from the nature that was created by God, but from that which takes its origin from the Devil, who is said to be the master of his subjects. 'You cannot serve two masters.'⁸ He is also said to be a father: 'You are of the devil, your father.'⁹ Therefore, you need have no hesitation in ascribing to him the origin of that secondary element, the later and depraved part, since he is said to be the 'sower of cockle' and the enemy who spoils the crop of wheat by night.¹⁰

Chapter 17

(1) There also arises the question of the veracity of our five senses, of which we learn from earliest childhood, since the heretics seek to support their teaching on this score. They are the familiar five: sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch.

(2) The Platonists seriously attack their validity, and Heraclitus, Diocles, and Empedocles are said to agree with them. It is certain that Plato in the *Timaeus*¹ declares sense knowledge to be irrational and capable of arriving at opinion, but not true knowledge. Our eyes deceive us, he says, in showing us oars under water as bent or broken in spite of our assurance that they are straight; thus, again, from a distance a square tower appears to be circular and on looking down a long corridor we seem to see the walls meeting at a point. Besides, we normally see on the horizon the meeting of the sea and the sky which is really high above it.

(3) Likewise, our ears deceive us; we mistake thunder for the rumble of a cart or *vice versa*. The senses of smell

7 Eph. 2.3.

8 Matt. 6.24.

9 John 8.44.

10 Matt. 13.25.

1 *Timaeus* 28C, 51A.

and taste are also faulty in that we become so accustomed to perfumes and wines that we no longer advert to their specific bouquet. Touch also fails us in that the same pavement which scratches our hands is smooth to our feet; and at the first touch our bath water may seem to be scalding, yet shortly it seems quite comfortable.

(4) Thus, they tell us, we are deceived by our senses and must continually revise our opinions. The Stoics are somewhat more moderate in that they do not always impugn the validity of all the senses. The Epicureans with complete consistency maintain that the senses always report the truth, but they explain the illusions in a way different from the Stoics. In their opinion, the senses report the truth, but our minds lead us astray. The function of the senses is to receive an impression, not to think; that is the function of the soul. They deny to the senses the power of thinking and to the soul all power of sensation.

(5) But, what is the basis of thought, if not the senses? Whence does the mind get the idea the tower is really round, unless from the senses? Whence comes the act of sensation, if not from the soul? On the other hand, a soul without a body would experience no sensation. Therefore, sensation takes place in the soul and thought begins in the senses, but the soul is the root of it all. It is a fact that there is something which causes the senses to report things otherwise than they really are. If the senses can report things which do not correspond to reality, isn't it possible that such things are caused not by the senses at all, but by something that takes place between sensation and thought?

(6) This fact ought surely be recognized. The water is the cause of making the oar appear bent or broken, because out of the water it is perfectly straight. Water is so delicate a medium that, when under the light of day it be-

comes a mirror, the slightest motion of the water will distort the image and appear to bend a straight line. We mistake the true shape of a tower because of the nature of the medium that lies between it and ourselves, for the uniform density of the surrounding air blurs the angles and dulls its sharp outlines. The equal sides of a corridor appear to come to a point in the distance because our vision is contracted within the enclosed space, thins out, and so seems to extend indefinitely. So, sea and sky meet when the power of our vision has been exhausted, for, as long as it could, the eye kept the two apart.

(7) Naturally, the ear will be deceived by similarity of sounds. And, if the perfume smells dull, the wine tastes flat, and the water no longer hot, still they are actually very much the same as they ever were. And, of course, tender hands and calloused feet will disagree as to the roughness of the pavement.

(8) So, you see, there is always a cause when our senses are mistaken. Now, if this cause deceives the senses and they in turn our opinions, then the error should not be imputed either to the senses which follow the cause or our opinions which are dependent on the data of our senses.

(9) Madmen think they see other people than they really do: Orestes looks at his sister and thinks she is his mother; Ajax sees Ulysses in the slaughtered cattle; Athamas and Agave see wild beasts in their children. Would you attribute these errors to defective vision or to insanity? When a man has an excess of bile or jaundice, everything tastes bitter. Which are you going to blame—his taste or the disease? All of the senses, then, may be occasionally disordered, but when functioning normally they are free of any error.

(10) Further still, the blame for these errors is not to be imputed to these 'causes' either. For, although these things happen for specific reasons, reason should not be blamed for

the mistake. The normal event should never be construed as a lie. Now, if we can absolve the 'causes' from blame, then surely we must acquit the senses which merely follow the 'causes.' The senses, then, can claim that they faithfully report the truth, since they never render any other account of their impressions save that which they receive from the often-mentioned causes; this latter it is which produces the discrepancy between sensation and reality.

(11) O Academics! What impudence you are showing! Don't you see that your assertions would destroy the normal conduct of human life and the very order of nature? Are you not claiming that Divine Providence was blind? The senses of man have been given the mastery over all God's creation that by them we might understand, inhabit, dispose of, and enjoy His goodness—and these you accuse of deliberate falsity! Is not all life dependent upon the senses? Are not our senses the second source of knowledge with which we are endowed? Whence, do you think, come the various arts, the ingenious developments in business, politics, commerce, medicine? Whence the technique of prudent advice and consolation, the resources that have made progress in all phases of human life and culture? Without his senses, man's life would be deprived of all joy and satisfaction, the only rational being in creation would thus be incapable of intelligence or learning, or even of founding an Academy!

(12) Plato in the *Phaedrus*² goes so far in disparaging the senses that he makes Socrates deny that he can know himself, which the Delphic Oracle had commanded him to do; in the *Theatetus*³ he abdicates his power of thought and feeling; and in the *Phaedrus*⁴ he denies that he can know truth till

² *Phaedrus* 229E.

³ *Theatetus* 150C.

⁴ *Phaedrus* 247D,E.

after death; yet in spite of that, still alive, he continues the search for wisdom.

(13) We cannot, I insist, impugn the validity of the senses, for thus we will be denying that Christ really saw Satan cast down from heaven;⁵ that He ever heard His Father's voice testifying to Him;⁶ that He only *thought* He touched Peter's mother-in-law;⁷ that He never smelled the fragrance of the ointment given Him in preparation for His burial⁸ or of the wine He consecrated in memory of His Blood.⁹

(14) On this pernicious principle, Marcion denied that Christ had a real body and was but a phantom or a ghost. No, His Apostles really and truly perceived Him with their senses. They saw and heard Him at the Transfiguration;¹⁰ they tasted the wine changed from water at Cana in Galilee.¹¹ Thomas believed when he touched the wound in His side.¹² Finally, listen to the word of St. John: 'What we have seen, and heard, perceived with our eyes, what our hands have handled of the word of life.'¹³ The witness of St. John is false if we cannot believe the testimony of our eyes, our ears, and our hands.

Chapter 18

(1) Now I turn to the consideration of our intellectual faculties which Plato holds to be completely independent of the body; this is part of his legacy to the heretics. This is a

5 Luke 10.18.

6 Matt. 3.17.

7 Matt. 8.15.

8 Matt. 26.12.

9 Luke 22.20.

10 Matt. 17.3.

11 John 2.1.

12 John 20.27.

13 1 John 1.1.

piece of knowledge which he seems to have acquired before death. In the *Phaedo*,¹ he asks: 'What is your opinion as to the possession of knowledge? Is the body a hindrance to it or not, if we admit at all that the body shares in the pursuit of knowledge? And, likewise, does truth come to man through sight and hearing? Are not the poets always mumbling something about the fallibility of your eyes and ears?' Here he was recalling the verse of the comic poet, Epicharmus: 'The mind sees, the mind hears; all else are deaf and blind.'

(2) Further, Plato holds that man to know most clearly who knows with his mind alone and never calls on the help of sight or any other sense; in solitary contemplation the mind, serene and isolated, surveys reality, cut off from the disturbing and distracting influence of the eyes and ears, in a word, of the whole body which might hinder it in the quest for truth and wisdom.

(3) Therefore, we see here another and more useful faculty offered in opposition to the bodily senses, namely, the powers of the soul, by which the intellect grasps such truths as do not fall within the purview of the bodily senses, but lie hidden far away from common knowledge in some lofty region or in the very bosom of God Himself. Plato believes in the existence of certain substances which are invisible, incorporeal, celestial, even divine and eternal, which he calls *ideas*, that is, forms. These, he says, are the patterns and models of all the objects that we see around us; these forms alone are truly real, visible things being but shadowy likenesses of the originals.

(4) Can't you catch a gleam there of the heretical teaching of the Gnostics and the Valentinians? This is where they get their distinction between the bodily senses and the intellect which they use in their interpretation of the parable of

¹ *Phaedo* 65A-E.

the wise and foolish virgins.² Thus, the five foolish virgins are said to be the senses, who are foolish because so easily deceived, while the wise virgins typify the intellect which can perceive the secret and supernal truth hidden in the fullness of God. Here, then, is the source of all their heretical ideas and their aeons and genealogies.

(5) Thus they divide sensation from intelligence, separating it from its spiritual source, and, again, they separate sense knowledge from the animal source, since *that* cannot in any way perceive what is spiritual. The objects perceived by the intellect are invisible, while the others are visible, mean and temporal, and, as contained in images, fitted to be perception of the senses. This is the reason why, at the outset, we said that the mind is merely an instrument and faculty of the soul; that the breath is not something distinct, but is the soul insofar as it exercises respiration. Whatever God or the Devil imparts to it subsequent to its origin must be considered an adventitious element.

(6) We now come to the matter of the distinction between the sensitive and the intellectual powers, which is seen to be based on the nature of the objects perceived. While corporeal, visible, and tangible things belong to the province of sense, the spiritual, visible, and secret things are under the dominion of the mind. Yet, both classes come under the soul for the purpose of being at its service; thus, the soul perceives corporeal things with the help of the body and spiritual things by means of the mind, since the soul is really exercising sensation when it is thinking.

(7) Isn't it true that to feel is to understand and to think is to have sensation? For, what else is sensation than the perception of the thing felt? Or what else is understanding than the perception of the thing known? Why, then, all this

² Matt. 25.1-13.

torturing of simple truth into obscurity? Can you show me a sensation which does not understand what it feels or an intellect which does not perceive what it knows, so as to prove to me that one can get along without the other?

(8) If we must say that corporeal things are 'sensed' and spiritual things are 'understood,' it is the nature of *those objects* which causes the distinction and not the abode of sensation and understanding, that is, the soul and the mind. By what faculty do we perceive corporeal things? If the mind does it, then the mind is a sensual as well as an intellectual faculty, because, when it understands, it feels, and, if it doesn't feel, it has no understanding. If, however, corporeal things are perceived by the soul, then the power of the soul is intellectual as well as sensual, because, when it feels something, it understands it; because, if there is no understanding, there is no sensation. Likewise, by which faculty are incorporeal things perceived? If by the mind, where does the soul fit in, and, if by the soul, the mind? Things that are distinct should be separate from each other in the exercise of their specific functions.

(9) You would have to say that soul and mind are separated if it were possible to see and hear without knowing it, because, at the time, the mind was elsewhere. In that supposition we should have to say that the soul did not see or hear, since it was then deprived of its active agent, the mind. When a man is insane, the soul is mad and the mind, far from being separated from it, is the fellow sufferer of the soul. In fact, the soul is the principal sufferer in such a contingency.

(10) This is confirmed by the fact that, when the soul leaves a man, his mind goes, too; so closely does the mind follow the soul that it cannot remain in the man after death. Since it follows the soul, and is attached to the soul, so the

understanding must be attached to the soul which the mind follows, understanding being attached to the mind. Suppose we admit that the intellect is superior to the senses and has a deeper understanding of mysteries, what difference does that make as long as both intellect and sense are powers of the soul? My argument stands as long as the superiority of intellect over sense is not predicated on the assertion of a separation of one from the other. Now that I have refuted the assertion of the distinction of soul and mind, I must deal with this alleged superiority before I come to the belief in a better god.³

(11) On this matter we shall have to fight the heretics on their own ground. This work is concerned with the soul and we have to be careful lest the intellect should usurp the prerogative of superiority over the soul. Now, even though the object of the intellect, being spiritual, is superior to the object of sense—namely, material things—it is still merely a superiority in object—the exalted as against the humble—and not a superiority of intellect over sense. How can there be a real superiority of intellect over sense when the former depends on the latter for its guidance to the truth?

(12) We know that truth is apprehended by means of visible images, that is, the invisible through the visible. For, St. Paul tells us: ‘The invisible attributes of God from the creation of the world are understood from the things that are made.’⁴ Plato would tell the heretics: ‘The things we see are merely the image of the hidden realities.’⁵ Hence, this

³ The heretic Marcion held that there were two gods, one having dominion over visible things and the other (*Deus Potior*) over invisible things. Tertullian barely alludes to this point here which he dealt with in his treatise *Against Marcion*. If a distinction is made between the realms of sense and intellect, he fears he may be forced to agree with Marcion, postulating this ‘better god’ as the guardian of the invisible things which the intellect alone can perceive. Cf. Waszink, *op. cit.* 265-266.

⁴ Rom. 1.20.

⁵ This quotation is not found in the works of Plato.

world must be a representation of some other world, else why would the intellect use the senses as its guide, authority, and support, if without them it could attain to truth? How, then, can it be superior to that through which it exists, which it needs for its operation, and to which it owes all that it gains?

(13) Two conclusions follow, therefore, from this discussion: (1) Intellect is not superior to sense on the argument that the instrument through which a thing exists is inferior to the thing itself. (2) Intellect must not be considered to be separate from the senses, since that by which a thing exists is united to that thing.

Chapter 19

(1) Mention must also be made of those philosophers who would deprive the soul of the intellect for even a short period of time, thus preparing a basis for the view that the intellect and the mind are introduced into man during childhood.

(2) Thus, they believe that the soul alone sustains the child, giving life without intelligence, since not all living things can think. Aristotle holds that trees have vegetative without intellectual life and others attribute some kind of soul to all beings. This we believe to be the exclusive prerogative of man, not merely as a creature of God, common with all things else, but rather as the breath of God which the human soul alone is, and which we say comes to man at birth with all its faculties.

(3) Let us take up their example of the trees:¹ it is a

¹ The Stoics held that intelligence was not possessed by children, but reason came only when they reached maturity. Thus, they compared them to trees that possessed vegetative life but were devoid of reason. Tertullian goes far beyond what he had to, to combat their argument about the human soul, by making the extraordinary statement that even trees possess reason from the first moment of their growth.

fact of experience that even the smallest plants, not even yet young trees but mere shoots and twigs, have from the first moment they appear above ground the full potentiality of life. As time goes on, they grow and develop into a woody trunk until they reach the full maturity that is proper to the species. Otherwise, trees would not be capable of receiving grafts, of developing leaves, seeds, and flowers, or of a full flow of sap, unless [from the beginning] the full potency of their nature were present so as to grow and develop in all their parts.

(4) These, then, have intelligence from the same source as they have life, that is, the same [soul] gives life and intelligence from the beginning of their existence. I have often seen a young and tender vine, obviously knowing its function and striving to cling to something in union with which it intertwines itself and thus finds support. Without any instruction in horticulture, without hook or prop, it clings to whatever it touches and that with greater tenacity from instinct than you could by volition.

(5) I have seen ivy, no matter how young, striving upward, and faster than any other plant, obviously choosing to spread its lacy web over a wall rather than, by hugging the ground, run the chance of being trampled under foot. Have you ever noticed certain trees that are injured by contact with buildings drawing away from walls as they develop? You can tell that the branches are meant to go in the opposite direction and from so deliberate an avoidance you may judge the nature of the tree. Quite content with its significance, it follows the instinct which it manifested from the beginning of its growth and it even fears a crumbling wall.

(6) Why, then, cannot I stress these signs of wisdom and knowledge in plant life? To be sure, they have vegetative life as the philosophers say, but they also have intelligence which

they will not allow. If a baby tree has intelligence, there is all the more reason why a human infant must have it, too. The soul of a child, like a tender shoot, derives from Adam as its stem, comes into life from the womb of its mother, and begins to grow with its full complement of faculties of both sensation and intelligence.

(7) I am certain, then, that an infant, when first it cries at birth, by that act makes first use of the possession of intellect and sensation, proving it has all the senses: sight, by seeing; hearing, by perceiving sounds; taste, by savoring its milk; smell, by taking in air; and touch, by feeling the ground. That first voice of infancy undoubtedly springs from the earliest effort of the senses and from the initial impulse of intelligence.

(8) There are, indeed, those who would believe this first pitiful cry to be a sign of realization of the sorrows that lie before the child in life; as a result, we must say that the soul from the moment of birth is endowed not only with intelligence, but even with foreknowledge. By this same intuition the baby knows its mother, recognizes its nurse, distinguishes its servants; the child will refuse the breast of another and the bed that is unfamiliar, choosing only those things to which he is accustomed.

(9) How else but through intelligence should he be able to judge what is unusual or normal? How else would he be capable of being soothed or annoyed? Strange indeed it would be if an infant were without mind, since he is so lively; or so naturally affectionate, without intellect. Christ has told us that He has 'received praise out of the mouths of babes and sucklings'² and, hence, that infancy and childhood are not dull and stupid. While He was on earth, children, on meeting Him, testified to His divinity; and the innocents who were slaughtered for His sake surely must have known Him.

² Ps. 8.3.

Chapter 20

(1) Here, then, we may offer our conclusion that all the properties that are natural to the soul are inherent in it as parts of its substance and they are born and develop with it from the moment it comes into existence. Seneca here as so often agrees, when he says: 'The seeds of all arts and ages are implanted in us and God, our Master, secretly produces the qualities of our mind,'¹ that is, through the seeds planted within us in infancy; mainly, our intellect. From this our mental qualities develop.

(2) There is a specific form for each seed of each plant, and each plant has its own mode of growth. Some come easily to full maturity, while others wither or thrive according to the conditions of sun and soil, the amount of care they receive, the variations of the weather, and the vicissitudes of chance. Thus, while souls may all come from one kind of seed, individuality manifests itself as soon as growth begins. For here, too, we also find environment among other relevant factors.

(3) They say all Thebans are born dull and stupid, while Athenians are clever in speech and understanding, and, around Colyttus, the children are so precocious that they talk before they are a month old. Plato in the *Timaeus*² tells us that Minerva, when building her beloved city, paid most attention to this quality of the climate which would favor mental development. Hence, in the *Laws*,³ he commands Megillus and Clinias to take pains as to the site of their city. On the other hand, Empedocles felt that the source of genius or stupidity lay in the character of the blood, and that any progress or perfection was due to learning and training. National characteristics of this type, however, have become proverbial.

1 *De beneficiis* 4. 6.6.

2 *Timaeus* 24C-D.

3 *Laws* 704B.

The comic poets always joke about the cowardice of the Phrygians; Sallust reproaches the Moors as fickle and the Dalmatians as cruel; and even St. Paul brands all Cretans as liars.⁴

(4) It is likely, too, that bodily health has something to do with intellectual development. Obesity is not conducive to wisdom which thrives in the thin man; the mind wastes away in paralysis, while consumption sharpens it. Besides, there are many extrinsic conditions besides obesity and strength which in the arts, experimental knowledge, business, and sustained study have a way of developing the mind, while it loses its sharpness if allowed to wallow in ignorance, laziness, lust, idleness, and vice. To all of which may be added the influence of higher powers.

(5) For, according to our teaching, such higher powers are: the Lord God and His enemy, the Devil. In the view of ordinary men they are: providence, fate, necessity, fortune, and free will. The philosophers use all these terms; for my part, I have already written a special treatise on fate in the light of our faith.

(6) From all this it will be clear how important are these various influences which affect the soul, since they are commonly regarded as separate natures. Not that they are distinct species, but accidental qualities of that one nature which God bestowed on Adam and made the stem from which all other souls have developed. There will always be such accidental qualities and never distinct species, nor was the variety of personality, so noticeable nowadays, to be found in the father of our race, Adam. If this variety were due to the nature of the soul, then, surely, all those divergent characteristics would have to have been existent in him and thus descended to us as from their source.

⁴ Tit. 1.12.

Chapter 21

(1) Now if [as shown above] the nature of the soul in Adam was simple before the development [in subsequent men] of disparate mental characters, then it does not become multiform, since it is evenly divided among so many men; nor is it triple in structure (to keep in view the heresy of Valentinus), since there is no sign of this division in the soul of Adam.

(2) What was there of the 'spiritual' inherent in Adam? If you adduce the power of prophecy by which he foretold the great mystery in Christ and in the Church, saying: 'This is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh and she shall be called woman; wherefore let a man leave his father and mother and cling to his wife and these two shall be in one flesh,'¹ then I must remind you that this power only came to him later when God took him out of himself and infused into him the spiritual quality in which prophecy consists.

(3) If, further, the evil of deliberate sin is manifest in Adam, this must not be considered as something *natural* to him, which really took place because of the instigation of the serpent. It was no more *natural* than it was *material*, and the material we have already excluded from belief. Now, if neither the *spiritual* nor what heretics call the *material* was inherent in Adam, even if the seed of evil should have proceeded from matter, it still follows that the only natural element in him was the psychic, which we maintain to have been simple and uniform.

(4) On this we must ask whether, being natural, it has to be subject to change. The Valentinians deny that any change is possible, that they may bolster their view of a 'trinity' of divergent natures. The good tree does not bear

¹ Gen. 2.23-24.

bad fruit, nor the bad tree good fruit,² and no man gathers figs from thorns or grapes from brambles. If that were possible, then God could not raise sons to Abraham from stones nor could a generation of vipers bring forth fruits of repentance.³ St. Paul would be wrong when he said: 'You were heretofore darkness,'⁴ and: 'we were once by nature children of wrath,'⁵ and: 'in this were you also but you have been washed.'⁶

(5) Holy Scripture, however, is never contradictory. The evil tree will never bear good fruit unless the good branch be grafted onto it, and the good tree will not bear evil fruit unless it be cultivated. And stones will become sons to Abraham if they are formed in the faith of Abraham; a generation of vipers will bring forth fruits of repentance if they will but spit out the poison of their wickedness.

(6) Such is the power of Divine Grace, stronger than nature itself, that it can even make subject to itself the faculty of free will which is generally said to be master of itself. Now, since this faculty is naturally changeable, it varies; and so does nature. That we do possess this faculty which is master of itself has been proven in my works against Marcion and Hermogenes.

(7) Finally, therefore, if we must enunciate a definition of the natural state of the soul, it must be said to be twofold—there being the categories of the born and the unborn, of the made and the not made. Now, the nature of that which is born and made is capable of changes, but that which is unborn and not made is eternally immutable. Since this latter

2 Luke 6.43-44.

3 Matt. 3.7-9.

4 Eph. 5.8.

5 Eph. 2.3.

6 1 Cor. 6.11.

can be said only of God, who is alone unborn and not made, immortal and unchangeable, it is certain that the nature of all other beings that are born and made is variable and changeable. Hence, if a threefold composition is to be attributed to the soul, the cause must lie in extrinsic circumstances and not in the ordination of nature.

Chapter 22

(1) The other faculties of the soul have been explained to Hermogenes with their justification and proof and it was seen that they spring from God rather than from matter. I shall merely mention them here lest they should seem to be neglected. We have granted that the soul is endowed with free will, as we just mentioned, a certain power over things, and occasionally the gift of foresight—which is different from that capability of prophecy which comes from the grace of God. But, let us drop this subject of the character of the soul that I may list briefly its various attributes.

(2) The soul, therefore, we declare to be born of the breath of God, immortal, corporeal, possessed of a definite form, simple in substance, conscious of itself, developing in various ways, free in its choices, liable to accidental change, variable in disposition, rational, supreme, gifted with foresight, developed out of the one original soul. Now, we must discuss this last point, how it develops out of one soul; in other words, where the soul comes from when it joins the body and how it is produced.

Chapter 23

(1) The assurance with which certain heretics affirm that souls come down from Heaven is only equaled by their certainty that they are destined to return thither after death. Saturninus, a disciple of Menander, held this view, saying that man was made by angels. The first such product was ridiculously weak and unable to stand upright, but had to crawl on the ground like a worm. Later, by the mercy of God after whose image, though poorly understood, he had been clumsily made, a spark of life was infused, which roused man, stood him up on his feet and, granting him a higher grade of vitality, provided for his return to his source after death.

(2) Carpocrates, in fact, claims for himself such a degree of supernatural qualities that his disciples consider their souls equal to Christ—not to mention the Apostles—and at times even superior to them, believing that they partake of that sublime virtue which lords it over powers and principalities that govern the world.

(3) Apelles holds that our souls were enticed from Heaven in their desire of earthly delicacies by a fiery angel—Israel's God and ours—and, once here, were then imprisoned in this sinful flesh.

(4) The followers of Valentinus introduce into the soul the seed of Wisdom, and by means of this seed they recognize, in the images of visible objects, the stories and Milesian tales¹ about their own Aeons.

¹ 'Milesian tales,' the *Decameron* of antiquity, a collection of erotic novels, written by an otherwise unknown author, Aristides, toward the end of the second, or at the beginning of the first century, B.C. The scene of the tales is Miletus, hence the name. The novels of Aristides enjoyed great popularity; they were also translated into Latin.

(5) And I am sorry to say that Plato is the merchant who supplies them with such wares. In the *Phaedo*² he says that souls travel back and forth between this world and the other, while in the *Timaeus*³ he imagines that God had delegated to his offspring the production of men. Thus they clothed the mortal body around the immortal soul, thereby indicating that this world is the image of some other.

(6) In order to win credence for this theory—that the soul formerly came from dwelling with God, where it shared in the contemplation of the ideas, thence to return here, and while here recollects the eternal exemplars once known—he concocted his notion of ‘learning by reminiscence.’⁴ He tells us that souls on their arrival in this world have forgotten what they learned in heaven, but gradually, under the stimulus of visible things, they recall what once they had known. Since, therefore, the ideas of the heretics are borrowed from this notion of Plato, I can take care of them by demolishing him.

Chapter 24

(1) On Plato’s principles, I cannot admit that the soul could possibly forget anything, since he puts it on a par with God. He says the soul is unborn, and that for me is sufficient proof of its divinity. He goes on to say it is immortal, incorruptible, incorporeal—since he believes God to be so—invisible, without form, simple, supreme, rational, and

² *Phaedo* 70C.

³ *Timaeus* 69C.

⁴ *Meno* 81C-D. Here, Socrates, by asking the proper questions of a young boy, elicits from him the proper solution of a problem in geometry. Since the boy had never studied the subject, Socrates argues that his questions had merely caused the boy to remember what he had forgotten from a previous existence.

intellectual. What more could he say of the soul unless he would call it God?

(2) We, however, do not attach the soul to God, but say that by the very fact of being born it is therefore a pale and shadowy replica of the divine happiness, being the breath of God but not His spirit. If it is immortal—a characteristic of divine beings—yet still is it passible, as a result of its birth, and so from the first moment of its appearance capable of and allied to forgetting.

(3) This matter has been sufficiently discussed with Hermogenes, but I may add that, if the soul is in all its properties to be equated with God, then it cannot be subject to any passion and, hence, to forgetting. For, the disgrace of forgetting is in proportion to the glory of memory possessed by the soul, since Plato¹ calls memory the warden of all knowledge and Cicero² says that it is the treasure house of all learning. The real question is not whether so divine a being as the soul is capable of forgetting, but, rather, whether it can ever get back what it has thus lost. I wonder if a faculty which has forgotten what it should never have lost could be capable of recalling it again? My soul can forget and remember, but Plato's can't!

(4) The second question I would ask Plato is this: 'Do you admit that souls can naturally understand *ideas* or not?' 'Surely, I do' will be his answer. In that supposition, then, no one will agree with you that a natural knowledge of the natural sciences can be deficient. But we do forget the facts of science, the train of ideas, and things we have learned. Perhaps we also can forget our ideas and emotions, which are not from nature, although they appear to be. For, as we said above, they are conditioned by circumstances of place,

¹ *Philebus* 34A.

² *De oratore* 1.18.

education, bodily health, the influence of higher powers, and by man's own free will.

(5) No, the instinctive knowledge of natural things never fails, not even in animals. Do you think a lion, under the influence of kindly training, will forget his instinctive ferocity? To be sure, he may, with his flowing mane, become the pet of some Queen Berenice and lick her checks with his tongue. But, though he may change some of his habits, his fundamental instincts will remain the same. Always will he look for his proper food and his natural remedies, and experience his instinctive fears. Suppose the queen offers him some fish and cakes? He will look for flesh. If he becomes sick and is offered some medicine, he will still want an ape. If no hunting spear will stop him, yet will he fear the rooster.

(6) Even man, perhaps the most forgetful of all creatures, will always retain consciousness of the things that are natural to him, precisely because they belong to his nature. Thus, when hungry, he will always desire to eat; when thirsty, to drink. Always will he use his eyes for seeing, his ears for hearing, his nose and mouth for smell and taste, and his hands for feeling. These are merely sense faculties, which philosophers, out of regard for intellectual powers, are wont to undervalue.

(7) But, if the natural knowledge of our senses is so lasting, is it likely that the power of the intellect, which is supposed to be stronger, will fail? What is the source of this forgetfulness which is said to precede remembrance? We are told it is caused by the lapse of time, which seems to me a foolish answer. What effect can time have on something which we are told is unborn and, by that very fact, must be considered eternal. Now, that which is eternal because it is unborn, having neither beginning nor end, has no relation whatever to time. But, what bears no relation to time obviously

can suffer no change because of time, nor can the lapse of time have any effect on it.

(8) If time is supposed to be the cause of forgetfulness, why does the memory fail as soon as soul and body are united? Are we to believe that the soul is, from that point, somehow dependent on time? Insofar as the soul is prior to the body, you can say that it bears that much of a relation to time. But, when does the soul forget? As soon as it joins the body, or shortly after? If immediately, where is the length of time which in an infant is still too short for consideration? If shortly after, will not the soul remember in that short interval before forgetfulness sets in? How do you explain the fact that the soul forgets, and then, later, remembers? How long does this period of oblivion last, during which time it affected the soul? I don't think the whole course of life would be long enough to erase a memory of a period before the soul came to the body.

(9) Plato would say that the body is the cause, as if we could believe that an unborn substance could be destroyed by something born. Since bodies differ a great deal because of race, size, character, age, and health, are there therefore to be different degrees of forgetfulness? No. Forgetfulness is said to be the same for all. Obviously, then, various bodily peculiarities cannot be the cause of an invariable effect.

(10) As I have already mentioned to Hermogenes, Plato³ offers a number of proofs that the soul has the power of foresight. Now it is the common experience of all of us that our souls occasionally manifest some flash of foreknowledge in a case of future danger or advantage. If, then, the body is no obstacle to such experiences, why should it be a hindrance to memory? The supposition is that the soul, while remaining in the same body, both forgets and remembers.

³ *Timaeus* 71D.

If the body be the cause of forgetfulness, how can it permit the contrary—remembrance? Do you mean that memory revives after forgetting? But, if the body was a hindrance in the first case, why isn't it hostile in the second?

(11) As a matter of fact, children with young and vigorous souls have better memories. Since they have not yet become immersed in the cares of domestic and public life, they devote themselves exclusively to those studies whose very acquirement is a process of remembrance. Why don't we all remember to the same degree, since are all equal in forgetting? This, however, is true only of the philosophers—and only of some of them. It is curious that Plato is the only one, out of so great a number of races and so great a crowd of wise men, who can remember all the things that he had forgotten.⁴

(12) Therefore, since this, his fundamental argument, is seen to be weak, the whole structure of his theory it was intended to support must collapse: namely, that souls are unborn, dwell in the heavenly regions where they know divine mysteries, and, coming down to this earth, call to mind that previous existence—all of this, indeed, merely to give to heretics the basic idea of their systems.

Chapter 25

(1) To return, then, from this digression on Plato, I shall explain how all souls are derived from one, and when, where, and in what manner souls join the body. The answers to

⁴ It is here in the treatment of Plato's doctrine of 'Reminiscence' that Tertullian's unfair tactics appear most clearly. All too frequently he distorts the true meaning of an adversary's argument in order to hold it up to ridicule. Tertullian must have known the Myth of Er which explained that forgetfulness of the experiences of the soul in the other life was caused by the drinking from the river Lethe, the river of forgetfulness. Cf. Waszink, *op. cit.* 305-306.

these questions will be the same whether they are asked by a philosopher, a heretic, or an ordinary man.

(2) Those who profess the truth do not take seriously the theories of its opponents, especially those who say that the soul is not conceived in the womb, nor formed and produced along with the flesh, but is inserted into the body which comes from the womb in a lifeless state. This is how they describe the process. The seed is through intercourse deposited in the womb and, quickened by its natural motility, develops into the solid substance of flesh alone. In time, the body is born, still warm from the furnace of the womb, and it loses its heat just as a hot iron does when dipped into cold water; on feeling the cold air, the body is shocked into life and utters its first cry. This view is held by Aenesidemus and Stoics in general, and occasionally by Plato, as when he tells us that the soul is an alien thing and originates apart from the womb, since it is received at the first breath of air, just as it departs when a man draws his last breath. Let us see whether this really represents Plato's own view in this matter. Even among physicians there is Hicesius, a traitor to nature and his own profession.

(3) I suppose it was their modesty which forbade them to give the explanation which women would tell them was the true one. The result is that they have to blush even more when, far from agreeing with them, the women prove them wrong. In this matter the best teacher, judge, and witness is the sex that is concerned with birth. I call on you, mothers, whether you are now pregnant or have already borne children; let women who are barren and men keep silence! We are looking for the truth about the nature of woman; we are examining the reality of your pains. Tell us: Do you feel any stirring of life within you in the fetus? Does your groin tremble, your sides shake, your whole stomach throb as the

burden you carry changes its position? Are not these movements a source of joy and an assurance to you that the child within you is alive and playful? Should his restlessness subside, would you not be immediately concerned for him? In fact, would he not be aware of your worry, stirred by this new sound? Would you not go looking for special foods or, perhaps, lose your appetite? Would you not share your ailments even to the extent that, if you suffer a bruise, the child within you would be marked in the same part of the body as you are; as if he were claiming as his own the injuries to his mother?

(4) Now, if these bruises on the child's body are the result of the presence of blood, then without a soul there will be no blood, just as, if health be an attribute of the soul, without a soul there will be no health. If nourishment and fasting, growth and decay, fear and motion involve activities of the soul, the being who performs them must be alive. When he no longer experiences them, he dies. How can we speak of children being born dead unless they were once alive? Who can die unless he once lived? Sometimes, unfortunately, a child is killed while still in the womb, because he is in such a position that delivery is impossible without causing the death of his mother.

(5) Hence, among their instruments, physicians have one, curved in structure, which is used to hold the womb wide open; to this is fitted a kind of circular knife by which the limbs are all too carefully amputated; finally, there is a blunt hook, which is used to extract the victim in a violent delivery. Another deadly instrument is a brazen needle which performs the murder within the womb and is fittingly called the 'child-killer.' Such instruments were used by Hippocrates, Asclepiades and Erasistratus; Herophilus, who practiced dissection of adults, also had them, as did even the kindly Soranus. And

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

(6) I imagine that Hicesius was convinced of the necessity of such harsh measures even though he held the soul was inserted after birth, by means of a blast of cold air; and this, because the root meaning of the Greek word for soul implies some process of cooling. We might well ask him if barbarians and Romans received their souls by some other process, since they happen to call a soul something other than *psyche*. And, further, how many nations can we count who live under a sun so hot that their skins are darkened by its rays? How do they get their souls with no frosty air around them? Need I mention the warmth of delivery rooms and all the precautions to keep women warm at childbirth, to whom the slightest draught is considered dangerous? Why, the fetus is clearly alive in his first [warm] bath, because he immediately cries.

(7) And, if brisk, cold air is such an important item, no one could be born except in the territory of the Germanic and Scythian tribes, or high in the Alps or the Argae. As a matter of fact, the people who dwell in the temperate zones are more prolific and far more intelligent, and it is well known that the Sarmatians are all dull-witted. The minds of men, too, would become sharper because of the cold if their souls arose from cold air, because any substance must resemble its generative power.

(8) Next, we might consider the case of those who were cut out of their mothers' womb living and breathing, as were Bacchus and Scipio. If there be any who think, with Plato, that two souls cannot coexist in the same being any more than two bodies could, I can show him the case of two such souls and even two such bodies and of many other things

joined to the soul. Take the case of possession by the Devil; and not merely of one spirit, as in the case of Socrates' *daimon*, but of the seven devils driven out of Magdalen¹ and of the devils in the Gadarene swine whose number was legion.² Surely, a soul could more easily be united to another soul of the same nature than to a devil, who has a very different nature.

(9) I cannot decide which of his two opinions Plato is contradicting when he warns us (in Book 6 of the *Laws*)³ to be careful lest we stain the soul and the body by the vitiation of the seed in some debased and illicit union. In thus warning us of a danger to the soul he is clearly teaching that it derived from the seed and not (as he said before) from the first breath of the new-born child. If we are not produced from the seed of the soul, how could we account for the fact that, because of resemblance of soul, we are like to our parents in disposition, as Cleanthes said? Why, indeed, did the ancient astrologers cast a man's horoscope from the time of his conception, if the soul does not exist from that moment? The inbreathing of the soul, however we explain it, pertains likewise to this moment of conception.

Chapter 26

(1) The vagaries of human opinion cease to matter as soon as we come to the words of Holy Scripture. Hence, I shall withdraw within our boundaries and there make a stand so that I may prove to the Christian the answer I have given to the philosophers and physicians. Build your faith, my brother, on the foundation that is yours! You know of the

¹ Mark 16.9.

² Mark 5.1.

³ *Laws* 775B-C.

living wombs of those holy women whose children not only breathed before being born but uttered prophecies.

(2) The very vitals of Rebecca¹ are stirred, though the child is a long way from birth and there is no breath of air. Behold, the twin offspring struggles in the womb of their mother, though there yet is no sign of the two nations. We might regard as prophetic this struggle of the two infants, who are at enmity before they are born, who show animosity before animation, if their restlessness merely disturbed their mother. When, however, the womb is opened, their number known, and the symbolic implications of their condition made manifest, we see clearly not only the separate souls of those children but, even then, the beginning of their rivalry.

(3) For, before the first of the twins was full born, he was almost detained in the womb by the second one, whose hand alone had emerged. If we hold the Platonic theory or the Stoic doctrine of the coming of life on exposure to the air, how are you going to explain this action of the second child, who, while still within the womb, tried to hold on to his brother who was already outside? I suppose he took hold of his brother's foot before he breathed and, so, earnestly desired to be born first, while still feeling the warmth of his mother's body. Surely, he was a remarkably vigorous child and even then asserting his rivalry—perhaps he was so because he was even then alive!

(4) You will also recall the accounts of those women who conceived under extraordinary circumstances—those of barren women and of the Virgin Mary. They could only have conceived imperfect children against the course of nature, because one was too old and the other knew not man. You might expect those children, if any, to be without souls, since they had been conceived in an extraordinary fashion.

¹ Gen. 25.22.

But, they were both alive while still in the womb. Elizabeth rejoiced as the infant leaped in her womb; Mary glorifies the Lord because Christ within inspired her.² Each mother recognizes her child and each is known by her child who is alive, being not merely souls but also spirits.

(5) Thus, you read the word of God, spoken to Jeremias: 'Before I formed thee in the womb, I knew thee.'³ If God forms us in the womb, He also breathes on us as He did in the beginning: 'And God formed man and breathed into him the breath of life.'⁴ Nor could God have known man in the womb unless he were a whole man. 'And before thou camest forth from the womb, I sanctified thee.' Was it, then, a dead body at that stage? Surely it was not, for 'God is the God of the living and not of the dead.'⁵

Chapter 27¹

(1) How is a human being really conceived? Is the substance of both body and soul formed at the same time, or

² Luke 1.41,46.

³ Jer. 1.5.

⁴ Gen. 2.7.

⁵ Matt. 22.32.

¹ In this (and the preceding) chapter, Tertullian's doctrine of Traducianism is implicit in his discussion of the origin of the body and soul. Just as the body was generated from the body of the parents, so the soul of the child is derived from the soul of the father and mother at the moment of conception. He was unable to envisage the doctrine of Creationism (the human soul is the result of a direct act of creation), since he felt that act would have to take place either before or after the existence of the body; if before, some approval of the doctrine (Platonic) of transmigration of souls might be taken; if after, then there is some period of time in which the embryo is not an animate being. He could accept neither possibility and he taught the simultaneous origin of body and soul. For St. Augustine and St. Jerome, Creationism seemed to weaken the doctrine of the transmission of Original Sin. Their difficulties were resolved when later theologians clarified the nature of Original Sin as a *privation* of Sanctifying Grace.

has one of them a priority over the other? My view is that both are conceived, formed, and perfected at the same time, just as they are born together, and there is not a moment's interval in their conception by which any priority might be assigned to either one of them.

(2) Now, from man's last moment of life we may get some idea of his first. If death is nothing else than the dissolution of body and soul, life, then, should be defined as the union of soul and body. If this separation occurs simultaneously to both through death, the law of their union must demand that life means the simultaneous joining of soul and body.

(3) Now we believe that life begins at conception, since we hold that the soul begins to exist at that time; for where life is, there must be a soul. Hence, they create life by their union, whose dissolution always means death. If we insist that one comes before the other, then we assign the precise times of semination according to the rank of each. What time can you assign to the bodily seed and what moment can you designate for the conception of the seed of the soul?

(4) If you insist on different times of conception then this difference of time is going to result in totally unrelated substances. Even though we admit that there are two kinds of seed, the one for the body and the other for the soul, we still insist they are unseparated and as such altogether contemporaneous in origin. There is no need to be ashamed of an explanation that is demanded by the truth. Nature should, for us, be an object of reverence and not the occasion of blushes. It is lust that has befouled the intercourse of the sexes, not the natural use of this function. It is the excess and not the normal activity which is unclean. Thus has natural intercourse been blessed by God: 'Increase and multiply.'²

² Gen. 1.28.

On the other hand, He has cursed excess as adultery, debauchery and lewdness.

(5) This natural union of the sexes, therefore, which brings man and woman together in common intercourse, is performed by both soul and body. The soul supplies desire and the body its gratification; the soul furnishes the impulse, the body affords its realization. By the united impulse of both substances, the whole man is stirred and the seminal substance is discharged as a products of both; the body supplying fluidity, the soul, warmth. Now, if the Greek word for soul implies cold, how does it happen that the body becomes cold as soon as the soul departs?

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

(7) Here, the account of the first creation is helpful to our understanding of this matter. The flesh of Adam was formed from the slime of the earth. Now, what is slime except a slightly solidified [or thickened] liquid? There you have the generative fluid. The soul came from the breath of God. Now, what is the breath of God except the exhalation of the spirit, and there you have what we lose in the seminal fluid [of the soul].

(8) In that first creation, therefore, there were two different and distinct elements, slime and breath, which produced man. Thus, by the mixture of the seeds of their two substances, they gave the human race its normal mode of propagation. So, even now, two different seeds flow forth

together, and together they are implanted in the furrow of their seed-plot, and from both there develops a man. In this man, in turn, is a seed contained according to his own species, just as the process of generation has been ordained for all creatures.

(9) And so from one man, Adam, flows this whole stream of souls, while nature obeys the command of God: 'Increase and multiply.' For, in God's declaration at the creation of the first man: 'Let us make man,' the whole human race was proclaimed: 'And let *them* have dominion over the fishes of the sea.'³ And this is quite natural, for the promise of the future harvest lies in the seed.

Chapter 28

(1) What is the source of this ancient doctrine mentioned by Plato as to the successive migrations of souls? He says that they leave this world and go to the other, then come back here again, live their lives and depart once more, and once again from death return to life. Some people say it was invented by Pythagoras, and Albinus holds it to be a divine pronouncement, perhaps of the Egyptian Mercury. But there is no divine oracle save that of the one God which the Prophets, the Apostles and Christ Himself proclaimed. Moses is older than Saturn or even his great-grand children by some nine hundred years, and surely more divine is he in his writings. For he has traced out the history of the human race from the every beginning of the world, indicating according to names and ages the generations of great men, and his prophetic voice sufficiently establishes the divine character of his story.

³ Gen. 1.26. The Vulgate Text here reads '*praesit*' in the singular, but the Greek of the Septuagint is plural.

(2) Now, if the wise man of Samos is Plato's authority for this continuous transmigration of souls from life to death and death to life, then Pythagoras, however noble in other matters, in this at least surely did resort to a disgraceful and deceitful lie in order to establish this theory.¹ Here is his story, in case you never heard it, and you may take my word for it. Pretending to be dead, he condemned himself to hiding in a dungeon for seven years. The only one who knew of his hiding place, his mother, took care of him and kept him informed of those who had died in the interval about whom he was to tell on his return. When he felt that his appearance had changed so that he looked like a dead old man, he came out of his dungeon of deceit and pretended he had returned from the dead.

(3) Since he had been thought dead, anyone would have believed he really had come back to life, especially when he began to tell stories about men who had died in the preceding seven years, which he could only have learned in Hades. Stories were told in ancient time of men coming back from the grave. Why couldn't it happen now also? A story doesn't have to be old to be true, and many a tale of yesterday is false. Even though this theory of Pythagoras is from antiquity, I believe it is completely untrue. How could it be other than false when the evidence for it is founded on a lie? How can I help believing Pythagoras to be a liar (when he teaches transmigration), since he lies to make me believe that he came back from the dead? Why should I believe that in previous incarnations he had been Aethalides, Euphorbus, Pyrrhus the fisherman, and Hermotimus, when as Pythagoras he lies to bolster his doctrine? I might have believed that he had

¹ The method of argumentation used here is common throughout the treatise—that of attacking the general credibility of an opponent, without specifically refuting the details of his doctrine.

come back to life once, though not perhaps these many times, if only he had not deceived me in difficult matters and even in things that might easily have won credence.

(4) He pretended to recognize as his own the shield of Euphorbus that was consecrated at Delphi, and in proof he adduced evidence not generally known. Well, look at that underground dungeon of his and see if you can believe this story. Here is the man who concocted this trick: he buries himself in the earth for seven years, ruins his health, wasting his life on a fraud amidst hunger, idleness and darkness, refusing to look on the light of day. Why, he would descend to any deceit and manufacture any magic trick to pretend to have discovered that famous shield.

(5) It is possible that he might have discovered some recondite documents; he might well have chanced upon some tradition of ancient times; perhaps he bribed some caretaker to let him see them secretly. We all know that magic has great power for exploring secret things: through katabolic, pardedral, and pythonic spirits. It is likely enough that Pherecydes, the master of Pythagoras, indulged in, or perhaps better, dreamed of such practices. Might he not have been possessed of the same demon which in Euphorbus did such bloody deeds? Finally, however, why is it that this man, who tried by means of the shield to prove he was Euphorbus, did not recognize any of his Trojan fellow soldiers? Surely, they, too, must have come to life again, since apparently the dead were rising from their graves.

Chapter 29

(1) There is surely no doubt that dead men come from living men, but there is no evidence of a reversal of the process.¹

¹ *Phaedo* 72A.

From the beginning of time living men came first and, afterwards, dead men. There was only one source from which the dead could have come—the living. But, the living need by no means have come from the dead.

(2) Therefore, if the original process was that the living did not come from the dead, why should they afterwards? Perhaps because the original fountain of life had dried up? Perhaps because the law of human origin was found unsatisfactory? Why, then, did it hold in the case of the dead? Isn't it clear that, because the dead came from the living in the beginning, therefore they should always come from the same source? The law established in the beginning should have continued in both cases or changed in both cases, and, if it was later decided that living should come from dead men, then the parallel case should also have been changed.

(3) If the established order were not to be maintained, then opposites ought not to be formed alternately from opposites. There are many cases of opposites which do not come from another: born and unborn, sight and blindness, youth and age, wisdom and folly. The unborn does not issue from the born because of a supposed law of contraries, nor does youth come again to bloom from old age because it is normal for youth to deteriorate into senility, and, finally, wisdom does not become stupidity because folly may sometimes develop into wisdom.

(4) Albinus is here at pains to distinguish various kinds of opposites, solicitous for the reputation of his master, Plato. He would claim that these examples are not the same as that of life and death, which he had endeavored to explain in accordance with his teacher's principle. Finally, life does not return from death just because death follows upon the completion of life.

Chapter 30

(1) What answer can we give to the rest of their arguments? If, just as death follows life, life should follow death, the number of men in the human race must always remain the same, and that would be merely the number who first inaugurated human life. First, there were the living, and they died; from these dead came the living, and again the living from these dead men. Now, since this process was continually going on among the same group of people, no more came into the world than the original number. For, the men who died could not be more or less than those who had previously returned from death.¹

(2) In the ancient records of the human race, however, we learn that the number of men has gradually increased; either as aborigines, as nomads, as exiles, or as conquerors, men have occupied new lands. The Scythians overran Parthia; the Temenidae, the Peloponnesus; the Athenians, in Asia; the Phrygians, in Italy; and the Phoenicians, Africa. Besides, many races have swarmed over unpopulated lands in large-scale migrations, in order to relieve the crowding of their cities. Native populations have remained in their original home or have loaned vast numbers of people to other lands.

(3) A glance at the face of the earth shows us that it is becoming daily better cultivated and more fully peopled than in olden times. There are few places now that are not accessible; few, unknown; few, unopened to commerce. Beautiful farms now cover what once were trackless wastes, the

¹ Tertullian is here altering the doctrine of his adversaries to make them appear ridiculous. Transmigrationists held that 'the number of souls in existence' was constant, but not that the population of the earth was always stable. Since there was an interval of a thousand years between death and reincarnation, it would appear that the majority of souls at any given time would not be on earth.

forests have given way before the plough, cattle have driven off the beasts of the jungle, the sands of the desert bear fruit and crops, the rocks have been ploughed under, the marshes have been drained of their water, and, where once there was but a settler's cabin, great cities are now to be seen. No longer do lonely islands frighten away the sailor nor does he fear their rocky coasts. Everywhere we see houses, people, stable governments, and the orderly conduct of life.

(4) The strongest witness is the vast population of the earth to which we are a burden and she scarcely can provide for our needs; as our demands grow greater, our complaints against nature's inadequacy are heard by all. The scourges of pestilence, famine, wars, and earthquakes have come to be regarded as a blessing to overcrowded nations, since they serve to prune away the luxuriant growth of the human race. Yet, when the sword of destruction has slaughtered vast hordes of men, the world has never yet been alarmed at the return from the dead of the masses that had died in that catastrophe of a thousand years before. Surely, the equalizing force of loss and gain would have long since become evident if men really returned to life from the grave.

(5) Why is it necessary to wait a thousand years for this return? Why does it not happen in a moment? There is a danger that the demand might exceed the supply if the deficiency is not made up in time. This brief period of our human life, compared to that one thousand years, seems to be very short; too short, in fact, when we consider that the spark of life is far more easily quenched than kindled. Finally, since the human race has not yet lived long enough to test the truth of this theory of transmigration of souls, we cannot agree that men come back to life from death.

Chapter 31

(1) Now if this recovery of life really takes place, personal individuality must be maintained. Hence, each of the souls which once inhabited a body must have returned each into a single body. Now, if two, three, or five souls all unite in the one womb, you will have no true return to life, because they will not return as separate individuals. Yet, in this supposition, the original plan of creation would be followed out, since you would have several souls coming from one.¹

(2) Besides, since souls would have departed from this life at different ages, why do they all come back at the same age? At their birth, all men are imbued with the souls of infants; but, how comes it that a man who dies in old age returns to life as an infant? Far from slipping back in age during its exile of a thousand years, wouldn't it be more likely that it should return to life the richer for its millennial experience in the other world? At least, the soul ought to come back at the age it had when it departed, so as to resume life where it left off.

(3) If they did return as precisely the same souls, even though they might acquire different bodies and totally different fates in life, they ought to bring back with them the same characters, desires, and emotions they had before, since we should hardly have the right to pronounce them the same if they were lacking in precisely the characteristics which might prove their identity. You may ask me: 'How can you be sure all this doesn't happen by some secret process? After all, why should *you* recognize those who come back, strangers to you, after a thousand years?' Ah, but when you tell me Pythagoras was once Euphorbus, I know that it doesn't!

¹ Tertullian is guilty of a sophism here: even though twins were born of one mother, still, at birth, a single soul is found in a single body.

(4) Take Euphorbus. It is clear that his was a military and warlike soul, if we can judge by the renown of his sacred shields. Compare him with the timorous and unwarlike Pythagoras who preferred to pass the time in Italy at geometry, astronomy, and music at a time when Greece was teeming with wars—the very opposite of Euphorbus in character and temperament. Pyrrhus spent his time in catching fish, and Pythagoras wouldn't eat a fish or any animal food. Beans were doubtless part of the ordinary fare of Aethalides and Hermotimus, but Pythagoras wouldn't even allow his disciples to walk through a bean-patch!

(5) Tell me, then, if you please, how can you say they can recover their own souls, if you can show no proof of identity of personality, habits, or way of living? And, out of all of Greece, only four souls are claimed to have returned. But, why should we restrict ourselves to Greece, as if there wouldn't have been transmigration of souls and even of bodies in every country, among all ages, conditions, and sexes, and that, every day, too? And why does Pythagoras alone experience these changes from one personality to another? Why hasn't this happened to me?

(6) However, if it is an exclusive privilege of philosophers, and Greek ones at that (as if there were no philosophers among the Scythians and Indians!), why didn't Epicurus recognize he had once been another person? Why didn't Chrysippus, or Zeno, or, in fact, Plato himself, whom we might well believe to have been Nestor, because of his honeyed eloquence?

Chapter 32

(1) Empedocles, who had once dreamed that he was a god, disdained for that reason, I suppose, to declare that he

had been a mere hero in a previous incarnation, and so asserted: 'I was a shrub and a fish.' Why didn't he say he'd been a pumpkin, since he was such an empty-head? Or a chameleon, so puffed up was he with his own importance? Perhaps he chose a fish so as to avoid rotting in some obscure grave, and he preferred being roasted in the fires of Etna into which he jumped. That probably took care of any subsequent metempsychoses (or transmigrations of bodies), as he could hardly provide more than a light repast, after being so well cooked.

(2) Now we must deal with the horrible theory that some have imagined—that, in the process of transmigration, men become beasts and beasts are turned into men. So, enough for Empedocles and his shrubs and bushes; a passing mention of them will do, lest our amusement prevent us from teaching the truth. Our position may be stated in this way. It is impossible for the human soul to pass into beasts, even though the philosophers may hold that both are made up of the same substantial elements.

(3) Whether for the moment we assume that the soul is made of fire, water, blood, air, or light, we must remember that certain animals possess characteristics that are contrary to some of these elements. For instance, there are cold-blooded animals that are opposed to fire, such as snakes, lizards, and salamanders; and such others as are predominantly composed of water, the enemy of fire. Again, there are dried-up animals that seem to thrive on dryness, like locusts, butterflies, and chameleons. Then there are bloodless animals, like snails, worms, and most fish. As opposed to breath, we find such as have no lungs or windpipes, and hence cannot breathe—gnats, ants, moths, and other tiny insects. Opposed to air, there are countless creatures who live underground or under water; you've seen them, even though you can't give them

names. Finally, we know of many animals that are totally blind or see only in the dark, such as moles, bats and owls; it is clear that these have nothing to do with light. All these examples have been chosen so as to illustrate the point with clarity.

(4) But, apart from these, if I could get a handful of Epicurean 'atoms,' or get a glimpse of the 'numbers' of Pythagoras, if it were possible to trip over the 'ideals' of Plato or capture some of the 'entelechies' of Aristotle, I am sure I could find even in these some characteristics that would be opposed to some animals. No matter what elements may make up the human soul, I maintain that it could never be reborn into animals so contrary to its original nature. This transfer could never produce a new being; in fact, everything would lead us to expect that there would be violent opposition to such a union because of the inherent contrariety of those elements. A body so composed would be in a state of continual civil war, and, as each animal developed naturally, the strife would only grow fiercer.

(5) The human soul has obviously been destined to dwell in a certain type of abode; it has its proper food and care, feelings and emotions, its own process of reproduction and birth. In an individual body it has its own disposition, its proper functions—joys and sorrows, faults and desires, pleasures and pains, its specific remedies—finally, its own mode of life and its own end, in death.

(6) Now, will you tell me how a soul so afraid of great height and depth, which is exhausted from climbing stairs, which drowns if it falls into a fish pond, is ever in some future like to soar to the heavens as an eagle or dive to the depths of the sea as an eel? How is one who has been brought up on exotic and delicate foods to feed as a goat or a quail on straw, thorns, or the bitter leaves of wild plants, or root in

dunghills for worms and other poisonous vermin? Suppose it becomes a bear, or a lion, how can it stoop to devouring carrion or, remembering what is once was, even human flesh? We need not waste time on any more such absurdities. Now, since a human soul must be of a certain definite size and extent, how will it manage in very large or very small animals? Whatever its size, every body must be completely filled by its soul and, in turn, cover the soul entirely. How is a human soul going to fill the body of an elephant? How can it be squeezed into a gnat? Surely, it can't be so contracted or extended without serious danger.

(7) This naturally leads to another question. Since the soul is clearly incapable of adapting itself to the bodies of animals and their natural characteristics, is it going to shed all human qualities and, by this transfer, take on the characteristics of various species of animals? If, indeed, through this transmigration it loses what it had, it will cease to be what it was; if it becomes something altogether different, then this so-called metempsychosis is nonsense and there is no reason for assigning the change to the soul which will be so changed that it has practically ceased to exist. Only when the soul comes out just as it was in the beginning can there be said to be metempsychosis.

(8) Now, if the soul cannot change so as to lose its identity nor stay as it is, if it is to become so radically modified, I am still looking for some good reason for this alleged transformation. Even though we do call some men beasts because of their habits, characters, and desires—even God said: 'Man is made like to the senseless beasts'¹—a rapacious man does not really become a hawk, nor the impure man a dog; vicious men are not panthers, good men, lambs, chatterers, swallows; nor do the pure become doves,

¹ Ps. 48.21.

as if the same substance of the soul would repeat its natural disposition everywhere in the properties of certain animals. There is a difference between a substance and the nature of that substance, since the substance is an exclusive property of one thing though the nature may be common to many individuals.

(9) For example, a stone or a piece of iron is a substance, but hardness is the nature of both of them. Because of hardness they are alike, but they differ in their respective substances. You'll find softness in wool and in a feather; their natures make them alike, but they are different in substance. So, though we may call a man a wild beast or a harmless one, we don't mean that he has the soul of a beast. Similarity of nature is clearest when there is the greatest dissimilarity of substance. By the very fact that you consider a man to be like a beast you admit that the souls are different; note that you say 'similar' and not 'identical.'

(10) This is what is meant by the word of the psalmist, quoted above—man is like the senseless beast in nature, but not in substance. Besides, God would not have said that of man, if He knew him to be a beast in his substance.

Chapter 33

(1) This doctrine is advanced as a means of assuring proper judicial retribution, on the supposition that human souls in accordance with their deserts are assigned (in a subsequent incarnation) to the bodies of animals. Some of them, in beasts destined for slaughter, are to be executed; some, in animals that slave and toil, are to be subjugated and worn out with labor; those in unclean animals are to suffer debasement.

(2) On this same principle, the souls placed in ani-

mals that are most beautiful, noble, useful, and attractive are to be honored, loved, cared for, and sought after. To this I say: If they are changed, then they won't get the punishment they deserve. The whole idea of punishment will be frustrated if they have no consciousness of what they truly deserve. This realization will be missing if the state of the soul is changed, and it is changed unless they remain the same personalities they were before. They should surely retain their individuality until the judgment, as was noted by Mercurius the Egyptian when he said that a soul on departing from the body was not dissolved into the world-soul, but maintained its individuality, so that it might be able to render an account to the Father for its sins during life. It would be well for us here to recall the awesome dignity and magnificence of Divine Justice, for I fear that we are likely to assign too high a place to human judgment. To it we allow too much freedom, and often it is too severe in visiting punishment and again too generous in dispensing its favors.

(3) Now, what do you suppose will be the fate of the soul of a murderer if merely human justice is to dictate the punishment? Perhaps it will inhabit some cow destined for the butcher's knife, that it may be killed just as he had murdered another, to be skinned as he had flayed a man, to be served up as food since he had thrown his victims to the beasts of the forest glens.

(4) If that is to be his punishment, it would seem that this soul would find more comfort than pain in such a fate. He would be cooked by expert chefs, served swimming in sauces that would do honor to Apicius or Lurco, served at the tables of gourmets like Cicero, on gleaming silver platters worthy of Sulla—in a word, his obsequies would be the *pièce de résistance* of a sumptuous banquet. He would finally be devoured by people like himself, instead of by buzzards

and wolves, and find his tomb in a human body. At last he would rise again, return to his own form, and, if in the end he had any realization of human judgments, what else would he do but laugh at their futility?

(5) Even while still alive, then, the murderer is to be delivered to various kinds of beasts, some of them trained to a ferocity that is not natural to them. His death is prolonged as much as possible so as to inflict the last possible stroke of punishment. If by chance the soul escape the final blow of the sword by dying, then the body is further tormented. The full price of its crime is exacted by stabbing of the throat and sides. The mangled body is then thrown into the fire, so that even burial may be a form of torture. The bodies must be burned, but the funeral pyre is not so carefully tended that the animals do not have a chance to tear the remains. Not a shred of mercy is to be shown even to the bare bones and his ashes.

(6) The punishment that men would assign for the murderer is thus as great (if not greater) than that which nature demands. Indeed, anyone would prefer the justice of the world, which, as the Apostle testifies: 'beareth not the sword in vain,'¹ and is, in fact, an instrument of Divine Justice in punishing murderers. Think of the torments attached to other crimes, such as the crosses, the bonfires, the sacks, the hooks, and the precipices—who wouldn't prefer the condemnations of Empedocles and Pythagoras to those?

(7) They would condemn a soul to dwell in the bodies of asses and mules, to be punished by drudgery and slavery turning a mill-stone of a water-wheel. But these tasks they would find easy compared to the horror of the metal mines, the workhouses, road-building, and the jails where men rot away in boredom. Those who surrender life to the judge

1 Rom. 13.4.

after lives of nobility might well look for rewards, but actually they, too, are punished. It must indeed be a handsome reward for a good man to be turned into an animal, however good or beautiful!

(8) Ennius once dreamed that Homer had lived in the body of a peacock. Now, I wouldn't believe a poet even when he was awake, though I do admit that a peacock is a beautiful bird and none has more beautiful tail feathers. But, since a poet's joy is in singing his songs, what good is a handsome tail when he has a raucous voice? So, it was no favor at all to Homer to imprison him in a peacock. Homer would get much more satisfaction out of the world's acclaim which heralds him as the father of the liberal arts; the laurels of his fame would be far more pleasing than the decorations of his tail.

(9) But, let the poets migrate into peacocks and swans! At any rate, a swan has a pleasing voice. Tell me, what animal you would choose for the good man Aeacus? In what beast would you clothe the chaste Dido? With what bird would you reward patience, what animal would become the abode of holiness, and what fish would cover innocence? All of these are the servants of man, his menials, or dependents. Is that to be the reward of the man whose virtues merited pictures, statues, titles of honor, distinguished public privileges, and even sacrifices from the Senate and the people?

(10) What kind of reward would that be for the gods to pronounce as man's recompense after death? Far more fallible are they than human judgments; contemptible they are as punishments, and, as rewards, disgusting. The vilest of men would have no fear of them and the best would scarcely be expected to look forward to them. They would provide more incentive to criminals than to saints, since the former would thus escape more quickly the world's judgment,

and the latter would be, by them, held up from their reward. Fine teachers you are, you philosophers who try to persuade us that punishments and rewards that come after death rest lightly upon our souls! Whatever sentence awaits us after death will surely hurt the more at the conclusion of life than while we are carrying out our duties. For, nothing is so complete as that which comes at the very end of life, and that which comes in our last days is the more divine.

(11) God's judgment will be for us the more complete since it will come after death, a sentence to eternal punishment or reward for souls which will not undergo transmigration into beasts but a resurrection in their own bodies. And this will happen once and for all and on that day which is known to the Father alone,² so that the soul continually solicitous for the reward she hopes for by faith may ever celebrate that day, never knowing when it will come, ever fearing the arrival of that for which she longs.

Chapter 34

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

(2) There was Simon of Samaria, who in the Acts of the Apostles¹ tried to buy the Holy Spirit. When he and his

² Matt. 24.36.

¹ Acts. 8.18.

money were condemned by the Holy Spirit, he feigned a kind of repentance, but then devoted himself to the destruction of truth, to console himself for his punishment. With the help of his magic arts and tricks, he bought out of a brothel some Tyrian woman named Helen with the same money with which he would have bought the Holy Spirit—a deal worthy of this miserable man.

(3) Then he pretended that he was the Supreme Father, and this woman his first conception, through whom he intended to create angels and archangels. When she became aware of this design, she deserted the father and, going down to the lower areas, in anticipation of his plan she produced the angelic powers who were totally ignorant of the father, and they in turn created this world. These angels then took her prisoner, fearing, just as she had, that when she was gone they might appear to be the offspring of another. Hence, they exposed her to every abuse, and, that she might never escape from her degradation, she was imprisoned in the flesh, forced to take human form.

(4) So, for many centuries she flitted from one female form to another and became the notorious Helen who brought ruin to Priam, and later to Stesichorus, whom she blinded because of his abusive poems and whose sight she later restored when he had sung her praises. Finally, after passing through numerous other bodies, she further defiled the name of Helen as a prostitute. This was the lost sheep for whom the supreme father, Simon, went in search and, when he had found her, brought back on his shoulders or his loins. Then he turned his attention to the salvation of mankind, and out of revenge tried to free them from the angelic powers. To deceive them he took on a visible shape and in Judea he posed as the Son, as a man among men; but in Samaria, as the Father.

(5) Poor Helen! You have a hard time of it between the poets and the heretics who branded you as an adulteress and a prostitute. Perhaps her rescue from Troy was a more noble exploit than her liberation from the brothel! It took a thousand ships to get her out of Troy, but it wouldn't need more than a thousand pence to free her from the brothel! Simon, you ought to be ashamed of yourself—it took you so long to find her, and you were so careless in holding on to her! You could learn gallantry from Menelaus; as soon as he missed her, he began to search, he follows when she was found to have been stolen, he rescues her after ten years of war. No deceit or trickery or delay for him! I am afraid that Menelaus looks like a much better 'father' who struggled so long and valiantly for the recovery of his Helen!

Chapter 35

(1) However, it was not for you alone, Simon, that they invented this theory of transmigration of souls. Carpocrates naturally made good use of it, too, and he is just like you, a magician and a fornicator, except that he had no Helen. He believed that souls continued to take new bodies in order to accomplish the complete overthrow of all human and divine truth. He held that no man's life was utterly complete until he had befouled himself with every iniquity that is considered vile. You see, he held that nothing was really bad but thinking makes it so. Hence, transmigration was demanded if any man in the first stage of life had not indulged in all that is forbidden. For, obviously, sin is the natural product of life! So, the soul had to be called back to life if it were found below the quota of sin, 'until it has paid the last farthing,'¹ and cast into the prison of the body.

¹ Matt. 5.26.

(2) Thus he distorts the meaning of that remark of our Lord which is perfectly clear and straightforward and should be understood in its obvious meaning. The 'adversary' whom Christ mentions is the heathen who, along with us, walks the road of this life. We would have to leave the world altogether² if we are to have no contact at all with him. Therefore, He bids us be kind to such a man: 'Love your enemies and pray for those who say evil of you,'³ lest any man irritated by your injustice in some business transaction 'deliver you to his own judge'⁴ who will throw you into jail until you have paid the whole debt that you owe him.

(3) Now, if you choose to interpret 'adversary' as the Devil, then you are bid by Christ to make even with him a compact which will be in accordance with your faith. The compact you have already made with him is to renounce him, his pomps, and his angels. There is agreement between you on that point. Your friendship with the Devil will arise from your adherence to your renunciation. Never will you try to get back from him anything that you have renounced, anything that you have handed over to him, lest he might hale you before God your judge as a cheat and as a violator of your agreement. For, we do read of the Devil as an accuser of the saints and as the prosecutor.⁵ The Judge may then hand you over to the angel of retribution and he will cast you into the prison of Hell, whence there is no release until every sin has been expiated in the period before the Resurrection. No interpretation could be better or more true than this one.

(4) To come back to Carpocrates, who would be the enemy and adversary in his opinion, since the soul must pay

² 1 Cor. 5.10.

³ Matt. 5.44.

⁴ Matt. 5.25-26.

⁵ Apoc. 12.10.

its debt by committing all kinds of sins? I suppose it would have to be some wiser mind which would force the soul into some act of virtue and drive it from body to body until it should be found free of all debt to the virtuous life in any body. This is judging a tree to be good by its bad fruit and from the worst possible teachings to derive the doctrine of truth.

(5) I fully expect these heretics to seize upon the example of Elias as reincarnated in John the Baptist, and thus they would have our Lord espousing the doctrine of metempsychosis. 'Elias indeed has come and they knew him not.'⁶ And again: 'And if you are willing to receive it, here is Elias who was to come.'⁷ Was the question of the Jews to John, 'Art thou Elias,'⁸ to be understood in a Pythagorean sense, and not in reference to the divine pronouncement: 'Behold I send you Elias, the Thesbite'⁹

(6) But their theory of transmigration refers to the recall of a soul that had died long before and to its insertion in some other body. Elias, however, is to return not after leaving this life by death, not to be returned to his body, since he never left it, but he will come back to the world from which he has been removed. He will return not to take up a life he had left off, but for the fulfillment of a prophecy. He will come back as Elias, with the same name. How, then, could John be Elias? The voice of the angel tells us: 'And he shall go before the people in the spirit and power of Elias,'¹⁰ and not in the soul or body of Elias. These substances are the specific property of each man, while 'spirit and power' are

6 Matt. 17.12.

7 Matt. 11.14.

8 John 1.21.

9 Mal. 4.5.

10 Luke 1.17.

extrinsic gifts conferred by the grace of God, and so they may be transferred to another according to the will of God as happened long ago with respect to the spirit of Moses.

Chapter 36

(1) Let us now go back to the matter we interrupted to take up this question of transmigration. In the discussion of the conflicting opinions of philosophers and heretics and of that old saying of Plato's, we established that the soul is a seed placed in man and transmitted by him, that from the beginning there was one seed of the soul, as there was one seed of the flesh, for the whole human race. Now we will take up the points which follow from these.

(2) Since the soul is implanted in the womb along with the body, and along with the body receives its sex, so neither one of them can be regarded as the cause of the sex. Now, if there were any interval of time between their conception, so that either soul or flesh were first implanted, one might ascribe a specific sex to one of them, owing to the difference of time of their impregnation, so that either soul or flesh would be the cause of the sex of the human being.

(3) Even so Apelles (I mean the heretic, not the painter) speaks of male and female souls before bodies are formed, as he learned from Philumena, and so holds that the flesh receives its sex from the soul. Those, however, who believe that the soul is placed after birth in the body which had previously been formed, naturally take the sex of the soul from the male or female body.

(4) As a matter of fact, the two seeds together are infused; hence, they share the same sex in accordance with this mysterious power of nature. Surely, the formation of our first parents attests to the truth of this view. The male was molded first

and the female somewhat later. So, for a certain length of time, her flesh was without specific form, such as she had when taken from Adam's side; but she was then herself, a living being, since I would then consider her soul as a part of Adam. Besides, God's breath would have given her life, if she had not received both soul and body from Adam.

Chapter 37

(1) There is undoubtedly some power, some servant of God's will, which controls the whole process by which the human embryo is implanted in the womb, and there developed and brought to its final form. All these stages were noticed by the Romans, who in their superstition designated the goddess, Alemona, to nourish the fetus in the womb; they appointed Nona and Decima to watch over the critical months, Partula was supposed to care for the actual birth, and Lucina brought the child to the light of day.

(2) The embryo, therefore, becomes a human being from the moment when its formation is completed. For, Moses imposed punishment in kind for the man who was guilty of causing an abortion on the ground that the embryo was rudimentary 'man,' exposed to the chances of life and death, since it has already been entered in the book of fate. And this, although it still dwells within the mother and shares with her their mutual life.

(3) Now, so as to cover the whole process of birth, I ought to say something of the different stages of pregnancy. A normal birth takes place at the beginning of the tenth month and those who are interested in numbers regard the number ten as the parent of all numbers and, so, as the master of human birth.

(4) I should rather attribute the choice of ten to God,

as if these ten months were man's introduction to the Ten Commandments, so that the ten months of our physical birth would be parallel to the means of our spiritual rebirth in God. Since a child born in the seventh month has a better chance of living than one born in the eighth, I think this is out of respect for the Sabbath. Thus, the image of God in a child would sometimes coincide with the number of the day on which God's creation was completed. So, even though a birth be premature, it may coincide with the number seven, a symbol of the Resurrection, of rest, and of the Kingdom. The number eight, however, is not concerned with birth, since in eternity, which it represents, there will be no marrying.

(5) We have already discussed the close union of soul and body from the moment of the joining of their seeds to the complete formation of the fetus. Now, we maintain their intimate conjunction even after they have been born; together, soul and body grow, each in accordance with its nature; as the body grows in size and external form, the soul develops in intelligence and perception. Not that the substance of the soul increases, lest we should imagine that it therefore could decrease; this would imply the possibility of its complete destruction. But, that power of the soul which contains all its native potentialities gradually develops along with the body, without any change in the initial substance which it received by being breathed into the man in the beginning.

(6) For instance, take a rough chunk of silver or gold: its mass is gathered together into a solid nugget which is all silver or gold. But, when it has been beaten out into a sheet of gold, it becomes larger than it was in its original form, but larger only by being extended into a flat surface—it has not increased its original bulk; it is broader, but no heavier.

So, though its extent may have increased, there is no more metal than before.

(7) Greater also is the gleam of the metal after beating, but that, too, was surely there before, even though not apparent. Later, various other changes may be made in it, in proportion to its malleability, but these are no more than variations of shape. In this fashion, the growth of the soul takes place. Age does not add bulk, but merely develops latent potentialities.

Chapter 38

(1) We established, above, the principle that all the natural potentialities of the soul with regard to sensation and intelligence are inherent in its very substance, as a result of the intrinsic nature of the soul. As the various stages of life pass, these powers develop, each in its own way, under the influence of circumstances, whether of education, environment, or of the supreme powers. At this point in our discussion of the union of soul and body, we now wish to affirm that the puberty of the soul coincides with that of the body; at about the age of fourteen years, puberty comes to the soul through the development of the senses and to the body by the growth of its organs. We choose this age, not because Asclepiades sets that as the age of reason, nor because civil law then considers a boy as competent to conduct business, but because this was determined from the beginning.

(2) If Adam and Eve felt it necessary to clothe themselves once they had come to the knowledge of good and evil, then we claim to have the same knowledge once we first experience shame. From this age when the genitals cause blushing and must be covered, concupiscence is fostered by the eyes, which in turn communicate desire to the

mind, until a full knowledge has been attained. Then, man covers himself with the fig leaves which themselves excite passion and he is driven out of the paradise of his innocence. From there he falls into unnatural vices, which are the perversion of nature's laws.

(3) There is only one strictly natural desire—that of food. This God conferred on man from the beginning: 'Of every tree of paradise thou shalt eat,'¹ and after the flood He said to Noe and his sons: 'Behold I have given you all things as food, even as the green herbs,'² and here He was looking to the good of the body primarily, even though food is also good for the soul. We have to cut the ground from beneath the argument of the quibbler who would argue to the mortality of the soul because the soul apparently desires food, is sustained by it, grows weak when it is withheld, and finally appears to die of starvation.

(4) At this point we should ask, not *which faculty* desires food but *for whose advantage* is it desired, and, if it be for its own advantage, why and when and how long? Besides, we must distinguish desires that are natural from those which are necessary, accidental from essential. The soul will desire food for itself because of an external circumstance, but for the body because the latter needs it for itself. For, the body is the dwelling place of the soul; the soul, merely its tenant for a time.

(5) The temporary lodger, then, will have desires for the good of the house for as long as he is to live in it; he will not become part of the foundations, of the plaster on the walls, or of the beams that support the house. He simply wants to live inside, and he can't live except in a soundly built structure.

¹ Gen. 2.16.

² Gen. 9.3.

(6) And so (to apply this to the soul), if the body collapses owing to the lack of the sustenance it once enjoyed, the soul may depart in full possession of all the attributes of its nature: immortality, reason, sensation, intelligence, and free will.

Chapter 39

(1) All the endowments which the soul received at birth are obscured and corrupted by the Devil, who from the very beginning cast an envious eye on them, so that they are not properly cared for nor perform their functions as they ought. For, the Devil lies in wait to trap every human soul from the moment of its birth, to which he is invited to assist by all the superstitious practices which surround child-birth.

(2) All men are born surrounded by the idolatry of the midwife: the wombs from which they are born are still wrapped in the ribbons which were hung on the idols, and thus the child is consecrated to the demons; in labor, they chant prayers to Lucina and Diana; for a whole week a table is set in honor of Juno; on the final day, the 'Writing Fates' are invoked; and the child's first step is sacred to Statina.

(3) After that, everyone dedicates the child's head to sin by cutting a lock of his hair, shaving the whole head with a razor, binding it up as for sacrifice, or sealing it for some sacred use—and all this for the sake of some devotion to the clan or the ancestors, either in public or in private. Thus it was that Socrates was found by the demonic spirit in his boyhood; and so to each person is assigned a genius, which is another name for a demon. As a result, there is hardly a birth that is free from impurity, at least among the pagans.

(4) This is the reason why St. Paul said that, when

either of the parents was sanctified, the children could be born holy, as much from the privilege of Christian birth as from the conferring of Christian baptism. For, he says: 'Otherwise they would have been born unclean,'¹ as if the children of believers were in some sense destined for holiness and salvation, and in the pledge of this hope he supported those marriages which he wished to continue. In general, of course, he was mindful of the words of Christ: 'Unless a man be born of water and the Spirit, he will not enter into the Kingdom of God';² in other words, he cannot be holy.

Chapter 40

(1) Every soul is considered as having been born in Adam until it has been reborn in Christ. Moreover, it is unclean until it has been thus regenerated.¹ It is sinful, too, because it is unclean, and its shame is shared by the body because of their union.

(2) Now, although the flesh is sinful and we are forbidden to walk in accordance with it, and since its works are condemned for lusting against the spirit,² and men therefore marked as carnal, still the body does not merit this disgrace in its own right. For, it is not of itself that it thinks or feels anything toward urging or commanding something sinful. How could it, when it is only an instrument? And, an instrument not as a servant or a friend—they are human

¹ 1 Cor. 7.14.

² John 3-5. In his solicitude to make no exceptions to the inheritance of Original Sin, Tertullian here adds the general law, as contained in Christ's words to Nicodemus. The children of believing parents must be baptized even though they may be called (by anticipation of their Baptism) *sancti*. Cf. d'Alès, *op. cit.* 265-6.

¹ Rom. 5.14; 6.4; 1 Cor. 15.22.

² Rom. 6.12-14.

beings—but rather as a cup or something like that; it is body, and not soul. Now, a cup may serve the need of a thirsty man, but, unless he lifts the cup to his lips, the cup is no servant of his.

(3) Now, the specific characteristic of man is not that he is formed of clay nor is his flesh the human person as if a faculty of the soul and separate person, but it is a thing of altogether different substance and state, joined to the soul, however, as a possession, an instrument for the conduct of life. Hence, the flesh is blamed in the Scriptures because, without the flesh, the soul is unable to accomplish anything in the pursuit of passion, such as gluttony, drunkenness, cruelty, idolatry, and other works of the flesh, operations which are not merely internal sensations but result in external actions.

(4) Finally, sins of thought that do not result in action are imputed to the soul: ‘Whosoever shall look on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart.’³ Besides, what has the flesh ever done independently of the soul in deeds of virtue, justice, suffering, and chastity? In fact, what kind of thing is that to which no praise is ever offered for good actions, but only blame for evil things? The one who assists in the commission of a crime is brought to trial for complicity and is accused along with the principal criminal. Greater is the disgrace of the master when his servants are punished because of him; the one who gives the orders is punished more severely, but the one who obeys them is not acquitted.

³ Matt. 5.28.

Chapter 41

(1) Besides the evil that mars the soul as a result of the machinations of the Devil, still another evil has previously affected it, and this is in a certain sense natural to it, since it flows from its origin. As we have said, the corruption of nature is a second nature, one which has its own god and father, namely, the author of all corruption. Nevertheless, there is some good in the soul, the remains of that original, divine, and genuine good which is its proper nature.

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

(3) Thus, some men are good, others, bad, yet their souls all belong to the same class. There is some good in the worst of us, and the best of us harbor some evil within us. God alone is without sin, and the only sinless man is Christ, since He is God. Hence, the soul, conscious of its divine origin and native goodness, renders prophetic testimony to God in such expressions as 'Good God,' 'God will provide,' and 'God bless you.' So, just as no soul is wholly without sin, so no soul is entirely bereft of some seeds of good.

(4) Therefore, when the soul embraces the faith, it is regenerated by this new birth in water and virtue celestial; the veil of its former corruption is removed and it at last perceives the full glory of the light. Then is it welcomed by the Holy Spirit as, at its physical birth, it was met by

the evil spirit. The flesh naturally follows the soul which is now wedded to the Spirit and, as part of the wedding dowry, it is no longer the slave of the soul but the servant of the Spirit. A blessed marriage, indeed; but, would that no infidelity were to follow!¹

Chapter 42

(1) It remains for us to speak of death, so that our discussion of the soul may end with that with which the soul concludes this life. Epicurus, according to his well-known doctrine, believed that death did not pertain to us. He says: 'Whatever is dissolved is without sensation, and what is without sensation is nothing to us.'¹ But it is not death (but man) who experiences dissolution and the loss of sensation. And even Epicurus admits that the man who dies suffers something. Besides, it is ridiculous to say that so great a force as death means nothing to the man for whom it means the separation of soul and body and the end of sense knowledge.

(2) Seneca is more to the point: 'After death, all things are at an end, even death itself.'² In that supposition, death certainly pertains to itself, since it, too, comes to an end; and much more to man, who himself comes to an end among all

1 We must not look to Tertullian for the exact formulation of the doctrine of the nature of Original Sin which later resulted from the profound analyses of the scholastic theologians. Most prominently before his mind were the manifold revolts against the Good—the concrete effects of Original Sin as inherited from Adam. While not clearly distinguishing Original Sin (the privation of Divine Grace) from the effects that remain (even after baptism), he was perfectly clear as to the fact of our regeneration in Christ by baptism and on the indwilling of the Holy Spirit in a soul so sanctified. Cf. d'Alès *op. cit.* 267; 324-333.

1 Epicurus, *Sententiae* #2.

2 Seneca, *Troad.* 397.

the things that are finished. If death means nothing to us, then neither does life. For, if death by which we are dissolved is nothing, then life which unites us into one being is equally nothing. Thus, the loss or the acquisition of sensation also are unimportant.

(3) The fact is that, if you destroy the soul, you also destroy death. We, however, have to speak of death as a second life and another existence of the soul, for, even if death means nothing to us, we pertain to death. Hence, sleep, the image of death, is pertinent to our subject.

Chapter 43

(1) First, then, we will speak of sleep, and afterwards of the manner in which the soul meets death. Sleep is not something unnatural, as many philosophers held when they said that it came from causes that are beyond nature.

(2) The Stoics define sleep as a suspension of the activity of the senses: Epicurus, as the weakening of the animal spirit; Anaxagoras and Xenophanes describe it as a weariness of the soul; Empedocles and Parmenides say it is a cooling of the soul; Strato holds it to be a separation of the spirit from the body; Democritus, as the indigence of the soul; while Aristotle sees sleep as a result of the dispersal of heat around the heart. I must confess that I have slept a good deal and never experienced any of those conditions. I don't believe that sleep is some kind of weariness, either; in fact, it seems to be quite the opposite and removes weariness, and a man is refreshed rather than fatigued when he wakes up. Besides, sleep is not always the result of fatigue, but, when it is, the fatigue disappears in sleep.

(3) Nor can we admit that sleep is a process of cooling or dispersal of heat. In fact, our bodies become warm in

sleep and, on those theories, our food could not be properly distributed throughout the body during sleep if the process were hurried by heat or delayed by cold. Further proof is found in the fact that perspiration is a sign of an overheated digestion. In fact, the very word for 'digestion' [*concoquere*] implies heat and not cold.

(4) The immortality of the soul is sufficient proof of the falsity of the theories which say that sleep is a weakening of the animal spirit, the indigence of the soul, or the separation of the soul from the body, because, if the soul could decrease in any way, it could perish altogether.

(5) Nothing remains but to agree with the Stoics and to define sleep as the suspension of sense activity, since it brings quiet to the body but not to the soul. The soul is always in motion, always active, and it never succumbs to rest, because that would be contrary to immortality. Nothing that is immortal will permit a cessation of its activity, and that is just what sleep is. Sleep generously bestows the favor of quiet on the *body*, which is mortal.

(6) Anyone, therefore, who doubts the naturalness of sleep will run into the dialecticians in their controversies as to the distinction between natural and unnatural, so that he will begin to believe natural, things which he thought unnatural. For, nature has so arranged some things that they appear to be beyond its powers. As a result, anything can be natural or unnatural, as occasion requires. For us, as Christians, the matter must be settled by what we learn from God, the Author of all the things we are discussing.

(7) We believe that nature is a rational work of God. Now, reason presides over sleep, since it is so fitting for man; in fact, it is useful and even necessary. Without sleep, the soul could never find means of restoring the weary body, or rebuilding its energy, assuring its health, providing surcease

from toil and a remedy for overwork. Day departs that we may enjoy sleep; night makes sleep obligatory by stealing the color from all things. Since, then, sleep is indispensable for our life, and health, there is nothing irrational about it and, consequently, nothing unnatural.

(8) Thus, physicians consider as unnatural anything which is contrary to our complete good health, such as those diseases which prevent sleep—pains in the head and the stomach. By this they have implicitly declared sleep to be natural. Further, when they declare that lethargy is not natural, they are predicating their belief on the fact that the normal use of sleep is a natural thing. Every natural thing is impaired by excess or defect, but is maintained by the proper amount. The thing, therefore, that is rendered unnatural by defect or excess becomes natural in the proper measure.

(9) Suppose we were to declare eating and drinking to be functions unnatural to man. Yet, these are certainly an important preparation for sleep and the instinct for sleep was impressed upon man from the very beginning. If you look to God for instruction, you will see that Adam enjoyed sleep before rest; he slept before he had ever labored, or even before he had eaten or spoken.¹ Thus, men may learn that sleep is a natural function and one that takes precedence over all other natural powers.

(10) From this, then, we are led to trace even the image of death in sleep. If Adam is a type of Christ, then Adam's sleep is a symbol of the death of Christ,² and by the wound in the side of Christ was typified the Church, the true Mother of all the living. Hence, sleep is so salutary and rational and has become the model of that which is common to the whole race of man.

¹ Gen. 2.21.

² 1 Cor. 15.22.

(11) By means of such types God has foreshadowed everything in the dispensation of His providence and so He has willed to set before us each day, with greater clarity than Plato ever did, the outlines of the beginning and end of human life. He uses for this all sorts of types and parables in both words and deeds, thus stretching out His hand to aid our faith. Thus He presents to your view the human body touched by the friendly gift of repose, stretched out by the kindly need of rest, immovably still in sleep as it was before life began and will be after life has closed, in proof of man's condition when he first was formed and after he has been buried—as if sleep awaited the soul before it was first bestowed on man and after it has been taken away.

(12) In sleep, the soul acts as if it were present elsewhere and the imitation of absence *which is sleep* is a preparation for its future departure in death (we will see this later in the story of Hermitimus.) Meantime, the soul dreams. Whence come its dreams? The soul does not altogether give in to rest and idleness nor surrender its immortality to the power of sleep. It continues to show itself in constant motion; it wanders over land and sea, engages in trade, is excited, labors, plays, sorrows and rejoices, pursues the lawful and the unlawful, and clearly shows that it can accomplish much without the body, that it is supplied with members of its own, although showing the need it has of exercising its activity in the body once again. Thus, when the body awakens, it portrays before your eyes the resurrection of the dead by returning to its natural functions. There you have the natural explanation and the rational nature of sleep. Thus, by the image of death, you are introduced to faith, you nourish hope, you learn both how to live and die, you learn watchfulness even when you are asleep.

Chapter 44

(1) They tell the story about Hermotimus that he used to be deprived of his soul during sleep as if the soul went off from the body, on the pretext that his human existence would be temporarily abolished. His wife let out the secret and some of his enemies, coming upon him asleep, burned his body as if it were a corpse. When his soul returned; too late, I suppose, it accepted the fact that it had been murdered. His fellow citizens of Clazomene paid him the honor of erecting a temple to him, which women are forbidden to enter because of the perfidy of his wife.

(2) Why do I tell this story? So that superstition may not be increased by the tale of Hermotimus among the common people who believe that sleep is the temporary departure of the soul. It must have been some kind of heavy sleep such as is caused by a nightmare or perhaps some special disease which Soranus suggests, rejecting the idea of a nightmare, or some such malady as took hold of Epimenides when he slept for almost fifty years. Suetonius reports that Nero never had dreams unless, perhaps, near the end of his life after some great fright. Theopompus says the same of Thrasymedes.

(3) Suppose it were believed that the soul of Hermotimus actually went into such complete idleness and repose in sleep that it was separated from his body? You can imagine anything you like so long as it does not entail freedom for the soul to escape from time to time from the body without death. If such a thing were declared to have happened to his soul once (like a total eclipse of the sun or moon), I should imagine it happened through divine intervention. It would not be unlikely that a man might be warned or frightened by God, as by a bolt of lightning or a sudden stroke of death,

but it would be much more natural to think that such a warning would come in a dream. But, if this were not a dream, then it ought to have happened to Hermotimus when he was awake.

Chapter 45

(1) Here we are obliged to discuss the Christian explanation of dreams as accidents of sleep and rather serious disturbances of the soul. The soul we hold to be perennially active because of its continual movement which is a sign both of its divinity and its immortality. So, then, when that special comfort of bodies, rest, comes, the soul disdains an idleness which is alien to its nature and, deprived of the faculties of the body, makes use of its own.

(2) Just imagine a gladiator without his weapons or a charioteer without his team, but still going through the motions of their respective employments. They fight and struggle, but nothing happens. They appear to go through the whole performance, but they accomplish nothing at all. You have action, but no result.

(3) This power we call 'ecstasy,' a deprivation of the activity of the senses which is an image of insanity. Thus, in the beginning, sleep was preceded by ecstasy, as we read: 'And God sent an ecstasy upon Adam and he slept.'¹ Sleep brought rest to the body, but ecstasy came over the soul and prevented it from resting, and from that time this combination constitutes the natural and normal form of the dream.

(4) Of course you have observed how anxiously and with what feeling we rejoice, mourn, and are frightened in dreams. If we were fully masters of ourselves, we should not be

¹ Gen. 2.21. Tertullian is here following the Septuagint; the Vulgate reads '*soporem*,' and the Douai, 'a deep sleep.'

affected at all by such emotions, which would be only empty fantasies. In our dreams, any good actions we perform are without merit and our crimes are blameless. We will no more be condemned for a rape committed in a dream than we will be crowned for dreaming we were martyrs.

(5) But, you may object, how can the soul remember its dreams if during them we are presumably without control of the actions of the soul? This must be a peculiarity of this form of insanity which does not result from the failure of a healthy state, but from some natural process. It does not destroy the mental functions, but only withdraws them temporarily. There is a difference between shaking a thing and really moving it; it is one thing to destroy something, another to stir it.

(6) The fact that we remember dreams is proof of the fundamental soundness of the mind, but the dulling of a sound mind while memory continues to function is a species of madness. In that state, therefore, we are not considered insane, but only dreaming, and hence to be in full possession of our faculties, the same as at any other time. Although the power of exercising these faculties is dimmed, it is not completely extinguished and, while control seems to be lacking just at the time when ecstasy is affecting us in a special manner, still it then brings before us images of wisdom as well as those of error.

Chapter 46

(1) Next, we have to express still further the Christian view about the subject of those very dreams which move the soul so strongly. But, when are we going to get around to the topic of death? To this I answer: 'When God permits it; for nothing is really delayed which ultimately gets done.'

(2) Epicurus, when trying to prove that the gods are not interested in men and that there is, hence, no intelligent governance of the world, but that everything happens by blind chance, claims that all dreams are vain and meaningless. On that basis, however, some dreams should sometimes turn out to be true, since it is unreasonable to suppose that dreams alone should be outside the laws of chance. Homer says there are two gates from which all dreams issue: the gate of horn, for true dreams; the gate of ivory, for false ones—and this because horn is transparent while ivory is opaque.

(3) When Aristotle says that most dreams are false, he implicitly admits that some of them are true. The people of Telmessus admit that all dreams have some meaning and blame their own intelligence when they can't explain them. Now, any normal human being has sometimes had a dream that made sense. To shame Epicurus, I'll tell you some stories of really prophetic dreams.

(4) Astyages, King of the Medes, as we read in Herodotus, saw in a dream a flood which issued from the womb of his virgin daughter, Mandana, and inundated all Asia. In the years following her marriage, he dreamed that a vine grew out of her womb and covered all Asia. The same story is told by Charon of Lampsacus, before Herodotus. The men who interpreted these dreams were not mistaken, because Cyrus actually inundated and overspread Asia.

(5) Ephorus tells us that, before Philip of Macedon became a father, he dreamed that a ring with a lion as a signet was imprinted upon the body of his wife, Olympias. When he had thence concluded that she would have no children (in the belief, I suppose, that a lion becomes a father only once), Aristodemus and Aristophon assured him that the portent had great promise of an illustrious son. Anyone who knows

anything of Alexander the Great will see in him the lion of the ring.

(6) According to Heraclides, a woman of Himera foresaw in a dream the tyrannical rule of Dionysius over Sicily. Euphorion testified that Laodice, the mother of Seleucus, knew before his birth that he was to be master of Asia. From Strabo I learn that it was through a dream that Mithridates took Pontus, and from Callisthenes that Baraliris the Illyrian by the same means extended his control from the Molossi to Macedonia.

(7) The Romans, too, believed in the truth of such dreams. Cicero learned from a dream that one Julius Octavius, then but a boy and unknown to him or anybody else, was to be the reformer of the Empire, the suppressor of Rome's civil wars, the Emperor Augustus. This is related in the commentaries of Vitellius.

(8) Nor were dreams of this kind restricted to prophecies of supreme power; they also foretold dangers and catastrophes. It was through illness that Caesar missed the Battle of Philippi and, hence, destruction at the hands of Brutus and Cassius; though he expected to undergo greater dangers from the enemy, he escaped, being warned by a vision of Artorius. Also, the daughter of Polycrates of Samos foresaw his crucifixion from the anointing of the sun and the bath of Jupiter.

(9) Future honors and talents have also been foretold in sleep, remedies discovered, thefts revealed, and treasures indicated. Thus, Cicero's nurse foresaw his greatness when he was still a child. The swan that was supposed to come from the breast of Socrates for the comfort of mankind is clearly his pupil, Plato. Leonymus, the boxer, was cured by Achilles in his dreams and the tragedian, Sophocles, rediscovered the golden crown which had been lost from the citadel of Athens. Then there was the tragic actor, Neoptolemus, who through

intimations received in sleep saved from ruin the tomb of Ajax on the shores of Troy; when he removed the ancient stones he found a treasure of gold.

(10) The whole of world literature testifies to the truth of dreams, as for instance, Artemon, Antiphon, Strato, Philochorus, Epicharmus, Serapion, Cratippus, Dionysius of Rhodes, and Hermippus. I can't help laughing at the man who thought to persuade us that Saturn was the first one ever to dream, as if Saturn had lived before everybody else. You will pardon me for laughing, Aristotle!

(11) Among all the means of foretelling the future, dreams are awarded the first place by Epicharmus and by Philochorus the Athenian. You'll find oracles of this kind all over the world: there are the oracles of Amphiaraus at Oropus, of Amphilochus at Mallus, of Sarpedon in Troy, Trophonius in Boeotia, Mopus in Cilicia, Hermione in Macedonia, Pasiphae in Laconia, and many others with their rites, histories, and chroniclers. In fact, there is a whole literature of dreams of which you will find more than enough in the five volumes of Hermippus of Berytus. It is a favorite doctrine of the Stoics that God in His providence over human affairs gave us dreams; among the many other helps to the preservation of the arts and techniques of divination, He especially intended dreams to be of particular assistance to natural foresight.

(12) This will be sufficient for those dreams which we must believe, even though we have a different interpretation of their nature. As for other oracles, where no dreams are involved, they must be the results of diabolical possession of the person in question, or else they try to fool us by using the tombs of the dead to perfect the deceit staged by their malignity, even counterfeiting some divine power in the form of a man. And through their deceitful endeavors they grant us the favors of cures, warnings and prophecies. Thus

they hope to harm us when seeming to help us, and by their good deeds to distract us from the investigation of the true God by suggesting a false one to our minds.

(13) This vicious power is not restricted to the precincts of their shrines, but it roams all over with complete freedom. There is no doubt that the doors of our homes are open to such spirits and they impose on us in our bedrooms as well as in their own temples.

Chapter 47

(1) The first type of dreams we have declared to emanate from the Devil, even though they are sometimes true and favorable to us. But, when they deliberately set out to delude us with favors, as mentioned above, they betray themselves as vain, deceitful, vague, licentious, and impure. This is not surprising, since images generally resemble the realities they reflect.

(2) The second class of dreams must be considered to come from God, since He has promised to pour out the grace of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh and has ordained that His sons and handmaidens shall utter prophecies and dream dreams.¹ Such dreams may be compared to the grace of God as being honest, holy, prophetic, inspired, edifying, and inducing to virtue. Their bountiful nature causes them to overflow even to the infidels since God with divine impartiality causes the rain to fall and the sun to shine upon just and unjust alike.² Surely, it was under the inspiration of God that Nabuchodonosor³ had his famous dream, and the majority of mankind get their knowledge of God from dreams.⁴ There-

¹ Joel. 2.28-29.

² Matt. 5.45.

³ Dan. 2.1.

⁴ Placing so great an importance on special revelations, in this case, while asleep, is another hint of Tertullian's Montanist tendencies.

fore, just as the mercy of God abounds for the pagans, so the temptations of the Devil attack the saints; he never relaxes his vigor, trying to trap them while they are asleep, if he is unsuccessful while they are awake.

(3) The third kind of dreams are those which the soul somehow seems to induce of itself by the attentive contemplation of the things surrounding it. Yet, since the soul is not capable of dreaming when it wants to (even Epicharmus agrees with this), how can it be itself the cause of any vision? Is it not the best solution to refer this class to the natural form of dreams, allowing the soul to endure even in ecstasy whatever happens to it?

(4) Finally, those dreams which cannot be attributed to God, or the Devil, or the soul itself, since they are beyond expectation, or any ordinary explanation, or even of being intelligibly related, will have to be placed in a special category as arising from ecstasy and its attendant circumstances.

Chapter 48

(1) It is generally believed that the clearest and purest dreams occur toward morning, when the soul is restored by rest and sleep is light. Dreams are generally calmer in the springtime, since spring relaxes and winter hardens the soul. Autumn is generally hard on health, particularly because of the heady juice of its fruits which enervate the soul.

(2) We are told that we should not lie flat on our back while sleeping, nor on the right side, nor twisted so as to wrench the cavities of the intestines; a tremor of the heart then ensues and the pressure on the liver may effect the mind. I believe these to be more ingenious conjectures than demonstrable facts; even though Plato is their source,¹ they may all

¹ *Timaeus* 70D-72D.

result from chance. Otherwise, dreams would have to be under control of man if they can in any way be directed.

(3) The next point to be examined is what superstition and prejudice have dictated in the matter of selecting and restricting foods for the control of dreams. Thus, superstition demands that a fast be imposed on those consulting an incubation-oracle, so as to achieve the proper degree of ritual purity. On the other hand, the Pythagoreans for the same end proscribe beans as tending to heaviness and flatulence. But Daniel and his three companions ate only vegetables, lest they be contaminated by the royal food, and as a reward received from God not only the gift of wisdom but a special power of experiencing dreams and of explaining their meaning.

(4) In my own experience, I can but say that fasting made me dream so profoundly that I could not remember whether or not I dreamed. But, you may ask: 'Hasn't sobriety got anything to do with dreams?' Certainly, and as much to do with dreams as with our whole subject; and, if it is any help to superstition, it is more to religion. Even the demons require their dreaming subjects to fast in order to give themselves the [deceptive] appearance of true divinity. For they know its power of making man a friend of God. Daniel ate dry food for a period of three weeks, but he did this in order to win God's favor by acts of humiliation and not that he might augment the perception and mental vision of his soul as a preparation for a dream, as though the soul were meant to act without being in the state of ecstasy. Sobriety, then, will have no effect of neutralizing the ecstasy, but of recommending the ecstasy to God so that it might take place in Him.

Chapter 49

(1) Those who believe that infants do not dream, on the basis that all functions of the soul are accomplished according to age, ought to observe how they toss in their sleep, wag their heads, and sometimes smile. From such facts they will understand that these are the emotions of their souls, generated by dreams breaking through the barrier of their tender flesh.

(2) Then there is the story of the African tribe, the Atlantes, who are reputed to pass the whole night in dreamless sleep, the implication being that they are mentally defective. Now, either Herodotus was taken in by a rumor which was unfavorable to these barbarians, or else a large band of devils is in control of that region. Aristotle tells us that there was a demigod in Sardinia who had the power of inhibiting dreams for those who slept at his shrine; from this we may infer that it lies within the discretion of the demons to take away as well as give the power to dream. This also may be the explanation of the cases of Nero and Thrasymedes, who only dreamed late in life.

(3) But, we believe dreams come from God. Why couldn't God make the Atlanteans dream? There is now no race of men completely ignorant of Him, since the light of the Gospel now gleams in every land and to all the ends of the earth. Perhaps Aristotle was deceived by a rumor; it may be that this is the practice of the devils; in any case, no soul is naturally free of all dreams.

Chapter 50

(1) Let that much suffice for sleep, which is only the mirror of death, and for dreams, the business of sleep. We

will now discuss the cause of our departure, in all its aspects; it presents a number of questions, although it is itself the end of all questioning.

(2) It is the acknowledged opinion of the whole human race that death is 'the debt we owe to nature.' This has been established by the voice of God, and everything that is born must sign this contract. This should be enough to refute the foolish opinion of Epicurus, who refused to acknowledge such a debt. It demolishes the mad doctrine of Menander, the Samaritan heretic, who thinks not only that death is no concern of his disciples but that it will never touch them. He pretends to have received from the Supreme Power on high the privilege that all whom he baptizes become immortal, incorruptible, and immediately ready for the resurrection.

(3) The remarkable properties of certain waters are well known. Thus, the water of the Lyncestris River tasted like wine and men became intoxicated from drinking it; at Colophon the waters of a fountain, through diabolical influence, make men mad; and it is known that Alexander was poisoned by the water from Mt. Nonacris in Arcadia. Even before the time of Christ there was a medicinal pool in Judea, and the poet claims that the marshy Styx made men immune to death, although Thetis still wept for the loss of her son. As a matter of fact, even if Menander washed in the Styx, he would die; you have to be dead to get there, since it flows through the lower regions.

(4) But, what is this marvelous virtue of water and where can it be found if even John the Baptist could not use it, and Christ himself never mentioned it to His disciples? What is this wonderful bath of Menander? Why, *he* seems to be a comedian, too. How does it happen that so few people know about it or use it? This leads me to suspect the existence of this sacrament which has the power of making us so wonder-

fully secure and immune from death. Why, this would even dispense us from the law of dying for God, when, on the contrary, all nations have 'to ascend the mount of the Lord and to the house of the God of Jacob,'¹ who demands death by martyrdom from His own and exacted it even from Christ. No one will attribute such power to magic that it could free man from death or so renew the vine that it enjoys a renewal of life. Not even Medea had this power over man, although she could do it to a silly sheep.

(5) Enoch and Elias were transported hence without suffering death, which was only postponed.² The day will come when they will actually die that they may extinguish Anti-Christ with their blood. There was a legend that St. John the Evangelist was to live till the Second Coming, but he died.³ Heresies generally crop up out of statements made by ourselves and they borrow their armor from the doctrines they attack. The whole case comes down to this question: Where are these men Menander has baptized and plunged into his Styx? Let me see some of these immortal apostles. If this doubting Thomas can see them, hear them, and touch them, then he will believe.⁴

Chapter 51

(1) The function of death is obvious to all—the separation of body and soul. There are some people, however, who do not hold very firmly to the immortality of the soul, since they have learned it not from God, but only from very feeble arguments, and they think that souls sometimes remain united to bodies after death.

¹ Gen. 28.12.

² Gen. 5.24; Heb. 11.5; 4 Kings 2.11.

³ John 21.23.

⁴ Cf. John 20.24-29.

(2) Now, although Plato generally holds that souls go to heaven immediately after death, he tells us in the *Republic*¹ of an unburied corpse which lasted a long time without corruption because of the inseparability of body and soul. Democritus mentions the growth of the hair and nails for some time after burial. Now, it is possible that the nature of the atmosphere prevented the body of Er from decaying.

(3) This could happen if the air were very dry and the earth saline, or if the body itself were unusually dry. It is possible that the manner of death had already caused the elimination of all corruptive matter. Since the nails are the ends of the nerves, they may appear to be lengthened and to project further than usual, because of the decay of the flesh which would cause it to contract. The hair draws its nourishment from the brain, which would cause it to last longer as a kind of protection. In fact, physicians will tell you there is a relation in living people between the amount of hair and the size of the brain.

(4) But, not a particle of the soul can remain after death in the body, which itself is destined for destruction when time has finally dismantled the stage on which the body has played its part. Still, this idea of a partial survival makes an impression on some men; therefore, out of pity for this small part, they will not allow bodies to be cremated. There is, however, still another explanation of this kindliness, not so much out of respect for the soul but in order to spare the body this cruel treatment, since the body is human and does not deserve a murderer's end.

(5) The soul, being immortal, is necessarily indivisible; therefore, we must believe death to be an indivisible process which happens to the soul not because *that* is immortal but because death comes, as one act, to an indivisible soul.

¹ *Republic* 614B-621D.

Death also would have to be divided into stages if the soul could be divided into parts, with a part of the soul dying later; thus, a portion of death would have to wait behind for the part of the soul that remained.

(6) My own experience has shown me that some vestiges of this opinion still remain. There was a woman born of Christian parents who died in her maturity and beauty after a brief but happy marriage. Before the burial the priest came to pray over her, and, as soon as he uttered the first word of the prayer, she lifted her hands and joined them together in a suppliant attitude; at the end, she put her hands back at her sides.

(7) There is another story current among our own people of the body that moved over in the grave to make room for another. If you hear any stories like these among the heathen, you can conclude that God everywhere manifests His power for the consolation of His own and in testimony of His might to the heathen. I should much rather believe that such things happen by divine intervention than because of any particles of the soul; if any such were left in the body, they ought to move the other limbs as well, and, if only the hands, not for the sake of prayer. And that body not only made room for its new neighbor by moving, but it also made itself more comfortable as a result.

(8) But, whatever cause you assign to these events, you cannot say they are the normal practices of nature, but they must be put down as signs and portents. If death is not complete, it is not death; if any of the soul is still there, there you have life. Death will no more unite with life than night with day.

Chapter 52

(1) This, then, is the function of death—the complete separation of body and soul. Apart from the consideration of fate and fortuitous circumstances, men have distinguished two forms of death—the ordinary and the extraordinary. An ordinary death is a calm and peaceful end and it is ascribed to nature; any violent death is considered extraordinary and contrary to nature.

(2) Well acquainted as we are with man's origin, we know that death results from sin, and that neither death nor sin is a natural result of man's nature. It is true that things which are attached to man from birth easily appear to flow from his nature. And, likewise, had man been created with death as his destiny, then death would be imputed to his human nature. Now, that death was not appointed for him by nature is made clear by the law which made his fate dependent on God's warning and death itself the result of man's voluntary choice. Had he not sinned, he would not have died. Therefore, that cannot be the result of nature which depends on the free choice of an alternative and is not at all imposed by absolute necessity.

(3) Hence, though death may come in various ways (and there are many), no death is so easy as not to be in some sense violent. The very law which produces death, though simple in itself, is still violent. How can it be otherwise, when it causes the rupture and division of two substances which have been as closely united from birth as have the soul and body? Although a man may expire with joy as did Chilon while embracing his son after an Olympic victory; or from

glory, as did the Athenian Clidemus while receiving the golden crown for the excellence of his historical writings; or in a dream, like Plato, or in a burst of laughter like P. Crassus—yet death is always much too violent, coming as it does by means alien to man's nature, in its own time, and snatching man from life just when he could pass his days in joy, happiness, honor, peace, and pleasure.

(4) It is still a violent end for a ship when, owing to some internal shock, it founders far from the Caphaerean rocks, wracked by no storms, buffeted by no waves, lulled by a calm breeze, gliding on its course with a cheerful crew. The coming of a peaceful death is no less a shipwreck than this. It makes no difference if the ship of life goes to the bottom with its timbers intact or shattered by a gale, so long as its power of navigation is destroyed.

Chapter 53

(1) But, where is the soul going to find lodging when it is expelled naked from the body? There must we follow it in our discussion. First, however, we must state what is germane to the topic before us, lest people should expect from us a description of each of the types of death we mention—these are really the business of the physicians, who are competent to judge the incidents which cause death and of the various states of the human body.

(2) In order to safeguard the immortality of the soul, I shall have to insert some remarks about the passing of the soul, when talking of death, according to which it might seem that the soul leaves the body bit by bit and gradually. Its departure looks like a decline, and it seems to suffer dissolution, and it gives the impression of being annihilated by the slow process of its departure. But, this is all explained by

the nature of the body. For, whatever be the cause of death, it produces destruction of either the vital matter or the organs or the passages of the body—matter, such as gall and blood; organs, like the heart and the liver; or passages, such as the veins and arteries.

(3) Now, as each one of these parts of the body is destroyed by the proper agent until there is a complete disintegration and collapse of the vital powers, that is, of the natural parts and functions of the body, it necessarily happens that the soul, because of the gradual decay of its instruments, spaces, and situations, is gradually forced to abandon various parts and seems to fade away to nothing. Thus, the charioteer is considered to have weakened when his horses, worn out by fatigue, can no longer run. This is no actual failure of the wearied man, but of the circumstances in which he finds himself. Likewise, the charioteer of the body—the vital spirit of man—fails because of the collapse of the vehicle, not through its own weakness. It gives up its task, but not its inherent strength; its action is impeded, but its state is not changed; with no alteration of its substance, it no longer appears as strong as it was.

(4) When death comes suddenly, as from decapitation, it opens at once a large outlet for the soul; when it comes from some sudden ruin, like that internal disintegration, apoplexy, which crushes every vital function, the departure of the soul is not delayed nor is death a long-drawn-out process. But, in a lingering death, the soul withdraws in much the same way as it is being deserted. In this process, however, it is not broken off piecemeal, but is it drawn from the body, and, while being gradually drawn off, the last portion appears to be an isolated part. Yet, no portion can be considered to be actually detached because it is the last, nor, because it is small, is it destined for immediate destruction. The last sec-

tion to leave is in accord with the process whereby the middle portion is drawn by the extremes; the remnants are attached to the whole and are awaited but never abandoned. I should go so far as to say that the last part of the whole is the whole, for, although it is smaller and the last, it still belongs to the whole.

(5) Thus, it sometimes happens that the soul in the moment of its departure will be more violently stirred, will show a piercing gaze, and talk a great deal. Because of its loftier and freer position, it enunciates, by means of its last remnant clinging to the flesh, the things which it sees and hears and is now beginning to know. In the Platonic view, the body is a prison; in that of St. Paul, it is the temple of God because it is in Christ.¹ But it is a fact that the body by enclosing the soul obstructs, obscures, and sullies it by the union with the flesh, and its vision is obscured as if it were looking through a window of horn.

(6) Without a doubt, the soul is purified when by the power of death it is released from the bondage to the flesh; it is further certain that it escapes from the veil of the flesh into its own pure and clear light; then it finds itself enjoying its liberation from matter, and in this new-found liberty it regains its divinity as a man awaking from sleep and passing from shadows to realities. Then does it speak out what it sees; then it rejoices or trembles according to which lodging it sees in store for it, as soon as it sees the face of the angel, the one who issues the final call to souls, the Mercury of the poets.

Chapter 54

(1) We must now give an answer to the question of where the soul goes after death. Practically all the philosophers

¹ 1 Cor. 6.19.

who believe in the immortality of the soul, however much they differ in their understanding of it, still claim the soul has some abode after death. This Pythagoras, Empedocles, and Plato will admit, even though they envisage some temporary abode between death and the end of the world. The Stoics make this reservation, that only the souls of the Wise Men, that is, Stoics, find a place in the heavenly mansions.

(2) To be sure, Plato does not destine the souls of all philosophers for heaven indiscriminately,¹ but only of those who have enhanced the philosophic life by the love of boys. Such, indeed, is the great privilege accorded to impurity among the philosophers. According to his system, then, the souls of the wise are raised into the ether; according to Arius, into the air; and in the teaching of the Stoics, to the moon.

(3) (I find it surprising that they restrict the souls of the unwise to the earth, especially since they declare that they are to be instructed by the wise who are thus so far above them. Where can they find a school in which this may be done, with so much distance between their habitations? How can teachers and pupils get together when they are so far apart? Finally, what good will they get out of their posthumous education, since they are all destined soon for the eternal fire?)

(4) All other souls they thrust down into Hades, which Plato in the *Phaedo*² places in the bosom of the earth, to which all the filth of the world settles and accumulates and evaporates. There, every particular draught of air only serves to render more noxious the impurities of the seething mass.

¹ *Symposium* 203; *Phaedrus* 248.

² *Phaedo* 112.

Chapter 55

(1) We Christians do not consider Hell to be an empty cavern or some subterranean sewer of the world, but a profound and vast space hidden away in the deepest interior of the world. For, we read that Christ spent three days in the heart of the earth,¹ that is, in the hidden recess in the inner part of the earth, totally enclosed by the earth and built over the abyss which lies still lower down.²

(2) Now, Christ, being God and man, according to the Scriptures, died and was buried. Thus, He chose to submit to the law of death which belongs to human nature, going down to Hell in the form of a dead man; nor did He ascend³ to the heights of heaven before He descended into the lower regions of the earth, that there He might acquaint the Patriarchs and Prophets with His [redeeming] mission.⁴ There you have proof that Hell is a subterranean region, with which to confute those who, in their pride, think that the souls of the just are too good for Hell. Such people would place the servants above their Lord, disciples above their Master,⁵ and, if offered the privilege, would no doubt loftily disdain the solace of awaiting the resurrection in the bosom of Abraham.⁶

(3) 'But,' they will tell us, 'that is just the reason why Christ went down into Hell—so that we should not have to go. Besides, what difference is there between pagan and Christian, if the same prison is open for both after death?' But, how can a soul rise up to Heaven, where Christ is

1 Matt. 12.40.

2 Ps. 85.13.

3 Eph. 4.9; John 3.13.

4 1 Pet. 3.19.

5 Matt. 10.24.

6 Luke 16.22.

sitting at the right hand of the Father, when the command of God has not been promulgated by the trumpet of the Archangel? How, indeed, when those whom the Lord at His Coming is to find on the earth have not been caught up into the air to meet Him, in company with the dead in Christ who will be the first to rise?⁷ As long as the earth remains, Heaven is not open; in fact, the gates are barred. When the world shall have passed away, the portals of Paradise will be opened.

(4) In the meantime, then, will our resting place be in the ether with those lovers of boys of Plato, or in the air with Arius, or around the moon with the Endymions of the Stoics? 'Oh, no,' you say, 'but in Paradise whither the Patriarchs and the Prophets have traveled as a result of the Lord's Resurrection.' If that is so, how is it that the region of Paradise which was revealed in the spirit of St. John as being 'under the altar'⁸ contains no other souls but those of the martyrs? How is it that St. Perpetua, that bravest martyr of Christ, on the day of her death saw only the souls of the martyrs in Paradise, unless it be that the sword which guarded the entrance allowed none to pass save those that had died in Christ and not in Adam?⁹

(5) Those who die this new death for God, and violently as Christ did, are welcomed into a special abode. Here, then, is the difference between pagan and Christian in death: If you lay down your life for God as the Paraclete recommends,¹⁰ then it will not be of some gentle fever in a soft bed, but in the torture of martyrdom. You must take up your cross and

⁷ 1 Thess. 4.15-16.

⁸ Apoc. 6.9.

⁹ The privileged position here accorded to martyrs was common in early Christian literature, but, in Tertullian, it is perhaps enhanced by the Montanist predilection for martyrdom.

¹⁰ Cf. Introduction, p. 171, and d'Alès *op. cit.* 448-454.

follow Him, according to the precept of Christ. The only key that unlocks the gates of Paradise is your own blood. Look at my treatise on Paradise where I showed that all [other] souls are kept in Hell until the Second Coming of the Lord.

Chapter 56

(1) Here, there arise several questions which must be answered. Are souls assigned to the temporary abode immediately after death? Are some souls detained for a time here on earth? And, finally, is it possible for them to leave their place either of their own free will or at the bidding of authority?

(2) Cogent reasons are advanced for these opinions. It has been widely believed that souls could not go to Hades until their bodies had been properly buried. Homer relates how Patroclus asks in a dream for burial by Achilles because otherwise his soul could not enter Hades, being thrust away by the souls of those whose bodies had been buried. Now, we know that Homer is here espousing the rights of the dead and not merely indulging in poetic fancy. His desire that the dead receive the due honors of burial is proportional to the harm the soul suffers because of the delay in burial. He was also influenced by the fact that by keeping the body too long at home, he may expose both the survivors and the deceased to increased trouble by excessively prolonging the period of mourning. Therefore, his portrayal of the complaint of the unburied soul has two purposes: that honor be paid to the dead by a prompt funeral and that the grief of the bereaved be curtailed.

(3) But, isn't it a foolish idea to suppose that the soul awaits the burial rites, as if it could carry some of them off

to Hades? It is much more ridiculous to imagine that the soul would consider the lack of burial as an injury, when really it is in the nature of a favor. Surely, the soul that didn't want to die would be pleased at anything that would postpone its entry into Hades. The careless heir will be beloved through whose neglect the soul still enjoys the light. But, if some harm is really done to the soul by the neglect of burial (and it is the *delay* that is alleged to be bad), how unfair it is to blame this on the soul of the dead man, when any fault should really be imputed to his relatives!

(4) A second idea that has been handed down is that those who die prematurely roam about the earth until the completion of the time they would have lived had they not been cut off before their time. To that I reply: Either the number of a man's days are determined beforehand, and then I do not believe they can be shortened; or else, having been determined, they can be changed by the will of God or by some other power. Then, I say, this change is useless, since in any case they have to await their completion; or they are not predetermined at all, and then there is no period that has to be filled out.

(5) And, further, let us suppose the case of an infant who dies while still being nursed at his mother's breast, or of an immature boy, or a youth, all of whom were supposed to live to be eighty years old. How will it be possible for them to pass those years after death on earth without a body? They can't grow older without a body because the body is the thing that ages.¹ Here let me remind our people that we will at the Resurrection be restored to the bodies in which we died.

(6) Therefore, we must expect our bodies to return under

¹ In Chap. 38, Tertullian implied that the soul underwent a process of development, in that it reached an age of 'puberty of the soul.'

the same conditions and in the same state as when we died, for such particulars make the body to be a certain age. How then can the soul of an infant a month old spend all those years here after death, so as to be able to be an octogenarian at the Resurrection? Or, if the soul has to fill out the appointed years here on earth, will it have to pass through all the trials and experiences it would have had had it lived? Will a certain period be assigned to childhood and its years at school? Will it then pass on to the excitement of a young man in the army? Between youth and old age will he have to apply himself to serious responsibilities? Must he work at business, plough as a farmer, go to sea, engage in lawsuits, get married, struggle, suffer illness and, in a word, undergo all the experiences of joy and sadness of the destined length of years?

(7) But, how is he going to do all this without a body? Will he live without being alive? 'But,' you say, 'the time is merely to pass without incident.' What is to prevent his fulfilling all these things in Hades, where there is no use for any one of them? Therefore, it is my opinion that any soul, no matter what its age at death, stays at that age until the time arrives when the promised perfect age will be realized in accordance with the measure of angelic fullness.

(8) The third class, those who die by violence, are also believed to be kept from Hades, especially those who die by cruel tortures, the cross, the axe, the sword, and wild beasts. But, death that comes from the hands of justice, the avenger of violence, should not be accounted as violent. 'But,' you will say, 'only the souls of the wicked are excluded from Hades.' You must make clear which of the two regions of Hades you mean: that of the good or that of the bad. If you mean the bad, then that is where evil souls are consigned; if the good, why do you hold the souls of infants and virgins

and those who by their age were necessarily pure and innocent to be unworthy of such a resting place?²

Chapter 57

(1) So, either it is a good thing to be detained here on earth with the *Aoroi* or an evil thing with the *Biaiothanatoi*, if I may now at last be permitted to use the terminology with which the magic arts resound, the words of their inventors, Ostances, Typhon, Dardanus, Damigeron, Nectabis, and Berenice.

(2) There is a great deal of literature which attempts to call back from Hades the souls of those who are sleeping out their destined time, those who died through violence and those deprived of burial. What are we to say, then, of these pretensions of magic, except what everyone says—that it is a fraud. Christians are the only ones to see through this fraud, since we have come to know the evil spirits, not, of course, by consorting with them, but by the knowledge that unmask them; not by trying to solicit their assistance, but by a power which subjugates them. Thus do we deal with that universal pollution of the human mind, the inventor of all falsehood, that plunderer of the soul's salvation. By magic, a second form of idolatry, the demons pretend to be dead men [come to life], just as in ordinary idolatry they pass themselves off as gods. And that is reasonable, since the gods are dead.

(3) Hence, the *Aoroi* and the *Biaiothanatoi* are actually

² Although Tertullian has here mingled some Montanist ideas of a millenium to be passed by all but the souls of martyrs before their resurrection, he is definite as to the fact that the just will spend a period of purification before they are eligible for Paradise. Even though they will have to wait during what remains of the millenium for their final glory, the period of purification is substantially the doctrine of Purgatory. Cf. d'Alès, *op. cit.* 133-134 n.

invoked in prayer on the supposition that they should be most capable of committing harm [to enemies] who themselves were by unjust violence snatched away to a premature death, as if in revenge for their own fate.

(4) The demons inhabit those souls especially in whom they used to dwell when they were alive and whom they drove to this kind of untimely end. We have already suggested that every man is attended by a demon and many are aware that sudden and horrible deaths, which usually pass for accidents, are really work of demons.

(5) And, I think we can prove that the evil spirit tries to deceive us by hiding in the persons of dead men, from the facts that come to light in exorcisms. We know that the demon tries to pose as a relative of the person possessed, or sometimes as a gladiator or as a fighter of the beasts, or even as a god. And, in this, his object is always to disprove what we are here affirming, namely, that all souls go down to Hell at their death, and to weaken our faith in the Judgment and Resurrection. Yet, the Devil, after trying to deceive the bystanders, is overcome by the power of Divine Grace, and at last, much against his will, admits that he is an evil spirit.

(6) Then there is another form of magic in which this same trickery is attempted, where the Devil brings back the souls of the dead and exhibits them to view. This is clearly more effective, since it provides a visual image—the body of which the Devil has taken possession. And, of course, it is easy to deceive the eyes of a man whose mind is so easily taken in.

(7) The serpents which emerged from the magician's rods certainly were seen as material substances by Pharaoh and the Egyptians, and only Moses with the truth could prove them false.¹ Simon Magus and Elymas made many

¹ Exod. 7.12.

attempts against the Apostles, but the blindness that afflicted them was no magician's trick.² What is new about a devil trying to counterfeit the truth? Why, even now the followers of Simon are so confident of their art that they undertake to bring back the souls of the Prophets from Hell.

(8) And this, I believe, because their power lies in their ability to deceive. This power was actually granted to the witch of Endor, who brought back the soul of Samuel after Saul had consulted God in vain.³ Apart from that case, God forbid we should believe that any soul, much less a Prophet, could be called forth by a demon. We are told that 'Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light,'⁴—and more easily into a man of light—and that at the end he will work marvelous signs and show himself as God, so much so that, 'if possible, he will deceive even the elect.'⁵ He hardly hesitated to declare to Saul that he was the Prophet [Samuel] in whom the Devil was then dwelling.

(9) So, you must not think that the spirit which created the apparition was different from the one who made Saul believe in it; but, the same spirit was in the witch of Endor and in the Apostate [Saul], and so it was easy for him to suggest the lie that he had already made Saul believe. Saul's treasure, indeed, was then where his heart was,⁶ where God most certainly was not. Thus, he saw only the Devil, through whom he believed he would see Samuel, for he believed in the spirit who showed him the apparition.

(10) The objection is offered that visions of the dead seen in dreams must be real. For instance, the Nasamones con-

2 Acts. 8.9; 13.8.

3 1 Kings 28.6.

4 2 Thess. 11.14.

5 Matt. 24.24.

6 Matt. 6.21.

sult their own oracles by lengthy visits to the tombs of their ancestors, as we are told in Heraclides, Nymphodorus, and Herodotus. Nicander also reports that the Celts keep watch all night at the tombs of their heroes for the same purpose. But, I will not admit that the apparitions of dead persons (any more than those of living persons) seen in dreams are real, but the same explanation holds for all, living, dead, or anything else that is seen. These things are not real because they are seen, but because they are fulfilled. A dream is true because it works out, and not because a vision is seen.

(11) Now, the fact that the gates of Hell are not opened for any soul is sufficiently proven by the Lord in His story of Abraham, about the poor man at peace and the rich man in torment. It is not possible that any messenger be sent to this world to tell us about Hell, which would have been allowed then, if ever, for the purpose of making men believe in Moses and the Prophets.⁷

(12) Although God has on occasion called back the souls of men to their bodies as proof of His power, there is no reason to believe that He gives this power to the credulous magicians with their fallacious dreams and poetic fancies. In all cases of true resurrection, whether done by the power of God, the Prophets, Christ Himself or the Apostles, we have certain truth in the solidity, mass, and reality of the revived body, so that we can be sure that any incorporeal apparitions of the dead are due to the trickery of magicians.

⁷ Luke 16.30f. Tertullian is apparently quoting from memory, as he implies that the rich man asked Abraham to send a messenger to his brethren so that *then* they would believe in Moses and the Prophets. Actually, Abraham says; 'If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they believe, if one rise again from the dead.'

Chapter 58

(1) All souls, therefore, are consigned to Hell. Whether you believe it or not, there they suffer either punishment or reward, according to the story of Lazarus and Dives. Now, since I have delayed the treatment of some questions which pertain to this matter, I can now treat of them in concluding my remarks.

(2) Why don't you want to believe that souls are punished or rewarded in the meantime while awaiting the judgment to glory or damnation? There they remain in hopeful confidence while anticipating their fate. You feel that God's judgment ought to be definitive, and that no inkling of His sentence should be betrayed beforehand, and that punishment or reward must await the restoration of the flesh which should share the retribution of the deeds performed when they were together.

(3) How do they spend that time? Asleep? But, souls never sleep even in living men and sleep is a property of bodies, along with its image, death, Would you hold that nothing at all happens there whither all humanity yearns and the hopes of all mankind are centered? Is it a foretaste of the fate to come or its actual beginning? Is it a complete condemnation or only a sample of what is to come? But, wouldn't it be the rankest injustice if the wicked were at peace and the good still held in suspense? Would you add this further torture to death, that afterwards we should not know what was going to happen to us or that we should be trembling before the possibility of an accounting of our life and a subsequent decree of condemnation?

(4) Does the soul always have to await the body that it may feel sorrow or joy? Can't the soul of itself experience these emotions? Often, in fact, with no pain of body the soul

alone is tortured by indignation, anger, or boredom, sometimes without being conscious of it. And again, when the body ails, the soul seeks out some haven of joy all its own and scorns the irritating company of the body.

(5) If I mistake not, the soul even rejoices and glories in the sufferings of the body. Take the case of Mucius Scaevola, when the fire was melting his right hand, or of Zeno when the torments of Dionysius passed over him. The bites of wild animals are the pride of youth, as Cyrus who gloried in the scars left by the bear. So the soul can easily manage to rejoice or be sad without the body in Hell; during life it can weep when it pleases, though the body is unhurt, and likewise it can rejoice even in the midst of bodily suffering. Now, if it can do this by its own power in life, much more so after death can it by divine decree.

(6) But, during life, the soul does not share all its operations with the flesh, for in God's judgment even secret thoughts and unfulfilled volitions can be accounted sinful. 'Whosoever shall look on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart.'¹ For this reason it is most fitting that the soul, without waiting for the restoration of the flesh, should be punished for the sins it committed without help from the body. Likewise, it will be rewarded before the flesh is restored for the pious and kindly thought elicited independently of the body.

(7) Besides, even in actions which need the assistance of the body, it is the soul which first conceives, plans, orders, and carries out the acts in question. And, although sometimes it is unwilling to act, the soul always deals first with the matter which the body is going to accomplish and it never happens that an act is performed without previous consciousness. So, on this basis it is fitting that that part of man

¹ Matt. 5.28.

should have its reward which has the prior right to its enjoyment.

(8) In conclusion, if we understand the 'prison,' of which the Gospel speaks, as Hell, and 'the last farthing'² as the smallest defect that has to be atoned for there before the resurrection, there will be no doubt that the soul suffers in Hell some retributory penalty, without denying the complete resurrection, when the body also will pay or be paid in full. This fact has often been stressed by the Paraclete, if one is willing to admit His words on the basis of His promised spiritual disclosures.

(9) Now, at last, I believe I have dealt satisfactorily with all the human views as to the soul which arise from the teaching of our faith and from any normal curiosity. As for foolish and idle speculations—there will always be more of those than a wise man could ever answer.

² Matt. 5.25-26.

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