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# THE THIRD CENTURY 1: THE WEST

Patristic Theology

## WRITERS

(following the schema found in Quasten's *Patrology*, vol 2)

- At the end of the 2nd century there was as yet no systematic treatment of the faith
- What occurred next was the conscious Christianization of the Hellenic and Roman Culture (Wilken)

## CARTHAGE

### TERTULLIAN (c. 155-c. 220)

- He has been called the "creator of ecclesiastical Latin" (Quasten, 249)
- Writings
  - Early period
    - *Ad nationes*
    - *Apologeticum*
    - *Ad Scapulam*
    - *The Testimony of the Soul*
    - *Against the Jews*
    - *Prescription of Heretics*
    - *Against Marcion*
    - *Against Hermogenes*
    - *On Baptism*
    - *Scorpiace*
    - *On the Flesh of Christ*
    - *The Resurrection of the Flesh*
    - *To the Martyrs*
    - *The Shows*
    - *On the Dress of Women*
    - *Concerning Prayer*
    - *Concerning Patience*
    - *Concerning Repentance*
    - *To His Wife*
    - *Exhortation to Chastity*
    - *Concerning the Veiling of Virgins*
    - *The Chaplet*
    - *Concerning Idolatry*
    - *Concerning the Pallium*
  - Montanist period
    - *Against the Valentinians*
    - *Against Praxeas*
    - *On the Soul*
    - *Monogamy*
    - *Concerning Flight in Persecution*
    - *On Fasting*
    - *On Modesty*

- Truth and the Church
  - Rule of faith
    - Guided by the rule of faith, philosophy can be of use
    - “Christ laid down one definite system of truth which the world must believe without qualification, and which we must seek precisely in order to believe it when we find it.” (*De praescriptione*, 9)
  - This truth is transmitted from the time of the apostles and must be kept pure
    - “Again they set up churches in every city, from which the other churches afterwards borrowed the transmission of the faith and the seeds of doctrine and continue to borrow them every day, in order to become churches.” (*De praescriptione*, 20)
  - The Church is the custodian of the truth, it keeps it for us like mother.
    - “It follows that all doctrine which is in agreement with those apostolic churches, the wombs and sources of faith, is to be deemed true on the ground that it indubitably preserves what the churches received from the apostles, the apostles from Christ, and Christ from God.” (*De praescriptione*, 21)
  - Human reason is purified and corrected only in submitting to the rule of faith
    - “What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem?” (*De praescriptione*, 7)
- The Soul
  - The soul comes from the breath of God and begins to exist with the body (*De Anima* 4, 5)
    - It derives from the semen (*De Anima* 27)
  - The body manifests the soul and belongs to the soul (*De Anima* 9)
    - Gender is given with the body (*De Anima* 36)
  - Sin introduces into our nature an irrational element (*De Anima* 16)
  - The soul changes and grows through actions; evil is given to the body through the soul (*De Anima* 20, 40)
  - The soul is from the Spirit of God and is thus the breath of God; it does not arise out of matter. As the image of God, it reflects God’s immortality, freedom, foreknowledge, reasonableness, and knowledge. It is thus able to sin. (*Against Marcion* 2.9, see Phan 106-7)
- The body
  - The body is part of who we are as a person (*De resurrectione carnis*, 1-3)
  - The resurrection is promised by scripture
  - Thus, we should take life in the body seriously: “It is through the body that the soul reaches God” (*De resurrectione carnis*, 8)
- Society
  - The Christian must be very cautious in dealing with society for not fall into idolatry
  - All vices spring from idolatry (*De idolatria*, 1)
  - Christians must avoid all types of idolatry: they can’t be an artist, they can’t enter into contracts, they can’t attend the games (*De idolatria*, 9-11; *De spectaculis*)
  - There is no need to make a living if this requires engaging in idolatry (*De idolatria*, 12)
- The Evangelical Life
  - Martyrs
    - Those imprisoned awaiting martyrdom are “martyrs elect”. They are freer than those who remain in society. The world is a prison, with many dangers. (*Ad martyras*, 1-2)
    - “It is our desire to suffer, but it is the way the soldier longs for war. No one suffers willingly, since suffering necessarily implies fear and danger. Yet the man who objected to the conflict, both fights with all his strength, and when victorious, he rejoices in the battle, because he reaps from it glory and spoil. It is our battle to be summoned to your tribunals that there, under fear of execution, we may battle for the truth. But the day is won when the object of the struggle is gained. The victory of ours gives us the glory of pleasing God, and the spoil of life eternal. But we are overcome. Yes, when we have obtained our wishes. Therefore we conquer in dying; we go forth victorious at the very time we are subdued. ... your injustice is proof that we are innocent. ... Nor does your cruelty, however exquisite, avail you; it is rather a temptation to us. The oftener we are mown down by you, the more in number we grow; the blood of Christians is seed [*Plures efficimur quotiens metimur a vobis; semen est sanguis Christianorum*]. ... On this account

it is that we return thanks on the very spot for your sentences. As the divine and human are ever opposed to each other, when we are condemned by you, we are acquitted by the Highest." (Tertullian, *Apology*, 50, trans. S. Thelwall, accessible at [www.ccel.org](http://www.ccel.org))

- Marriage
  - Marriage is permitted by God, but chastity is the better path (*De exhortation castitatis*, 1)
  - There are three levels of holiness: (1) remaining a virgin since birth; (2) remaining a virgin since baptism; (3) monogamy: being married only once (*De exhortation castitatis*, 1)
  - A second marriage is only an excuse for fornication (*De exhortation castitatis*, 9)
  - Bodily pleasure, even in the first marriage, is against the openness to the Holy Spirit that the Christian life requires (*De exhortation castitatis*, 11)
- Clothing
  - We should not try to beautify ourselves; grace is the only beauty necessary
  - Women are particularly subject to the temptation to dress themselves well (*De cultu feminarum*)
  - For men, attention to one's appearance is a particularly grave sin (*De cultu feminarum* 8)
- Sin
  - Adam enslaves humanity to sin; each soul carries the stain of Adam's guilt
  - All future souls were contained physically in Adam (*traducianism*)
  - We all are born with the inclination to evil (*alia natura*) (On the Soul 19, 20; see Duffy 50)
  - Adam transmits a wounded humanity, with an irrational element
  - Christ recreates human flesh, cleansing it
- God
  - First to use the word *trinitas* and explain God as truly one substance and truly three persons
  - Suggests that substance is something spread out among the three
- Jesus
  - Jesus must be truly God who has taken flesh
  - God and man in one person
- Mary
  - The human body of Jesus is truly from Mary
  - Mary is virgin before the birth of Jesus, but not *in partu* nor *post partum* (*On the Flesh of Christ*, 23)
  - The brothers of Jesus are Mary's later children
  - Mary is the second Eve
- Church
  - He is the first to call the Church Mother
- Penance
  - Gives the procedure for atoning for one's post-baptismal sins
  - The prayers of the Church help the lapsed return
  - No sin cannot be forgiven
  - The bishop has the authority to confer absolution
  - *De Pudicitia*, written after he became a Montanist, holds that fornication, idolatry, and murder cannot be forgiven. He also here holds that the church does not forgive, only God.
- Eucharist
  - The Eucharist is truly the flesh of Christ
  - The Eucharistic liturgy is a sharing in the sacrifice of Christ
  - The consecration occurs at the words of Institution
- Eschatology
  - Understands a period of purgation for those who die in the faith: "it is most fitting that the soul, without at all waiting for the flesh, should be punished for what it has done without the partnership of the flesh." (*On the Soul*, 58)
  - The martyrs do not await final judgment but are immediately with god
  - Chiliastic views

## ST. CYPRIAN (c. 200-258)

- The most revered western writer before Augustine
- The controversy with Novatian and Cornelius
- The controversy with Stephen I over Novatianist baptisms
- Writings
  - *To Donatus*
  - *On the Dress of Virgins*
  - *Concerning the Lapsed*
  - *On the Unity of the Church*
  - *The Lord's Prayer*
  - *To Demetrianus*
  - *On Mortality*
  - *Concerning Works and Almsgivings*
  - *The Advantage of Patience*
  - *Jealousy and Envy*
  - *Exhortation to Martyrdom*
  - *To Quirinus: Three Books of Testimonies*
  - *That Idols are Not Gods*
  - *Epistles* (81)
  - Pseudo-Cyprianic Writings
- The Church
  - The Church is always good
  - Unity is of God, disunity is from the devil (1, 3)
  - The community of the immortal is founded upon a rock (2)
  - Unity springs from Peter, then the apostles (4)
  - Solidarity of all bishops (5)
  - Every bishop is the successor of Peter, each has responsibility for the whole (5)
  - If you abandon the Church, you cut yourself off from its promises (6)
    - *Extra ecclesiam nulla salus*
  - *Whoever is separated from the Church and is joined with an adulteress is separated from the promises of the Church, nor will he who has abandoned the Church arrive at the rewards of Christ. He is a stranger; he is profane; he is an enemy. He cannot have God as a father who does not have the Church as a mother.* (6)
  - *Does anyone believe that this unity which comes from divine strength, which is closely connected with the divine sacraments, can be broken asunder in the Church and be separated by the divisions of colliding wills? He who does not hold this unity, does not hold the law of God, does not hold the faith of the Father and the Son, does not hold life and salvation.* (6)
  - Good men cannot leave the Church (9)
    - *Let no one think that the good can depart from the Church; the wind does not ravage the wheat, nor does the storm overturn the tree strongly and solidly rooted; the light straws are tossed about by the tempest; the feeble trees are thrown down by the onrush of the whirlwind.* (9)
  - There is only one baptism (11)
    - *Although there cannot be another baptism than the one, they think that they baptize; although the fountain of life has been deserted, they promise the grace of the life-giving and saving water. There men are not washed but rather are made foul, nor are their sins purged but on the contrary piled high. That nativity generates sons not for God but for the devil. Being born through a lie they do not obtain the promises of truth; begotten of perfidy they lose the grace of faith. They cannot arrive at the reward of peace who have broken the peace of the Lord by the madness of discord.* (11)
  - You cannot be a martyr unless you are in the Church (14)
    - *Even if such men are slain in confession of the Name that stain is not washed away by blood; the inexpiable and serious fault of discord is purged not even by martyrdom. He cannot be a martyr who is not in the Church. He will not be able to arrive in the kingdom*

*who deserted her who is to rule. Christ gave us peace; He ordered us to be in agreement and of one mind; He commanded us to keep the bonds of love and charity uncorrupted and inviolate. He cannot display himself a martyr who has not maintained fraternal charity. (14)*

- Those who do not remain in the Church do not have love (14)
  - *He will not be able to attain it who has violated the love of Christ by perfidious dissension. He who does not have charity does not have God. The words of the blessed Apostle John are: 'God,' he says, 'is love, and he who abides in love, abides in God and God abides in him.' They cannot abide with God who have been unwilling to be of one mind in God's Church. Although they burn when given over to flames and fire, or lay down their lives when thrown to the beasts, that crown of faith will not be theirs, but the punishment of perfidy, and no glorious ending of religious valor but the destruction of desperation. Such a man can be slain; he cannot be crowned. (14)*
- Unity cannot be torn to pieces (23)
  - *God is one and Christ one and His Church one and the faith one and the people one joined together by the tie of concord into a solid unity of body. The unity cannot be torn asunder, nor can the one body be separated by a division of its structure, nor torn into bits by the wrenching asunder of its entrails by laceration. Whatever departs from the parent-stem will not be able to breathe and live apart; it loses the substance of health. (23)*
  - There is no salvation outside the church
- Baptism
  - Baptism can only occur within the Church
  - It is proper and encouraged to baptize infants: why withhold this gift from them? (*Epistle 64*)
- Penance
  - Those who sin should be remitted to the Church after a period of penance.
  - There are no unpardonable sins (*Epistle 55*)
- Eucharist
  - The Eucharist participates in the sacrifice of Christ (*Epistle 63: On the Sacrament of the Cup of the Lord*)
  - The priest imitates Christ and offers a true and full sacrifice (*Ep 63.14*)
  - The Eucharist is offered for the dead (*Epistle 1.2; Epistle 12.2; Epistle 39.3*)
  - The Eucharist is a symbol of the unity of the Church (*Epistle 63.13*)
- Petrine primacy
  - The unity of each local Church is the role of the successors of Peter, the bishop (*Epistle 55.21*)
  - Unity is manifest in the bishop
  - "No one among us sets himself up as a bishop of bishops, or by tyranny and terror forces his colleagues to compulsory obedience, seeing that every bishop in the freedom of his liberty and power possesses the right to his own mind and can no more be judged by another than he himself can judge another." (quoted in Quasten, vol 2, 376)
  - Rome is due the highest praise and honor because it is the see of Peter himself (*Epistle 59*)

## ROME

### MINUCIUS FELIX

- Apologist
- Works
  - *Octavius*
  - *De Fato*

### ST. HIPPOLYTUS OF ROME (CLAIMED TO BE BISHOP FROM 217–235)

- Traditional attribution
  - Life

- Born before 170 in the east; became the chief intellectual of the Roman Church refused to accept Callistus as pope and had himself elected instead (Kelly, 14)
- He was arrested, along with Pontian, by Maximinus Thrax and sentenced to Sardinia. It is said that the two were reconciled before death. Their common plea ended the schism. (Kelly, 15)
- Fabian brought their bodies back to Rome, where they were buried on 13 August in 236 or 237 (Kelly, 15)
- There is a statue of him listing some of his writings, which was discovered near the Via Tiburtina in 1551 and is kept in the Vatican Library since John XXIII put it there in 1959 (Kelly, 15)
- Writing at the end of the age of Greek in Rome (Quasten, 165-166)
- Very little remains in the original Greek of his writings; much survives in translation (Quasten, 165-166)
- Feast day June 30 in the East and August 13 in the West (Kelly, 15)
- Writings
  - *Philosophumena or Refutation of All Heresies*
  - *Syntagma or Against All Heresies*
  - *The Antichrist*
  - *Commentary on Daniel*
  - *Commentary on the Canticle of Canticles*
  - *On the Blessing of Jacob*
  - *On the Blessing of Moses*
  - *The Storey of David and Goliath*
  - *On the Psalms*
  - *The Chronicle*
  - *The Determination of the Date of Easter*
  - *Homilies*
  - *On Passover*
  - *On the Praise of the Lord Our Savior*
  - *Homily on the Heresy of Noetus*
  - *Demonstration Against the Jews*
  - *The Apostolic Tradition*
  - Lost writings
    - *On the Universe*
    - *Against the Heresy of Artemon*
    - *On the Resurrection*
    - *Exhortation to Severina*
    - *Against Marcion*
    - *On the Gospel of John and the Apocalypse*
    - *Against Gaius*
- Theology
  - Follows Irenaeus in his theology
  - Subordinationist in regard to the Logos
  - The Church is a community of the perfect
  - He saw the church as a community of saints and the validity of ordination dependent on personal holiness (Kelly, 15)
- Penance
  - Reacted against what he saw as the laxity of Callistus
- The Puzzle
  - Statue is female, probably an allegory of wisdom
  - The works are nowhere else attributed to one figure
  - Hippolytus the author and Hippolytus the Roman are likely different
  - The works can be attributed to different authors

## NOVATIAN (CLAIMED TO BE BISHOP FROM MAR 251-258)

- Conflict with Cornelius and Cyprian

- Treatise on the Trinity
- Monarchianist
- Called the founder of Roman theology by some because of his *De Trinitate* (Kelly, 18)
- Writings
  - *De Trinitate*
  - *On Jewish Foods*
  - *On Shows*
  - *On the Advantage of Modesty*
  - Epistles
- Views
  - Uses Stoic and Aristotelian arguments against the Monarchianists, avoiding Platonism; he adopts a Monarchianist view, striving to chart a middle ground between dynamic and subordinationist Monarchianism
  - The authority of the Logos will be handed over to the Father at the end of time
  - The Son is less than the Father and the Spirit is less than the Son

## OTHERS

- Muratorian Fragment
  - Oldest extant list of New Testament books
- Prologues to the Gospels and Epistles of Paul
- “Papal” Letters
  - St. Callistus (bishop 217-222)
    - His election was challenged by Hippolytus, who set himself up as bishop (Kelly, 13)
    - He excommunicated Sabellius and tried to steer a middle position between modalism and Hippolytus’s position that the Word was a distinct hypostasis from the Father (Kelly, 13-14)
    - It is thought that he taught the increasingly accepted view that the church was a home for sinners as well as saints and that reconciliation is open to any repentant Christian (Kelly, 14)
  - St. Pontian (bishop 21 July 230-28 Sep 235)
    - He approved the deposition of Origen and wrote a now-lost letter to that effect
  - St. Fabian (bishop 10 Jan 236-20 Jan 250)
    - His contemporaries spoke of him with deep respect. Origen sought his support when accused of heresy (Duffy, 18).
  - St. Cornelius (bishop Mar 251-June 253)
    - Writes to Cyprian about Novatian
  - St. Lucius (bishop 25 June 253-5 Mar 254)
    - Wrote to Cyprian
  - St. Stephen I (bishop 12 May 254-2 Aug 257)
    - He began breaking off with churches who practiced “the innovation of” rebaptism. He died before the conflict threatened the fiber of world Christianity. (Kelly, 20)
    - His activity shows that Rome had by that time become considered as a court of appeal for the sees of the west. (Kelly, 21)
    - He was the first pope to explicitly in print base his understanding of his office on Matthew 16:18. (Kelly, 21)
  - St. Sixtus II (bishop Aug 257-6 Aug 258)
    - His only authentic writing remaining is a fragment of a letter to Dionysius of Alexandria affirming the validity of heretical baptism (Kelly, 21)
  - St. Dionysius (bishop 22 July 260-26 Dec 268)
    - He convened a synod and composed a treatise on the Trinity in response to a request for arbitration from Alexandria (Kelly, 22)
  - St. Felix I (bishop 3 Jan 269-30 Dec 274)
    - Wrote a letter on the fully humanity and divinity of Christ which was quoted at the Council of Ephesus
- General characteristics

## OTHER PLACES

- Lactantius
  - Called by the Christian Cicero by the humanists of the Renaissance (Quasten, 393)
  - More accomplished in style than content (Quasten, 394)
  - Extant works
    - *On God's Workmanship*
    - *The Divine Institutes*
    - *The Epitome*
    - *The Anger of God*
    - *The Death of the Persecutors*
    - *The Bird Phoenix*
  - Vibrant and specific eschatology
  - Dualism
- Arnobius of Sicca
  - *Adversus Nationes*
- Victorinus of Pettau
  - Jerome says his erudition was lacking, but not his good will (Quasten, 411)
  - His writings have chiliastic tendencies
- Reticus of Autun
  - *On the Canticle of Canticles* (survived into the 12c but now lost)
  - *Against Novation* (lost)